

Another eBookWholesaler Publication



Auction Strategies
Your Blueprint for Success

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Introduction

I have been a member and student of Ebay since December 4, 1998. I use Ebay in some fashion everyday of my life, be it as a seller or a buyer.

Though I have “a day job” as a partner in a Web Development company, I use Ebay as a means of supplemental income, as well as a hobby. One can’t help but feel a rush when they view their listings and see the bids rolling in!

I’ve met some wonderful people on Ebay and learned some valuable lessons. As a member I’ve sold items from many many categories including:

- √ Toys
- √ Tools
- √ Books
- √ T-Shirts
- √ Clothing
- √ Information Products
- √ Dried Flowers
- √ Skin Care products
- √ Playing Cards
- √ Tag Sale items

The list is too numerous to continue, but rest-assured I've sold dozens of *types* of products. I've had experience selling items that I've created from scratch; items that I've purchased with the intention of reselling; dropshipped items. In my experiences as a seller, I've learned some very valuable tricks and have come up with my own list of "best practices" that I employ when determining what to sell.

There are lots of folks out there making a lot of money selling books that discuss how people can "Unlock the secrets to the Ebay goldmine". There are literally hundreds-of-thousands of people that now consider Ebay their full-time livelihood. I can virtually guarantee that if you were to interview any of them that they'd tell you it has been a long, time-consuming process, and as in "real life" there is **no such thing** as "getting rich quick".

This ebook attempts to support that way of thinking; that Ebay can be a great supplemental income, and can even grow to become your primary income. But for that to happen, you need to do your homework, and employ sound business practices.

So, enjoy the following pages, and utilize them to your benefit. There is TONS of money still to be made on the world's largest auction site!

George

Getting Started

Getting started may seem a little “entry level”, but I think there are certain things you should have in place prior to becoming an Ebay seller.

Creating your Ebay Account

The first (and most obvious) step is to create your Ebay user account. It is free to do this, and the steps via the Ebay web site are very explicit.

To get started, use the following link:

https://scgi.ebay.com/saw-cgi/eBayISAPI.dll?RegisterEnterInfo&siteid=0&co_partnerid=2&usage=0&ru=default

Or simply click “Register” from the top menu on the Ebay home page (highlighted in red in the picture below):



Create a Paypal Account

I've heard mixed reviews regarding the use of a Paypal account. Many people still refuse to utilize a Paypal account due to the fees associated with “receiving” money through Paypal. My philosophy, however is that I'm willing to have to absorb their fees if it means that I may gain a sale I normally wouldn't.

The problems I have with traditional methods of payment (checks, money orders, etc):

Time – It takes longer to get them

Documentation – I cannot tell you how often I get an envelope full of cash or a money order without any information on it, so I'm unaware of what exactly the person purchased from me

Time – When I receive checks/money orders, I have to go to the bank and wait in line. Sometimes this is more aggravating than paying Paypal fees.

Benefits of accepting payments online via Paypal:

Less chance of person forgetting to pay – If you run an auction and it is documented that you accept Paypal, the e-mail the buyer receives following the conclusion of the auction provides them means to pay right away with a "Pay Now via Paypal" button

Documentation – When you receive a payment via Paypal, you have a record of the buyer's mailing information, which item(s) they purchased, and you can click a button to create a printed packing slip for your package. I take it a step further. When I receive my e-mail stating that a person has paid me for an auction, I print it out, and cut out their shipping address with scissors. When I pack my item, I tape that slip of paper on the package. It is a built-in mailing label.

Signup for Ebay Selling Manager

One of the challenges when you do Ebay part time is finding the time to juggle your Ebay time with your family time. After getting home from a 10-hour workday, do you really want to spend 3 hours sending e-mails? I don't.

The most important decision I've ever made on Ebay was to sign up for their Selling Manager. At less than \$5 per month, it is a true bargain.

The Selling Manager consolidates all of your selling information in one easy-to-use interface. It truly allows you to manage your sales.

Let’s dig a little further into the specific reasons the Selling Manager should be part of your Ebay business. Pictured below is your main screen that you see when you login, click on “My Ebay” and then “Selling Manager”:

Summary


Last updated on Feb-03-04 10:08:27 PST

Quick Stats	GMS	# of listings
Pending Listings		0
▪ Starting within the next hour		0
▪ Starting today		0
Active Listings	\$0.00	16
▪ Closing within the next hour		0
▪ Closing today		0
Sold Listings	\$34.20	10
▪ Awaiting Payment		7
▪ Awaiting Payment, eligible for Non-Paying Buyer Alert		3
▪ Paid and ready to ship		3
▪ Paid and waiting for feedback		0
▪ Paid and shipped		0
▪ Unpaid and eligible for Final Value Fee credit		0

* Updates every 10 mins.

You’ll notice that all of my listings are categorized. I can check the status of any listing, anytime I want.

This feature, though nice, is not even the most valuable feature of the selling manager. That is pictured below:

Sold Listings
 Keep track of sold listings by customizing and sending sales records () to your buyers.
 10 sold listings.

<input type="checkbox"/> Record #	Buyer Email (Show/Hide)	Qty	Start Price	Total Price	Sales Date	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 726	(1)	1	\$1.00	\$1.00	Jan-25	2	W	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1) 1947-1948 Packard Reg. Brand New										
<input type="checkbox"/> 720	(18)	1	\$2.50	\$5.50	Jan-25	2	W	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1) 1947 Buick Park Parker Rabbit Light										
<input type="checkbox"/> 732	(6)	1	\$3.95	\$2.25	Jan-26	0	W	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1) 13 Trade Playing Cards - Flemings Las Vegas										
<input type="checkbox"/> 737	(10)	1	\$9.00	\$9.00	Jan-30	1	W	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1) Lot of Three Red Diao Ladder Chair										
<input type="checkbox"/> 738	(27)	1	\$2.50	\$2.50	Jan-30	1	W	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1) Ninja Oriental Chinese Star - 8 point - NEW										
<input type="checkbox"/> 740	(24)	1	\$0.00	\$11.85	Jan-30	1	W	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1) Lot of Three Red Diao Ladder Chair										
<input type="checkbox"/> 742	(6)	1	\$2.75	\$2.25	Jan-31	1	W	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1) Ninja Oriental Chinese Star - 8 point - Chrome										
<input type="checkbox"/> 746	(9)	1	\$1.00	\$5.00	Jan-31	1	W	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1) Welly 124 Scale Land Rover Freelander Silver										
<input type="checkbox"/> 752	(29)	1	\$1.00	\$5.00	Feb-01	0	W	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1) Welly 124 Scale Land Rover Freelander Black										
<input type="checkbox"/> 754	(6)	1	\$2.50	\$2.65	Feb-02	1	W	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1) Ninja Oriental Chinese Star - 8 point - Chrome										
Totals for listings 1-10:		Qty	Start Price	Total Price						
		10	\$34.20	\$62.50						
<input type="checkbox"/> Emails sent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Checkout complete <input type="checkbox"/> Paid <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shipped <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback left <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback received										
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Paying Buyer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Final Value Fee Initted										
Listings per page: <input type="text" value="50"/> <input type="button" value="Go"/>										1

I am able to see who purchased an item from me, which item it was, whether they've paid me, if I've left them feedback, if they've left me feedback, and can click one button to sell a similar item.

Talk about time-saving!

Furthermore, once my auction ends, I can send e-mails to my customers from this tool as well:

Email Buyer

From: george@crucialnetworking.com ([edit](#))
To: net

Template: ([edit template](#))
 Send a copy of email to me

Subject:

Message:

With one click of a button, I can notify the buyer that he/she has won, notify them that I have received payment, tell them I've shipped their item, or send a personalized e-mail. All e-mails are archived on Ebay's server, so you couldn't possibly accidentally delete one.

These functions have saved me HOURS per month. What used to take me an hour per night now takes me an hour per month. Literally. It has put my auction communications on autopilot.

To learn more/signup for Ebay's Selling Manager, click here:

<http://pages.ebay.com/sell/tools.html>

Do Your Homework

Now that you have taken the time to get your accounts in order, you should begin to "do your homework". Research is KEY on Ebay.

The first key to your research is to understand the fees associated with your auctions. Every auction you initiate on Ebay will have listing fees, and Final Value Fees. In addition to those fees, you will also incur fees if you accept payment via Paypal.

To illustrate a transaction:

Let's say you are listing a toy car. Your minimum bid is \$1.00. You add a "Buy it Now" feature whereby someone can purchase the item, ending the auction early, for a price of \$2.95. The shipping is a flat \$4.00

Your listing fees are:

- Insertion Fee: \$0.35
- Buy it Now Fee: \$0.05

Now let's say that it sells for \$5.50

- Your final value fee is: \$0.29

The purchaser pays via Paypal. Your Paypal fees are: \$0.51

Your total fees for your \$1.00 item are a whopping \$1.20!!!

This is an illustration of my first point...**know the fees!**

Selling a \$1.00 item is very difficult due to minimum fees charged by both Ebay and Paypal.

One of the first things that they teach you in business school is to **KNOW YOUR PROFIT MARGIN**. Your “profit margin” is the amount by which your revenues exceed your cost of a product. In the example I list above, you have LOST money.

Not good - **you won't be in business long.**

Before You Sell Any Items

Before deciding to sell any product, my first visit is to the Ebay/Paypal fees pages, copied below:

Ebay Listing Fees:

Minimum Bid, Buy It Now price, Opening Value or Reserve Price	Insertion Fee
\$0.01 - \$0.99	\$0.30
\$1.00 - \$9.99	\$0.35
\$10.00 - \$24.99	\$0.60
\$25.00 - \$49.99	\$1.20
\$50.00 - \$199.99	\$2.40
\$200.00 - \$499.99	\$3.60
\$500.00 and up	\$4.80

Final Value Fees:

Closing Value	Final Value Fee
\$0 - \$25	5.25% of the closing value
\$25 - \$1,000	5.25% of the initial \$25 (\$1.31), plus 2.75% of the remaining closing value balance.
Over \$1,000	5.25% of the initial \$25 (\$1.31), plus 2.75% of the initial \$25-\$1000 (\$26.81), plus 1.50% of the remaining closing value balance.

URL for all Ebay fees:

<http://pages.ebay.com/help/sellerguide/selling-fees.html?ssPageName=STRK:MEARL:006>

Paypal Receiving Fees (it costs \$0 to SEND money in Paypal):

Currency of Payment	Merchant Rate[†]	Standard Rate[†]
U.S. Dollars	2.2%+ \$0.30 USD	2.9%+ \$0.30 USD
Canadian Dollars	2.7%+ \$0.55 CAD	3.4%+ \$0.55 CAD
Euros	2.7%+ €0.35 EUR	3.4%+ €0.35 EUR
Pounds Sterling	2.7%+ £0.20 GBP	3.4%+ £0.20 GBP
Yen	2.7%+ ¥40 JPY	3.4% + ¥40 JPY

Product Selection

Now that you have become better acquainted with the fees associated with being an Ebay seller, you need to determine what to sell. If you are a crafter, or create some unique product, this part of the process is probably a no-brainer for you.

However if you are like me, constantly looking for another challenge and another item to sell successfully, you need to do some studying.

My first stop is always Ebay’s robust search capabilities.

In the top navigation of every page of the Ebay site, you’ll see the following:



When you click on “Search” you have many many options available to you.

One of those is “Advanced Search” pictured below:



My personal favorite is **searching completed items**. I type in my search term, and click the box labeled “Completed Items Only”. This gives me a good cross-section of items that sold, items that did not sell, and the categories and titles that the sellers employed.

Once I have completed my search and have my results, I begin to study. The first thing I do is find the items that most closely match the item I’m interested in selling. I pick through the listings and begin making a spreadsheet that shows the item title, the day of the week it started on, the time of day it started on, the beginning price and the ending price. I then make a note about the image employed.

Did they use Ebay’s “image gallery” feature?:

	Lot of TWO 4oz Cans of Zippo Lighter Flak	\$5.99	-	Jan-22 15:55
	*** USES IMAGE GALLERY FEATURE ***			
	Lot of Three 4oz Zippo Lighter Flak	\$9.99	1	Jan-22 17:23
	*** DOES NOT USE IMAGE GALLERY, BUT CONTAINS AN IMAGE ***			
	Lot of Three 4oz Zippo Lighter Flak	\$6.95	-	Jan-22 18:21
	*** DOES NOT HAVE AN IMAGE AT ALL ***			

The 1st item in the listings above uses the gallery feature.

The 2nd item has an image, but doesn't use the gallery.

The 3rd item doesn't have an image at all.

****NOTE:** Make sure you have an image of the item you are selling. This is VERY important. I have never had any success selling items without images. You don't necessarily need to employ the image gallery.

Just be sure you upload an image for your item.

After I have my spreadsheet compiled, I begin to study the results.

I sort the items first by whether the item sold or not.

I compare the number of sales to non-sales. This is important. If an overwhelming majority of items don't sell, this is a red flag for me, and I probably don't want to take a chance on this type of item again.

Next, I sort by the auctions that ended with the highest bid price. Then I examine the day of the week and time the item ended.

I have included an image of a listing below, highlighting what I'm referring to:

Zippo Zippo Fluid Advertising Lighter

You are signed in

Bidding has ended for this item ([redacted] is the winner)



↓ [Go to larger picture](#)

Winning bid: **US \$180.28**

Ended: Jan-22-04 07:34:36 PST

History: [8 bids](#) (US \$6.99 starting bid)

Winning bidder: ([543](#) ☆)

Location: Stuart, FL
United States

The image above tells me that this item ended at 7:34 a.m. PST on a Thursday. I do this for several similar listings to try to determine if a pattern emerges. If I notice that the items that end around dinner time on a weekend day, say Saturday, on average sell for a higher price than something that ends at 7:35 on a Thursday morning, I play the averages, and determine that I'd like to sell my item so it ends on a Saturday evening.

You are not restricted to using a spreadsheet for this analysis. You can use pads of paper. I have just found spreadsheets to be more flexible, allowing you to sort your information "on the fly".

Finding a Product Source

So you have determined that the product in question is "a winner".

Now you need to find a supplier. This is very tricky. You can really end up getting beaten here. You may find yourself buying a lot of product that just ends up sitting in your cellar.

Worse yet, you may be selling it like hot cakes, but for a \$0.03 profit per item.

Remember the analysis you did above? It will come in handy now.

I calculate the average selling price of the items I've analyzed, and assume that will be what I'll earn if I begin selling this product.

I then subtract all applicable fees (listing fees, final value fees, and Paypal fees), and this is my net revenue for the item. If my net revenue is \$7.50, I know that for this venture to be worthwhile for me I have to purchase it, and ship it to my house for about \$5.00 or less.

This is VERY difficult. That is why I laugh when people write books saying how Ebay is a ticket to tremendous wealth in a matter of weeks. Impossible!

It is, however, possible to make a steady income and build up a customer-base using Ebay.

You will find that you have repeat buyers, and some impulse shoppers who buy some of your other listings.

However, if you are reading this document with dreams of vast overnight wealth, please do yourself a favor and close the book now. Go buy a lotto ticket. You have the same chance. I don't want to sound harsh, but that's the reality. Ebay is a competitive place; there are no "magic products".

Now. Back to business. Now that you've picked a specific product, or group of products, you wish to sell, you need to build up your inventory.

The 3 most popular types of products you can sell on Ebay:

- √ Items you make
- √ Items you own/possess
- √ Dropshipping

Items you Make

In your Ebay travels, you will stumble across many many homemade products that sell quite well on Ebay. These are a great little cottage industries!

When you create the product, you have a good grasp on your development costs, the specifications, and can embellish them with little enhancements that can make the difference between a sale and no sale.

Some popular homemade items I've seen:

- √ Blankets/Quilts
- √ Handbags
- √ Bird Feeders
- √ Jewelry
- √ Doll Clothes
- √ Regular (human) clothes
- √ Pet Accessories

Beware, however. Your labor of love may break you if you don't do your homework. In the items listed above, there are a few real losers. Bird Feeders, for instance. You can buy them for \$1.00 anywhere on the planet. So, if you make something and sell it on Ebay, do yourself a favor and have a "hook" that will entice people to buy. For instance, don't just build a birdhouse out of cheap pallet wood. Build a customized birdhouse, or advertise that you can build birdhouses that look like the owner's house.

Don't make handbags that look like Luis Vuitton handbags. Make them out of crazy materials or in funky shapes.

This ingenious designer has incorporated a Macanudo Cigar box into her designs:

<http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=3457391964&category=3006>

Offering something for free is always an added bonus. If you make cookie cutters, affix a recipe to the cutter with a piece of ribbon, or include a picture of a finished cookie made with your cutter. This helps folks visualize what they can do with your product. This isn't an auction trick; it's basic merchandising.

If you sell an item such as dried flowers, don't just show a picture of the bouquet of dried flowers. Have a friend (or do it yourself) arrange them somehow. My mother did that when I was selling dried lavender (that's right, dried lavender). She created various cool items that showed them in a different light.

Categories.

It is also a good idea to experiment with categories. Some items you make may span categories.

A quilt may normally reside in the following category:

[Home](#) > [Bedding](#) > [Comforters, Duvet Covers](#) > [King](#) > [Other](#)

That's kind of obvious, though, don't you think?

Perhaps listing it here would work:

[Everything Else](#) > [Gifts & Occasions](#) > [Party Supplies](#) > [Baby Shower](#)

Titles.

If a different category doesn't seem right, perhaps a different title would suit your product. Instead of selling "Gorgeous Homemade Mother Goose Quilt" you might say "Homemade Mother Goose Quilt – Baby Shower". You will find yourself showing up in more and more searches.

If you make an item and are capable of selling in larger quantities, be sure to mention this in your item description. It is perfectly legal on Ebay for an auction to be the start of other "offline" transactions. Someone may buy 1 cookie cutter from you because that's what your auction listed; but they may need 75 more for their wedding favors. The 2 words "**Bulk Available**" at the bottom of the auction description may gain you hundreds of dollars of sales over the course of a year.

TIP: If you make items and your profit margins are tight, open an Ebay store. For \$9.99 per month you can list items in your inventory for \$0.05 for a 30-day listing. This will cut back on your per-item expenses, and Ebay has a built-in cross-selling tool that will suggest other items in your store to a potential buyer who is bidding/buying one of your items.

Items you own/possess

I got started on Ebay selling junk. Literally!

I was in college and moving out of my parents' home. I had thousands of baseball cards collected in my youth that I no longer had use for. I sold them, one by one, on Ebay over the course of the next few years and made thousands of dollars.

In the past, folks would have a tag sale to get rid of unwanted items. Why in the world would you do that??? At a tag sale you'll get \$0.25 for something that might fetch you several \$\$ on Ebay. Furthermore, you don't have to waste your Friday and Saturday setting up and watching your items.

Even if you don't have your own items to sell, you can make Ebay work.

Solicit items from family members. Does your grandmother have an attic full of stuff that she no longer uses and just collects dust? Ask her if you can have it. If you have family members who don't want to give it away, offer to consign it for them. You take the time to take a picture and list the item, and split the proceeds (after costs, of course) with them.

Both parties win.

Prior to selling anything, I like to take 5 minutes and research the items -particularly if they are old and potentially valuable. You don't want to sell yourself short.

The best place to research the items is Ebay itself, in my opinion. Ebay is pretty self-regulating. The market will dictate the price they are willing to pay for an item.

I know personally that if it is just "junk" theb **I typically start the auction at \$1.00 to encourage bidding**. Once folks begin bidding and that competition takes over, you'll end up getting the bids you want anyway. I would avoid starting items for the exact amount you'd like them to sell for. It'll be harder for you to encourage multiple bidders that way.

TIP: If you find that selling “junk” is working for you, begin scouting out local tag sales. For an hour of your time and a few dollars, you can find some serious income-producing items.

Also, call self-storage facilities in your area and ask them if they have a sale schedule. Usually, when renters stop paying their bill or move without telling the facility, the facility waits 30 days and holds a public sale or auction.

You can get items for pennies on the dollar because these sales are not highly publicized.

Dropshipping

Dropshipping has received TONS of press since Ebay has come to prominence.

There are many many scammers out there offering to sell you lists - "Suppliers of hundreds of thousands of dropshipped products".

THESE ARE SCAMS.

Don't buy such lists. There is (in my opinion) ONE reliable list out there:

Worldwide Brands, Inc has a staff that manages the best list in the business of dropshippers. It is always current, and the list is comprised of real companies supplying real goods. NOT dollar store garbage that EVERYONE is selling on Ebay and that you'll never make any money selling.

Here is the link to their directory (Paste this link into your web browser);

<http://www.myaffiliateprogram.com/u/worldwid/t.asp?id=5610>

Before you take the plunge, you must first understand dropshipping. Dropshipping is when a manufacturer or distributor of a product allows you to buy the product at a wholesale rate. After purchasing the product (on behalf of your customer), they'll ship it to your client in a plain package so it looks as though you've shipped it. Many dropshippers will put your information in the return address so it looks as though you've sent the item.

Dropshipping has many advantages. The main advantage is that you **don't have to carry inventory**. Prior to using a dropshipper, you should understand the disadvantages.

First, you need to make sure they have your item in stock. If you start a 7-day auction, and the supplier is out of stock by the time the auction ends, it is YOU that will get the negative feedback on Ebay...not the supplier.

Many dropshippers charge a “handling fee” which essentially is a means of recovering the cost of shipping the item using their shipping supplies.

My advice is to **find a wholesaler who happens to dropship; not a dropshipper who sells “wholesale to the public”**. The folks who sell closeout items “wholesale to the public” are making plenty of money. Unfortunately for you, there are THOUSANDS of people on Ebay selling these same products, and none of them are making any money.

You need to find a company in the [Drop Ship Source Directory](#) that is a wholesaler by trade, who happens to also dropship for you. If at all possible, it is ideal to find a wholesaler who does NOT charge a dropship fee. If they charge a dropship fee, you might not make any money at all on a sale after subtracting Ebay & Paypal fees.

When done properly, you can make some SERIOUS money dropshipping. If you find the right product from the right vendor, you can make money on autopilot, re-running the same auctions over and over again.

NOTE: Many of the sellers in the [Drop Ship Source Directory](#) will require that you have a valid resale certificate in your state of business. To get a resale certificate, you need to do a few things;

1. Register a business with the IRS. To do this, you’ll need to fill out an SS4 form, located here: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-fill/fss4.pdf>. Your best bet is to setup an LLC (Limited Liability Company) and make yourself the primary partner.
2. Your 2nd step would be to file “articles of incorporation” with your State. In CT it cost me \$60 for the privilege.

PLEASE consult a professional small business advisor to understand Tax filing requirements, etc before doing this. I am NOT RESPONSIBLE for your business filings.

I'm making suggestions to you, and teaching you how to be a legitimate wholesaler. A great place for free advice is S.C.O.R.E: <http://www.score.org>

Once you have this info, you are all set, and 95% of all Wholesalers will accept your application for a wholesale account.

The Numbers Don't Lie

The best way I've found to ensure success on Ebay is to KNOW YOUR NUMBERS.

Know the following at all times:

- √ How much your item costs (if homemade, what is the cost of materials)
- √ How much your item costs to ship
- √ Fees associated with listing your item (listing fees)
- √ Fees associated with selling your item (final value fees and Paypal fees)
- √ Fees for packaging. You will need to buy packaging tape & boxes, etc. You shouldn't absorb this price. Your customers should.

Some people like to do this on paper. I do this using Microsoft Excel Spreadsheets. I know to the penny what each item costs me. I sell a lot of commodity-like items so it is easier to track costs, etc. My items have a pretty fixed cost structure.

If you make something, each item is different, thus it may cost a little more or less from time to time.

Every penny counts.

TIP: The first place you can get hammered on costs is in shipping your items. People don't want to pay exorbitant amounts to ship their products.

I employ 2 tactics to get shipping materials.

<http://shop.usps.com> - The postal service will ship Priority Mail boxes to your door, free of charge. They will include tape and labels at your request also. FREE. FREE. Don't be foolish and pay for boxes.

Find a friend that works at a retail establishment and ask them if you can speak with their manager. Politely explain that you sell items on Ebay and would love to help them out by recycling some of the boxes their product was shipped to them in. My mother works at a basket store, and I have all the boxes I'll ever need. Also, ask whoever is responsible for disposing of boxes at your place of work.

Nobody will ever turn you down, because you're saving them work.

The only cost I don't skimp on is tape. I buy tape in bulk from the folks at Staples. If you don't ship a product Priority Mail, you cannot use the boxes or the tape.

In those instances, I use clear packing tape and my free boxes. Tape is cheap. You can buy 10 rolls for very little.

If you sell a fragile product, you'll want bubble wrap too. I've found a great supplier right on Ebay:

<http://www.stores.ebay.com/shippingsupplycom/plistings/list/all/dept1/index.html?dir=-1&col=2&sotimedisplay=2>

You'll have a hard time beating their prices!

In addition to the content in this Ebook, I arranged for you to get a copy of my own personal spreadsheet that I use to analyze costs and determine a product's worthiness.

The eBookWholesaler Member that you bought this book from will provide it to you FREE.

Be sure to check it out and play with it!

Be Part of the Community

The Value of Feedback

If you have ever used Ebay, then you have at least some idea of the value of Feedback. On Ebay, feedback is currency. As a seller, receiving positive feedback can mean the difference between making a sale and not making a sale.

Remember earlier when I mentioned that in the sea of Ebay faces you MUST stand out? Feedbacks are a good differentiator. There are many folks, who given a choice, would pick seller A over seller B if their feedback rating was better, all other things equal.

In many ways, the Feedback system should be treated the very same way you'd conduct yourself if you owned a traditional store. Would you expect someone to buy from you again if you provided him or her with horrible service, sold a bad product, and were rude to him or her while they browsed? From day one on Ebay, you must prove your worth and treat your customers like gold.

Don't be afraid to ask for feedback. Many times you won't receive any feedback simply because your buyer forgot to log back in and give you some. I have incorporated a feedback request in my shipping notification e-mail.

I alert the buyer that their item has shipped, and I then remind them to log back in once they receive it, to leave me positive feedback. At the same time I alert them to the fact that I have already left them positive feedback and thank them once again for their speedy payment.

About 90% of the folks I have dealt with have paid me almost immediately. For that, I "reward" them with positive feedback. It helps buyers almost as much as sellers.

Ebay Tools

Among the things that Ebay does very well is to support its members. Do yourself a favor and check out the community pages:

<http://pages.ebay.com/community/index.html?ssPageName=h:h:over:US>

Here is where you'll find;

- √ discussion boards & chat,
- √ answers to your questions, and even
- √ Ebay Groups, where you can hook up with other folks that share your interests.

There are collectors clubs, sellers groups and regional groups as well.

As a seller, these areas are VERY valuable to you. Visit these groups and poke around. Read about what folks are talking about. It will help you in your search for products as well as help you to determine what prices your target market is willing to pay.

Listings That Sell

Back to the whole “standing out” discussion.

On Ebay, you are not dealing with the Sunday afternoon “antiquers” who have nowhere else to be and are just wandering around your store. You are dealing with users of the web, a group of people who traditionally have the attention span of a fruit fly.

If you are going to entice someone to buy, you need to do it **emphatically and quickly**. In the case of certain collectible or rare items, they may sell themselves. However if you are selling brand new items or items for which there is lots of competition, you need to raise the bar a little on the quality of your listings.

Here are some tips:

Take quality images. Invest in a decent digital camera (In current terms, this means something 2 Mega pixels or greater). If you have blurry images or worse yet, NO IMAGE, you are setting yourself up for failure.

TIP: If you are dealing with a dropshipper or wholesaler often times they have product shots directly from the manufacturer that you are free to use. This can save you the time and trouble of snapping your own pictures.

Use Action Words: - Beautiful! Gorgeous! Stunning! Remember, the person viewing your auction is not sitting in front of it. You need to help them visualize it. Use descriptive words and punctuation. Sound excited that you are fortunate enough to be in possession of such a BRILLIANT item!

Give Suggestions: – If you sell an item that has multiple possible uses, why not list them?

Examples:

- √ “This item would make a great Groomsmen gift!”
- √ “Great housewarming gift!”
- √ “Great sign for your restaurant!”

It is actually kind of fun to tweak your listings and experiment with many different ways of selling the same product. You have the freedom to modify your description & title. Why not?

HTML vs. Text

Personally, I prefer listings that are enhanced with the use of HTML code to bold words, display items in tables, and show multiple images of an item. However, I don't think it is a necessity. If you explicitly lay out the details of your item that set it apart, have a good title, and a good image, you will be successful.

My father (groberts1) has been on Ebay for almost 6 years, and doesn't know any HTML. His auctions always contain just text, but he describes his items very explicitly, and takes SUPER pictures. He is a very successful Ebayer.

Closing Remarks

I thank you for taking the time to read this ebook, and I hope that it has helped you. If I could summarize this book in a few key tips, here they are:

- √ Ebay will not “make you instantly wealthy” as some people claim
- √ Carefully select products by:
 1. Studying buyers
 2. Researching sources
 3. Analyzing profitability

Do NOT be fooled by those people offering “wholesale sources” lists. The stuff they sell is garbage with no profit margin. It is a waste of your time and \$\$

Stand out from the crowd:

Take time in shooting images of your products

Create “listings that sell”.

Think of different applications for your product, and list in other categories from “the crowd”

Be a member of the community

Leave Feedback

Visit the message boards

Ebay is a powerful force in our economy. If you can study it and learn how to use it to its fullest potential, you will realize great success! **Be a student!**

About the Author

George Roberts is a web developer who has been buying & selling on Ebay since 1998. He uses Ebay as a source of secondary income.

He also offers one-on-one Ebay counseling, and creates custom Ebay templates for fellow Ebayers.

He is also the owner of <http://www.auctionsalesletter.com>, a web site that chronicles the success of Ebay buyers and sellers and delivers their tips & tricks via a free monthly e-newsletter.

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Auction Strategies Your Blueprint for Success

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