

The IWantCollectibles Guide to Ebay Sales

Formerly sold as
“The Auction Revolution”

By
Terry Gibbs

Updated Jan 2018

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Preface

How this book came about. . .

When I started selling on eBay in 1997 there were no books or reports explaining the process. EBay had basic tutorials on their site, but the quality was quite low. We were forced to learn by doing and talking with other sellers. Much of my early knowledge about selling on eBay came from telephone discussions with other eBay sellers.

In 1999, I wrote my first report explaining how to sell antiques and collectibles on eBay. At that time I'd been selling on eBay for two years and had done some personal coaching. For the next two years I ran my eBay business and taught eBay selling skills on the side.

By 2001, I had a following of antiques and collectibles dealers. I found myself spending more and more time explaining to others how I bought the items I sold on eBay. These conversations resulted in the Collectible Buying Strategies Package I released in early 2002. [Updated version available here.](#)

Also in 2002, I produced the first eBay selling video, and started a simple website called IWantCollectibles. Two years later in 2004, I wrote the first edition of The Auction Revolution.

Since then my eBay skills have improved, but more importantly for you, my teaching skills have also improved. This book has been updated regularly to cover eBay changes and to make it easier for you to learn from.

Over the years eBay has changed considerably. When I started, eBay was about antiques and collectibles. Today after years of trying to be a marketplace for everything, eBay is moving back to it's roots. It's a cleaner, more efficient, place to sell.

This newly revised and updated version of the Auction Revolution explains how to profitably sell on the current eBay system. It's the most comprehensive manual I've written, and humbly speaking certainly includes more material than packages selling for hundreds of dollars.

To your success,
Terry Gibbs

Introduction

In this book, you will learn everything you need to know to get higher prices on eBay and other online auctions. The first section of this book takes you step by step through listing your items.

You will learn how to:

- Create an eBay account.
- Research your item.
- Decide which listing option is best for each item.
- Find the best category to list your item.
- Find the right keywords to get your item in front of as many bidders as possible.
- Find out what your item is worth.
- Write a title to compel eBay surfers to look at your auction.
- Take clear and detailed digital photos of your items.
- Edit your photos so they load fast.
- Include photos in your listings without paying expensive image hosting fees. (If you are currently paying to include images in your auctions, this information alone will save you more than the cost of this manual.)
- Write auction listings that will get you higher bids.
- Select listing upgrades to increase selling prices while minimizing eBay fees.
- Handle questions from bidders.
- Select payment methods and track payments from buyers.
- Pack and ship your items safely and track packages through the mail.
- Deal with unhappy buyers to lower complaints and returns.
- Handle feedback and non paying bidders.

eBay is about collectibles. Collectibles are older items hidden away in closets, attics and garages. Collectibles are old baseball cards, post cards, dishes, dolls, Hot Wheels and Matchbox cars, toys, books and other small items found in homes.

Antique dealers call these items “small” because they are small items. They are perfect for eBay because they are easy to pack and ship. In the second half of this manual, I will share information with you about how I find the trains and toys I sell on eBay.

Some people specialize in selling new items. This book will teach you the fundamentals of selling on eBay. Although I sell antiques and collectibles the

basics you learn in this book will be appropriate in your auctions, no matter what you sell.

Whatever you are selling on eBay the most important aspect to your success is a thorough understanding of the process and reasons behind each action you take. The second most important aspect to your success is developing an effective system to list items in an efficient manner.

This manual is designed to fully acquaint you with every aspect of selling on eBay. This manual contains the knowledge gained by listing over 50,000 items on eBay during the past 20 years. Additionally, I have spent over a decade teaching people how to sell on eBay. In seminars, during private full day consulting sessions, and through my website IWantCollectibles.com, over the years I have taught over 70,000 people the system you are about to learn.

After reading this book you will be in the top 5 percent of all eBay auction sellers. You will be able to consistently get higher prices in your auctions, and list a wide variety of unique items in a fraction of the time others spend writing their auctions.

One other thing - **don't read this book like a novel. Think about each item as you read along and try to understand why these things work the way they do.** I explain many of my statements so you will not have to guess or even take my word for it, but you will learn more if you question the information.

This might sound strange, and I am sure you can find hundreds, if not thousands, of eBay sellers doing the very things I tell you not to do. I said earlier, but let me say it again. . .

After reading this book you will be in the top 5% of eBay sellers.

Do not assume because someone else is doing something it is the correct or best way. Don't even take my word for it. Test these things just as I have done and learn for yourself.

One more thing before we get started, I have a free newsletter about antiques collectibles and eBay. The newsletter goes out once or twice a month, and you will get a free five part introductory course about buying and selling collectibles just for signing up.

The newsletter is the only way to stay on top of new developments made by me and my clients around the world. You can sign up from any page on the www.iwantcollectibles.com website.

Let's get started.

Why Sell On eBay?

By selling your items on eBay rather than to a dealer, you will get higher prices. With eBay you have little or no overhead. I run my entire eBay sales out of a spare bedroom and a rented storage locker. This is the easiest way for anyone to become an antiques and collectibles dealer.

I sell old toy trains and train-related collectibles, but you can sell anything you want. Pick something you are interested in that you can find easily. This will make it easier for you to succeed because your enthusiasm will help you keep motivated.

Millions of people search eBay every week. This is a huge marketplace and knowing a few easy tips will allow you to sell to these hungry buyers.

It is important that you have a system for dealing with your eBay sales. Your eBay selling system might not be exactly the same as the one I use, and probably shouldn't be, but you must have a system. For best results use the system outlined in this book and then modify it to suit your needs as your experience grows.

Many sellers do not have a system, and eventually falter. In the rest of this book you will learn my system for selling large quantities of items on eBay with very little work.

Signing up as an eBay seller is the first step. If you already have an eBay buying account, skip down to the section on creating an eBay selling account. If you are already signed up to sell on eBay skip down to the section on researching your item on eBay.

Setting Up Your eBay Account

This section explains the steps needed to create an eBay selling account. If you are already selling on eBay you can skip this section. If you already have an eBay account, but are not set up as a seller click on the link to eBay below and then skip to Upgrading An Ebay Account To A Selling Account a few pages down.

The first step to creating an ebay account is to go to eBay. Click on the link below and you will be taken to eBay.

www.ebay.com

Once you are at eBay You will get a divided screen. The left side of the screen contains a registration button. Click on the button.

On the registration page, enter your information in the form boxes. The top of the form asks for your address and contact information.

Lower down on the form, you need to select an eBay user ID. Your eBay ID cannot be a website address or email address. I suggest you use a short nickname. Later you will need to type the ID in frequently and a long string of characters is just more work.

Because each user has an ID and there are millions of users, a lot of the great names are already taken. Don't spend a lot of time coming up with a name. You can easily change it later if you want. A good way to get a unique nickname fast is to use your last name and a few numbers. My name is Terry Gibbs, so a name that should be available is "gibbs7485."

You also need to select a password. This should be something easy for you to remember, but difficult for someone else to guess. Some good ideas for passwords are items from your childhood. Maybe use the name of your first pet, or the first girl you ever kissed, your kindergarten teacher's name – basically any word at least six characters long will work. If your word is too short add some numbers. For example the first girl I ever kissed – way back in the fourth grade - was named Beth. So I could use a password like "beth77."

Note: The most secure password is a series of capitalized words with a few numbers included. A phrase like "TerryLikesTrains316" is very secure. You also need to pick a secret question and provide eBay with the answer. This is in case you forget your password. Then fill in your date of birth and click on continue.

If you have selected an eBay user ID that is already taken you will get the same screen over again with the ID and password areas blank. Try different nicknames until you come up with one that works. If there are errors or you skipped a field eBay will request that information now.

The next page explains the eBay user agreement and rules. It is pretty simple. Read through it and then click continue.

At this point you need to check your email in order to confirm your email address with eBay. Open your email program and then click on the link within the email from eBay.

You are almost done. The link in the email leads to a congratulations page. On the resulting webpage there is a link to [create a seller's account](#). Click on this link.

Upgrading An Ebay Account To A Selling Account

Before you can sell on eBay you will need to upgrade to a selling account. In order to sell on eBay you must provide a checking account number. You can use a credit or debit card to pay, but must have a checking account to create a selling account.

If you just created an eBay account, from the congratulations page click on the [create seller's account link](#). If you are already an eBay member, but not a seller click on the link below and then log in to eBay and you will end up on the create sellers account page.

www.ebay.com

You will need to verify your contact information before inputting a credit card number. After making sure your contact information is correct, click on continue and enter your credit card or checking account number.

If you provide a credit or debit card eBay will then ask you for a checking account. A checking account is required to open an eBay seller's account. This is done because eBay has to pay transaction fees for credit cards, but direct withdrawal from a checking account does not have associated bank fees. If you want to have eBay bill your credit card MAKE SURE you specify that later.

The next screen asks you to select a preferred payment method. Select credit card or checking account based on your preference.

Added 2013 - if you set up your eBay fees to be paid with a PayPal debit card you might get 1% cash back from PayPal. The cash back program is by invitation only, and currently PayPal is giving cash back on all transaction that do not use a pin number.

REMINDER: EBay and Paypal will both automatically deduct money from your checking account unless you force them to use a credit card. You need to pay particular attention to the funding and payment options if you do not want eBay to deduct money from your checking account.

You'll need to enter a checking account number and routing number. The screen explains each needed item. Fill in the form and hit continue.

You are now ready to sell on eBay.

Creating Your First Listing.

Here's a checklist of things to do before selling your item on eBay. You can print this page by selecting the printer icon for the toolbar above and then selecting current page under print range in the print dialog screen.

1. Research your item if you are unfamiliar with it.
2. Choose your eBay category (or categories).
3. Select relevant keywords for your title and description.
4. Determine the opening bid and reserve price if applicable.
5. Decide on optional listing upgrades.
6. Determine how you will ship and what the buyer will pay for shipping.
7. Decide length of auction and starting price.
8. Plan your item title and description.
9. Prepare your photo(s).
10. Write your auction description.
11. Start the listing.

We will cover each of these items in the order above. In the future you can use the bookmarks on the left side of this book to move to the areas you want to reread.

Before you start listing on eBay you may need to do some research to discover what you have and if there are buyers. We will cover this first.

While you are researching your item, you will also select the best category and determine appropriate keywords.

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[Use this link to pay.](#)

Researching Your Item On eBay

The first place to start is on the eBay search page. I still use the old eBay search page because it is simpler to understand. Let's say for example you have an old ticket punch. This is an item like a hole punch used by conductors to mark tickets.

We will go step by step through finding the best category to list this ticket punch. You can follow these same steps for any type of item.

First we will go to the eBay search page:

[EBay Search Page](#)

Type **railroad ticket punch** into the BY TITLE search box at the top of the page. Check the box **Search Title and Description** and hit the search button.

You will then get a screen like this:

The screenshot shows the eBay search results page for the query "railroad ticket punch". The page has a yellow header with navigation tabs: "All Items", "Auctions", and "Buy It Now". A "Need help?" link is in the top right. Below the header, the breadcrumb "Home > All Categories" is visible. The left sidebar contains a "Basic Search" section with the search term "railroad ticket punch" and a checked box for "in titles & descriptions". Below this is a "Matching Categories" section listing various categories like "Collectibles", "Books", "Art", and "Coins" with item counts. The main content area shows "All Categories" with 29 items found. It includes a table of results with columns for "Show picture", "Item Title", "Price", "Bids", and "Time Left". The table lists several items, including "Old Railroad? Ticket Punch-Iron Cross Shape", "Antique Railway Conductor Ticket Punch", "N. Y. WORLD'S FAIR AUDIO ARCHIVE ON CD-ROM", "PUNCH USED ON RAILROAD TO PUNCH PASSANGER TICKET", "US Presidents in PICTURES CARTOONS MORE!", "Old West Wells Fargo & Co. Exp. Railroad Ticket Punch", "RAILROAD TICKET PUNCH", "RAILROAD TICKET PUNCH BOSTON MASS BUSBY CO RR", "YUGOSLAV PASSENGER TRAIN TICKET PUNCH WITH DATE STAMP", "N. Y. WORLD'S FAIR AUDIO ARCHIVE ON CD-ROM", and "BRIDGTON & SACO RIVER RAILROAD TRAIN TICKET LIMITED".

Show picture	Item Title	Price	Bids	Time Left
	Old Railroad? Ticket Punch-Iron Cross Shape	\$15.00	3	1h 50m
	Antique Railway Conductor Ticket Punch	\$15.00 \$25.00 <i>Buy It Now</i>	-	2h 29m
	N. Y. WORLD'S FAIR AUDIO ARCHIVE ON CD-ROM	\$8.50 \$9.50 <i>Buy It Now</i>	-	3h 29m
	PUNCH USED ON RAILROAD TO PUNCH PASSANGER TICKET	\$10.50	2	3h 30m
	US Presidents in PICTURES CARTOONS MORE!	\$9.99 \$24.99 <i>Buy It Now</i>	-	22h 57m
	Old West Wells Fargo & Co. Exp. Railroad Ticket Punch	\$20.50	5	23h 38m
	RAILROAD TICKET PUNCH	\$9.95	1	1d 06h 09m
	RAILROAD TICKET PUNCH BOSTON MASS BUSBY CO RR	\$9.95	1	1d 06h 09m
	YUGOSLAV PASSENGER TRAIN TICKET PUNCH WITH DATE STAMP	\$49.95	-	1d 16h 54m
	N. Y. WORLD'S FAIR AUDIO ARCHIVE ON CD-ROM	\$8.50 \$9.50 <i>Buy It Now</i>	-	2d 03h 47m
	BRIDGTON & SACO RIVER RAILROAD TRAIN TICKET LIMITED	\$7.95	-	2d 19h 39m

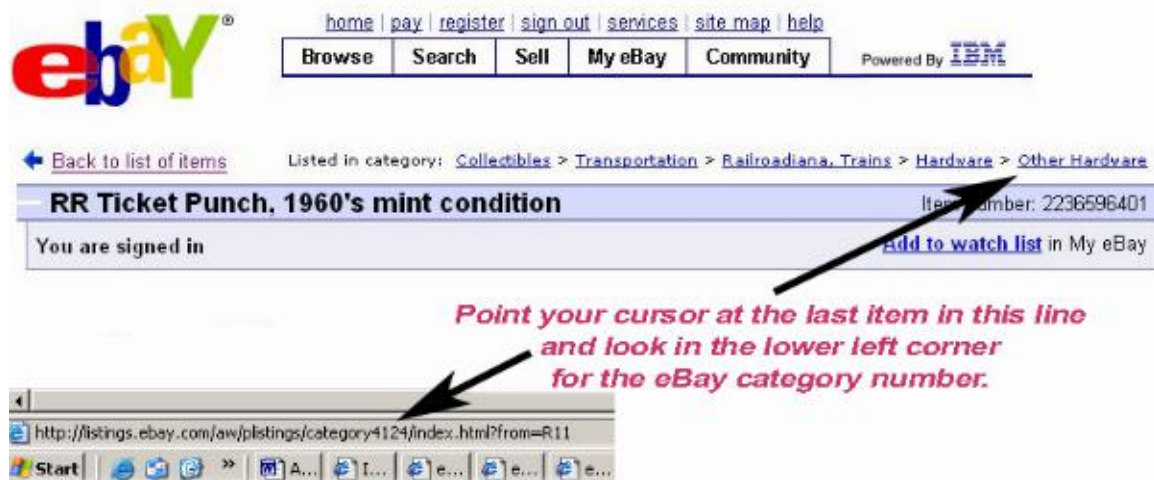
This screen shows all the items currently listed on eBay with the words **Railroad Ticket Punch** in the title or description. On the left side of the screen are

the **Matching Categories** containing these listings and the number of items listed in each category.

By clicking on a few of the items for sale we can quickly see the majority of these ticket punches are listed in this category:

[Collectibles](#) > [Transportation](#) > [Railroadiana, Trains](#) > [Hardware](#) > [Other Hardware](#)

You can see the category on the top of the auction listing. It is right above the blue bar containing the listing title. By pointing your mouse at the words [Other Hardware](#), and looking at the status bar on the lower left corner of your monitor – above the start button on windows computers – you can see the category is 4124.



When you are searching for categories you should write the number down so you can refer back to it when you write your listing. We are not done searching for the best place to list yet.

At this point, we have an idea that category 4124 is the best, but we need to check it. We can confirm the category by looking at sold auctions.

To check sold auctions click on the sold link on the left side of the search results page. **This is under the show only section.** Note: if you've selected "search descriptions," this link will not be available. You'll need to do a search of titles only, and then select the completed auctions link.

Note: If the sold listings checkbox is not available either your search includes descriptions or you aren't logged into eBay. You can enable this option by logging in to eBay or removing the check from "Include Descriptions" under the search button and searching again.

When you click on the display sold items link, you get only auctions that have ended with buyers. Looking through those listings, the majority of the listings are in the 4124 category.

So this is the best place to list the ticket punch we are using as an example.

Some sellers mistakenly believe listing their items in odd categories will get them higher bids. While this may happen occasionally, what normally happens is the seller gets few bids losing out on additional profits.

The highest prices come from getting your auction seen by the largest number of potential bidders. Putting your item in the best category is the easiest way to insure bidders see your item. Searching by category is the way the majority of eBay shoppers look for items. Putting your item in the wrong category hides it from potential bidders.

The second way bidders find items on eBay is by searching for specific items. This is usually done when people want specific brands or models of items or know exactly what they want.

In our example, there is no clearly defined category for railroad ticket punches. Collectors of these punches probably search for punches like we just did. In order to make sure your item is found during these searches, you must use keywords.

A keyword is the word or phrase that describes an item. Because you do not know what words are going to attract the highest number of bidders, you should use a variety of keywords in your descriptions.

While you are looking at sold auctions, look for keywords in auctions with higher selling prices. Just a quick glance through the different auctions found for ticket punches brings a up few: trolley, conductor, bus, Pullman, fare, passenger railroad and others.

Make a list of these keywords that are appropriate to your item. When you write your description you will include these keywords. At this point you should just add them to your notes.

Also while you are looking at sold auctions, examine the bids and prices. You can see the bid amounts by clicking on the [## bids](#) in the top section of the auction. The link is above the Selling Price and under the Start Time

The line looks like this:

Bid history: [## bids](#)

When you click on the [## bids](#) link, you will get a page with all the bids listed. The bid history will help you determine if your item is worth listing. The history will also help you determine a value for your item.

As a rule, I try to avoid listing items worth less than 30 dollars. I concentrate on the more valuable items because the bidders will factor the shipping cost into their bids.

This is not a hard and fast rule because it only takes a few minutes to list something on eBay. Maybe a better way to describe my rule is I do not list low priced items with high postage costs.

Remember, seeing similar items with no bids and low opening prices does not necessarily mean your item is not worth listing. After you have read this book, your listings will be better than other listings. Bidders will feel comfortable bidding on your items, and you will get higher prices than the majority of eBay sellers.

However, some items are never worth listing. For example, I have hundreds of pieces of costume jewelry. A quick search for costume jewelry reveals 52,200 items listed on eBay within the main categories. That's almost 8,000 new listings a day! Over 90 percent of the listings end with no bids.

This is not because there is no market for costume jewelry on eBay. After all, if someone will buy a broken Mr. Coffee machine, there will be bidders for costume jewelry. The problem is there are too many listings to get yours to stand out. With almost eight thousand items a day, yours will get lost.

Note: the only costume jewelry worth listing are items with designer names on them, and seasonal items listed during the season like Christmas or Halloween pins.

Back to the bid history. While you are looking at the bid history, check out the number of bidders. The example I am looking at has eight bids and only two bidders. One bidder submitted 7 bids in order to beat the other bidder.

When you get an auction with a few bidders bidding repeatedly, the price is not a good indication of the value of the item. In these situations, the bidders engaged in a bidding war and probably overbid. You can check this by looking at other auctions for similar items.

You want to get your bidders to fight over your items. It won't happen on all your listings, but it will happen. Later when we cover writing your description you will learn a few ways to increase the chance of starting a bidding war.

There is an article on my website about bid sniping programs that explains bidding wars. Read the article at:

<http://news.iwantcollectibles.com/ebay-snipe-review.shtml>

Now that you have looked at an auctions for similar items, you should be able to answer these questions:

1. Is this item worth listing?
2. What is the best category to list your item?
3. What are the keywords you need to use in your description?
4. What is the estimated value of your item?

Doing this research only takes a few minutes. If you specialize in a specific type of item, after a while you will not have to do much research. You will know the answers to these questions based on your past sales.

I sell toy trains and railroad memorabilia. I have all the different categories on a list I made up. After selling tens of thousands of items, I know what sells and what doesn't. As you gain experience you will also learn what sells.

If you specialize you should look at the auctions within your interest on a frequent basis. I spend about 3 hours a week looking at the other auctions on eBay.

This is a great way to learn what sells, and also to make some money. You see, you will undoubtedly find items others have listed poorly. You will be able to buy these poorly listed items and resell them for a profit.

Buying items for resale on eBay is called eBay arbitrage. Here's an online newsletter article about [eBay Arbitrage](#).

The big reason you should be watching similar items on eBay is to track trends. When you watch categories, you will see items with unusual demand. You will be able to capitalize on these demand bubbles by quickly listing your items.

Now that you know your item is worth spending the time to list on eBay, you need to create your photos. You have to have your photos ready when you write your description so you can include them in your listing.

Because I want to follow the eBay listing steps in this guide book, instructions for creating your photos are in a later chapter. If you are reading this book while you are creating a listing, [Jump to Creating Your Photos](#) (that's a link.), then come back to this section and continue reading.

Note: For the next few pages we will discuss only auction style listings. With an auction style listing, buyers bid against each other to determine the selling price.

EBay has a second type of listing called a Fixed Price Listing where the price is set by the seller and there is no bidding. We'll discuss fixed price listings, and compare them to auction listings, in a later chapter.

Planning Your Auction

After your research is completed you will know these things:

1. What category or categories to list your item in.
2. If your item is worth listing. In other words if there is a demand for your item.
3. The approximate value of your item.
4. A list of relevant keywords for use in your description.
5. How many pictures you need to showcase your item in the best way.

Now that you know these items, you need to plan your description before writing it. When you create your auction listing on eBay you will need the answers to the following questions:

- What is the opening bid?
- Will you use a reserve?
- Will you offer Buy It Now as an option?
- How long will your auction run?
- When will the auction end?
- Are listing upgrades (like bold, gallery and featured.) appropriate to this item?
- How much will shipping cost the buyer?
- Will you ship internationally?
- What type of payments will you accept?
- Your return policy.

Determining The Opening Bid Amount (rewritten in 2018)

I used to recommend low opening bids. This was based on the fact that if an item was listed in the correct category with the correct keywords it would sell for at least the wholesale value because dealers would see it and bid. This is no longer true.

Ebay has become so cluttered and with the replacement of the category format in 2015 with the catalog format, there is no way to be sure your items will be seen. Today, you have to start your auctions at a opening bid price high enough that you won't be resentful if the item only gets one bid.

Now, I start most of my auctions at 60-100 percent of the expected selling price. Many auctions end with no bids and I relist them until they sell.

I start with a lower percentage if I'm listing a lot of similar items and can get some cross traffic between my listings. Higher percentages are used with really nice items that aren't similar to my other listings.

On items that I just want gone, or I know there is a hot market I list with low opening bids.

Some pricing examples

Before 2014, I almost never used an opening bid above a few dollars. Today I use higher opening bids on expensive thinly traded items, on some items in fantastic condition, and on items with large swings of realized prices.

Thinly traded items are rarely seen on eBay, and might be missed by searchers. An example is a harder to find item that might get overlooked because the categories are clogged with similar yet cheaper items. I'll start these at about 90% of the amount I expect to get for them.

Condition is a big price determinant. Some of the common Lionel trains from the 1950s will bring 5-10 times as much if they look brand new and have all the original packaging. For a car that would be \$10 in good used shape, but might sell for \$50-100 in mint condition, I start the bidding in the \$20-30 range.

If I started the listing at \$100, the car might not sell for months. By starting it at \$30, I'll get a few bids, and other searchers will see the bids and then look at the auction. Here I am trying to create a bidding war that results in extra profits.

With more expensive items in fantastic condition I'll just list them with an opening bid close to what I want for the item. For example, I recently sold a 1948 Lionel loco for the opening bid of \$799. Used examples of this loco are really common on eBay and sell for \$150-225. Here I didn't want to let the loco go for less than \$800, and used a higher opening bid to put a floor on the price.

The last exception is for common items with large price swings. An example is toy train track. A circle of LGB track will sell for \$20-50 on eBay. I start it at \$40 so it doesn't sell for less. With the \$40 opening bid, I sometimes get more than one bidder so I can do second chance offers to get rid of additional lots of track. More on second chance offers later.

A Note About Price Guides

Many sellers look in price guides to determine the value of their items. Price guides are not relevant. Some are compiled based on results at large auction houses. Some are compiled based on questionnaires sent to dealers. And some are compiled based on asking prices seen at shows and in advertisements.

None of these methods is comparable to eBay. eBay is a fantastic pricing resource. Because of the huge number of buyers and listings, you can actually get a reliable estimate of the value of almost anything.

Ebay has introduced visible liquidity to the antiques and collectibles marketplace. You can compare eBay to a stock exchange.

On a stock exchange all the trading is done openly, and is visible to all buyers and sellers. When you look in a newspaper to find out what a stock is worth you get a really accurate value. The same holds true on eBay. Ebay is a transparent exchange for antiques and collectibles just like NASDAQ is for stocks.

I do not recommend using price guides for anything more than spotting variations. That is all I use them for - to find out if my items are unusual versions that might bring a premium.

Opening bids and fees.

Years ago eBay charged insertion fees based on the opening bid or reserve price. eBay now has a simplified fee structure. For sellers without a store the first 50 listings are free, each additional listing is 30 cents. You also get 20 free listings in the collectibles category. Second categories and listing options are extra.

If your item sells, eBay will credit the insertion fee if they collected one. This is only done on the first category, and they do not credit for listing upgrades.

Right now I'll assume you don't have an eBay store. Having a store may save you money because the final value fees are lower for store operators in some cases. There's a chapter coming up about the advantages and disadvantages of having an eBay store.

You can check the fees on eBay at the link below:

<http://pages.ebay.com/help/sell/fees.html>

You should bookmark the link above so you can refer to the fees while listing items.

Deciding On A Reserve Price

You can set a reserve price on your auctions.

Here is the current (August 2015) reserve pricing schedule:

Reserve Price	Reserve Price Auction Fee
\$0.01 - \$74.99	\$3.00
\$75.00 and up	4% of Reserve Price (Maximum charge \$100)

In June of 2015, eBay added a \$1.00 additional fee to the reserve prices in the table above for auctions with 1 and 3 day durations.

I rarely use reserves and you shouldn't either. There are four reasons for not using a reserve.

1. Reserve auctions decrease the number of bids, and lower the potential for bidding wars.
2. Reserves telegraph pricing information.
3. I trust my ability to list items correctly and the size of the eBay marketplace to bid my items up to their actual values. At \$450 dollars, the reserve fee is

\$18.00. This means the listing will cost you \$18.30. The reserve fee used to be refunded if the reserve was met, but this is no longer true.

4. Listing rarities at a fixed price rather than an auction with the best offer option is cheaper than listing with a reserve.

Using a reserve price when it is not needed will cost you more money. Reserves are not needed if there is a demand for your item. It will be bid up to its value.

The second reason for not using a reserve is because reserves decrease the number of bidders. You will still get some of the entertainment bidders because they will bid on anything, but serious bidders will not get a sense of ownership.

You want to make the bidder feel like he will win your item at any bid amount. This way when he is outbid he feels a sense of loss. This sense of loss will cause many bidders to return and up their bids after they are outbid.

Bidding wars happen because people want to recapture the feeling of ownership. The email from eBay telling the bidder he has been outbid creates a motivation for increased bidding. Ebay does not send “you have been outbid” emails to high bidders when the reserve is not met.

Because reserves lower the chances of bidding wars, I almost never use them in my auctions. We will discuss situations where a reserve is appropriate in a few minutes.

Unrealistic reserves harm you two ways. The first way you are harmed is by failing to sell your item. If you do not sell your item, you will need to relist it, or sell it in another venue.

I have seen sellers relist items dozens of times when they failed to meet reserves. In one example, I watched a man list an item 18 times over the course of a year. He wanted \$125 for an item I thought was worth \$75. In fact, I offered him \$75 dollars cash for it when he bought it.

He refused my offer, and then listed the item on eBay with a 125 dollar reserve. It was bid to 90 dollars. He relisted it and it was bid up to 70 dollars. He listed this item 18 times. and it consistently closed at prices between 65 and 90 dollars.

Finally he gave up and decided to keep the item. Let’s do some math. He listed the item with a \$125 dollar reserve. From the reserve fees table this means it cost him \$2.00 for the reserve fee. Plus the 30 cent listing fee. (Old example – fees much higher now!)

He listed the item 18 times which means he spent \$2.30 X 18 in eBay fees. That's \$41.40 in listing fees trying to sell an item worth between 65 and 90 dollars.

Obviously, he lost money. This is an extreme example, but not uncommon. When I wrote this section in 2006, I'd been seeing the same group of overpriced trains on eBay every week for years. The sellers just relist their auctions when they fail to sell. Now many of those listings have been converted to fixed price listings. I'll explain the fixed price trap in a later section.

This is just insanity. It is throwing away money in order to meet some irrationally determined value estimate.

The second way unrealistic reserves can cost you money is by telegraphing incorrect pricing information to bidders. Basically, you are telling potential bidders what you think the item is worth.

Here's an example - say you have an item worth 250 dollars. If you set a reserve price of 100 dollars on your item, as soon as the reserve is met it says [reserve met](#) under the bid amount in the auction listing.

It looks like this:

Current bid:	US \$100.00
	(Reserve met)

When a potential bidder sees [reserve met](#) under the current bid amount, it tells him you think the item is worth \$100 or less. If your item is really worth \$250, bidders will try to figure out why you are willing to accept only \$100 for it.

When you are selling on eBay, you do not want to add to the level of uncertainty in the buyer's mind. The buyer is already taking a risk he will not get his item, or it will not be as described. When you add uncertainty, you lose potential bidders.

As we have just seen using a reserve can cost you money. Either you will get less for your item or it will not sell. Sometime items blow right through the seller's reserve and sell for much more. In these cases it is just a waste of the seller's money on additional listing fees.

However, there are cases when a reserve can be used, but I prefer just using a higher opening bid as I explained earlier.

Reserves are appropriate when you have items without established sales histories, AND when the item is valuable.

That's important. Using a reserve on an item worth \$20 dollars is never appropriate.

Here's an example of when you should use a reserve. I buy and sell toy trains. There are odd variations of some trains that are only sought by experienced collectors.

For example, the first versions of Lionel's train stations made in 1920 have a different window arrangement. Some collectors will pay a significant premium for these high window stations, but most collectors don't care.

When I list one of these high window stations on eBay, I use a reserve because there is not a big enough pool of bidders who place the premium value on the station to get the premium in a regular auction. If I did not use a reserve the station would sell for slightly more a regular station. Probably 5-10 dollars more.

By using a reserve price, I can force the one individual who does place a premium value on the variation to pay the premium. This makes sense because a regular station is worth about \$150, while the high window version will bring 400 to 800 dollars. This increased value and thin market require a reserve to get the highest selling price every time.

Remember the example of the man who listed the same item over and over again 18 times? The item he had – a toy trolley from the 1970s - is common and frequently sells on eBay. There is nothing special about his trolley, and anyone who wants one will see one listed on eBay every six to eight weeks.

Remember, we are talking about collectibles. These are mass produced items that are usually quite common. The value is what someone will pay for an item. Not what it is appraised at or what a book says it is worth, or what someone else is asking. The value of a collectible is determined solely by what it sells for in an exchange between a knowledgeable buyer and seller.

When I originally wrote the section above, the option of listing as a fixed price with best offer wasn't available. Then when the fixed price option was introduced, the final value fees were cheaper for auctions so I continued to list these items with a reserve.

Now, the insertion fees and final value fees for fixed price and auctions are the same. This means listing a thinly traded item with a fixed price and the best offer option is a better way to sell items on eBay.

For example, I recently bought a pile of expensive train sets. Before I would have listed them with reserves in the \$3-500 range because there isn't enough demand for these sets. Instead I listed them with fixed prices in the \$350-700 range and have been accepting offers. I've been selling one set a month and getting the higher prices.

After 3 months, I lowered the prices on the sets I hadn't sold. When doing these listings, you can also run them as an auction with a higher opening bid. Sometimes converting a fixed price listing to an auction with the same price will result in a sale.

One note here. It's easy to get caught up in the fixed price trap. Sellers list items with a fixed price and good til cancelled listing length and then end up with the items going round and round incurring listing fees for years. I evaluate all my fixed price listings and lower the prices so they'll sell after 3 months of exposure.

Online Article on [The Fixed Price Trap](#)

This book is distributed on the honor system.
You get to read the book and then pay for it.
Even better, you decide what you want to pay.
[Use this link to pay.](#)

Is Buy It Now A Good Idea?

When you list on eBay you can select an option called Buy It Now (BIN). Buy It Now allows a bidder to purchase the item immediately rather than bidding against other buyers. The buy it now option remains in the listing until the bid amount reaches 40-60% of the BIN amount.

Don't confuse Buy It Now with Fixed Price listings. Fixed Price listings don't allow bidding and are covered in a separate chapter.

Buy It Now is usually not appropriate when you are listing collectibles. Using the Buy It Now option telegraphs the value you place on an item just as a reserve price does.

Many sellers who use Buy It Now are hoping someone will get excited and decide to buy their item immediately. This is like gambling. It is also a bit unethical. I am running a business. I am not interested in gambling or taking advantage of easily excitable buyers. I want buyers to come back and buy from me over and over again.

Another reason you should not use the Buy It Now option is you might set the price too low. I love sellers who underestimate the value of their items and offer the Buy It Now option. In fact, I have searches set up so I can easily look at everything offered with Buy It Now, and check the new listings a few times a day.

I frequently buy items at great prices from sellers using Buy It Now. I also frequently miss items other buyers have snatched up before me. This proves using Buy It Now is a bad idea. I will explain how to do these searches in the section on eBay arbitrage in the second half of this manual.

One note about using Buy It Now: If you are doing multiple item listings for products you have quantities of, this is the option to use. For example, I used to sell screen savers on eBay. I sold them for \$7.97 each and listed a few dozen in each auction. This is different than an auction where you want to get the maximum price for a single item.

Multiple item listings or fixed price listings are designed to sell quantities of products in a fast and efficient manner.

How Long Should Your Auction Run?

Ebay offers five different auction lengths. These are one day, three days, five days, seven days and ten days.

In order to decide on the best auction length for your item, a short explanation of how people search on eBay is needed.

We mentioned earlier that people search for items by looking through the appropriate category or by searching for keywords. The searcher can view search results and category listings in different ways.

Ways a viewer can sort search results:

- Time: Ending soonest.
- Time: Newly listed.
- Price + Shipping: lowest first
- Price + Shipping: highest first.
- Price: highest first.
- Distance: Nearest first.
- Payment: PayPal only.
- Category.
- Best match

Best match is the default sort. EBay doesn't explain how best match sorts are done, but based on observation we can guess.

Best match is basically items ending soonest with fixed price and buy it now listings from PowerSellers with good histories of customer satisfaction mixed in randomly regardless of when they end. EBay also moves listings by sellers with poor customer satisfaction ratings downward in the listings if the auction ends in more than 12 hours.

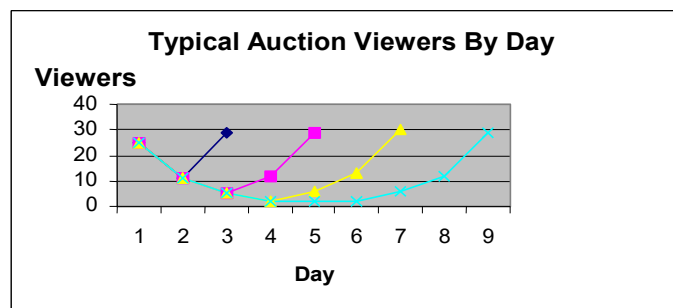
There is a longer more involved explanation of how best match works on the website at:

<http://www.news.iwantcollectibles.com/ebay-best-match.shtml>

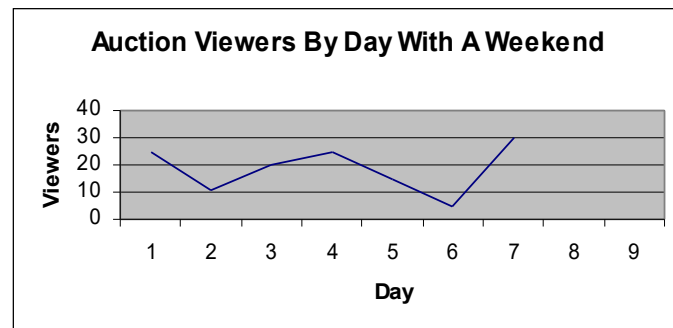
The first two sort methods are important considerations when choosing the length of your auctions. If you are listing items with many similar competing auctions, you need to be seen in the results pages.

Your listing is only likely to be seen on the day it starts and the day it ends. The days in between are needed to get exposure to people who search in other ways or are infrequent eBay browsers, but the first and last day are when the majority of viewers will see your auctions.

You can test this by putting a counter in your auctions and writing down the results every day. You can see this in the **U** shaped lines in the graph below.



The graph above ignores weekend traffic to keep it simpler. A graph of a 7 day auction started on Wednesday night looks like the one below.



This graph looks like a **W** and the bump in the middle of the graph represents auction viewers on Saturday and Sunday. By considering these two graphs you can see the best results come from running auctions through a weekend.

One day and three day listings are too short to get maximum exposure. At the same time ten day auctions are too long. During a ten day auction there is too much time for a potential bidder to have second thoughts or find other items to occupy his attention.

So the only listing durations left to consider are five and seven day listings. I haven't seen much difference in results between five and seven day auctions. Personally, I use five day auctions because it allows me to move items through in a logical manner.

I start my auctions on Wednesday so they end on Monday. Then I pack everything up on Tuesday to make room for the items I will list the next day.

My friends who run full time eBay businesses use seven day auctions. They work five days a week and every day a set of auctions ends. The next day the ended auctions are packed so a second set of auctions can be started. This system allows them to move large quantities of items through their businesses in an efficient manner.

If you are just going to sell a few items a week use five day auctions that run through a weekend. Always run your auctions through a weekend.

Some sellers claim they get higher prices by timing their auctions so they end on Saturdays. They believe the higher numbers of weekend searchers increase bid amounts. This may have been true a few years ago, but today with the majority of serious buyers using bid sniping tactics, it is no longer important.

For the same reason, the time of day is not important. I always end my auctions between 5 PM and 6 PM eBay time. I only do this because I write listings during the day and then upload them when I'm done.

The only important consideration is setting up a system that works for you. By having my auctions end at night, I can deal with the packing and getting invoices out the first thing the following morning.

Many sellers spend a lot of time trying to figure out what day and time to have their auctions end. While it is productive to develop a schedule and stick to it, getting high quality pictures and writing a compelling description are more valuable uses of your time.

Using Listing Upgrades To Increase Your Item's Visibility

EBay offers listing upgrades designed to help you draw attention to your listing. These upgrades cost additional money and are optional. Some of them will result in higher sales prices, others are just a waste of your money.

Remember, we are talking about selling used items -- especially antiques and collectibles.

You should always test the appropriateness of these options for yourself. Run auctions with, and without, these upgrades and keep track of your sales to make sure they produce extra income for you.

WARNING: Watch when you use these options. It is easy to select them for one auction and then end up using them in other auctions by mistake. Always confirm your listing options before starting your auctions.

The biggest area eBay sellers over pay on fees are by using listing upgrades that do not increase selling amounts enough to cover the extra cost.

When I first wrote this report eBay offered Home Page Featured and Featured Plus options to allow sellers to buy better positions in category and on the home page.

These options were dropped in 2008, and replaced with Featured First. Featured First allowed a seller to get higher positioning, but was not guaranteed. Featured First was dropped as an option some time later leaving sellers no way to get their items added exposure.

Because you cannot purchase better positioning, the only way to improve the visibility of your listings is by maintaining high Detailed Seller Ratings (DSR) and high sell through rates.

High sell through rates are based only on your asking fixed price, opening bid, or on your reserve amount, you can try lowering these amounts, but I'd just ignore that factor and list more items with no reserve. Here's an article about Detailed Seller Ratings:

<http://www.news.iwantcollectibles.com/ebay-detailed-seller-ratings2.shtml>

Here's a list of the upgrades available and information about when to use each option:

Reserve Fees are either \$3.00 or 4% of the reserve price up to \$100 maximum fee whichever is higher. I only recommend using reserves for thinly traded items where you might not get enough bidding to push the price upwards.

In many cases today rather than use a reserve, I'll list thinly traded items with an opening bid around 80 percent of the value I want for the item, or just list them with a fixed price of about 120% of my expected selling price and allow offers.

Buy It Now is free for all auction listings. I only recommend using Buy It Now with reserve auctions. For example an auction with an opening bid of 99 cents, a reserve of \$250, and a BIN of \$275. In this case the BIN gives pricing information to bidders and improves the chances of meeting the reserve.

The Gallery is a way of showcasing your item with a picture next to the listing or allowing people to search for items with pictures. This is free and is REQUIRED. If you use eBay photo hosting, gallery is automatic. If you host your own images, you need to insert the URL of an image into the first image field. If you have regular repeat buyers using a recognizable background in the gallery image will allow your buyers to spot your listings more easily.

Gallery Plus makes the gallery image expand when hovered over. If you use eBay photo hosting, Gallery Plus will allow users to see all your images in a larger size in the search results or category. This costs an extra 35 cents or a dollar depending on the listing type. It's ALWAYS a waste of money.

Listing Designer is not worth using. If you have to have a fancy listing you can buy a template or create your own in a few minutes. Using a template does not increase your bids unless you are very active in one category and have lots of regular repeat buyers.

Subtitle costs 50 cents or \$1.50 depending on listing length, and is often used incorrectly. The subtitle is considered part of the description by the eBay search system and ignored unless the searcher has checked the search descriptions box. This means it's not a good place to stuff keywords. The few times it makes sense to use subtitles are discussed elsewhere in this report.

Bold is a way to make your auction title stand out from the other listings in search results and category lists. It costs \$2.00-4.00. Bold is never worth using for cheaper single item listings. If you are selling multiple items with fixed price listings in a competitive market, Bold may result in more sales.

Scheduled Listings are now free, and are aren't worth using unless you are planning on returning from a vacation and want some listings to go active just before you get back. Timing auctions is a waste of effort and money. I know a lot of sellers swear ending an auction on a specific day or at a specific time increases bids, but it doesn't. Spend your time improving your skills rather than jumping on the statistically challenged bandwagon.

Listing In 2 Categories doubles your insertion and upgrade fees. Note: if you are NOT an eBay store user the first 20 auction listings are free for the first category, but you'll be charged for the second category. Adding a second category makes sense if the item you are selling is attractive to people browsing in different categories. If you are listing an item people search for based on keywords, this option won't help you.

International Site Visibility shows your item on the eBay.uk website in addition to the ebay.com site. This option costs 10-50 cents. This option is not available for all items, but is worth doing if your items are interesting to European bidders. Use this if there is a high likelihood a UK buyer would buy your item anyway.

One note about International Visibility. EBay recently lost a lawsuit in France over fake merchandise sold on the eBay.fr website. Because of this when you list an item with a brand name in the title eBay using International Visibility eBay will tell you to verify you're complying with foreign laws. There is no way to check off that you've done this so just back up and try relisting again until eBay allows the listing to start.

Value Pack combines Gallery Plus, Subtitle, and Listing Designer for 65 cents. I don't recommend using Gallery Plus or Listing Designer so you'd be better off just spending 50 cents for the subtitle than using this option.

Combining Options. You can combine any or all of these options to improve your sales. You should test each option separately to determine which option results in the most cost effective boost to your selling prices.

One last note: It is very easy to set some listing upgrades as defaults. Subtitle seems to be the most common default error. Make sure you pay attention to your listings, preview them and check your fees before you list so you don't end up using listing upgrades because you checked a box by mistake.

Determining Shipping Costs

It is important to include the shipping costs in your auction description. There are two reasons for including the shipping costs.

Telling potential bidders exactly what the cost will be increases their trust in you.

It makes notifying the high bidders after the auction ends easier.

Including the shipping costs in your listings removes the potential for surprises. For example, I just bought an envelope from a woman, and she is charging me \$7.00 shipping. She can put the envelope in a free priority mail flat rate envelope and mail it to me for \$3.85. (Note: These shipping prices reflect 2004 postal rates. Today's rates are higher, but the example is still relevant.)

The other \$3.15 is her making an additional profit on a \$4.00 sale. I will never buy from her again, and if the item is not as described, I will leave her a negative feedback.

I haven't even gotten the item yet, and I have lost the sense of satisfaction at getting something neat for my collection. I already have buyers remorse.

If she would have said the shipping will be \$7.00, I might have bid anyway. And I would have less reason to feel gouged.

Note: Since I wrote the above paragraph the package came in. The woman sent me the envelope by first class mail for 78 cents postage. This means she charged me \$6.22 to put an envelope inside another envelope and mail it.

This raises an important point. The envelope came in with a meter strip showing the amount of postage. There is too big a difference between \$7.00 and 78 cents. You want to keep the spread between what you charge for shipping and handling and the amount shown on the package small. You should be making your profit by selling items not on your shipping.

Telling potential bidders the exact shipping amount they will pay helps keep buyers happy. Happy buyers become repeat buyers.

Charging fair shipping prices became even more important in 2008 when eBay began having buyers rate sellers on different factors. These are called Detailed Seller Ratings and are explained in the section on feedback.

When I started selling on eBay any package under five pounds sent anywhere by Priority mail cost the same amount by weight. A four pound package was always \$6.50, a one pound package was always 3.20. It was easy to figure postage for any small package.

Today any package over a pound has different costs based on zones. This means a four pound package costs more to ship the farther it travels.

I live in Arizona and charge my buyers what it costs to send a package to Ohio. Buyers on the west coast end up subsidizing buyers on the east coast. On average, I collect slightly less than the true cost of shipping every month. I lose a few dollars.

But, I more than make this up with higher bids because buyers can factor the shipping into their bid amounts, and because it makes it really easy for me to send out the end of auction notices.

I have clients who charge a flat rate for everything they sell. One charges ten dollars for any package he ships. Another charges \$8.00. Both of them lose money on shipping and make it up on increased prices.

You can buy a scale at any office supply store for about fifty dollars that will weigh packages accurately.

I set my scale at 16 ounces and weigh items before they are packed. Then I look at a chart to determine the shipping cost for the item. The extra 16 ounces is about what the box and packing materials will weigh. When you decide on a shipping price, don't neglect to add in the cost of labels and the 12-13% combined eBay/PayPal fees you'll pay on the shipping portion of the sale.

I charge people in these increments:

\$5.57	\$12.47
\$6.18	\$15.86
\$8.47	\$17.51
\$10.77	\$20.00

Note that all the amounts above are odd numbers with the exception of the \$20. I started using these odd numbers a few years ago when eBay introduced Detailed Seller Ratings. I was losing money on the postage, yet had people giving me low ratings for shipping costs.

Using odd numbers makes people think the shipping cost was calculated. They seem to pay less attention to it, and then give me higher ratings.

When I have an especially heavy item I tell potential bidders I will pay all shipping costs to US addresses above 20 dollars.

These are the amounts listed in the auction description, and entered into the shipping costs field on the eBay payment and shipping screen.

Letting the buyer know in advance is just plain smart. I know I make more money this way, and I create happy buyers who return time and time again to purchase from me.

If you have many similar items you should also tell bidders you will combine auctions to save them money. State you will give them a price after the auction or – and this is a better option – tell them a flat rate for everything.

I have a client who sells comic books on eBay. He charges a flat shipping fee for any quantity of comic books. He ships the comic books in an envelope inside a Priority Mail Shirt box –USPS #1097, and makes 20 cents profit per shipment.

No one complains about him making 20 cents when they see the fantastic packing job. This is what you want to do when packing your items.

Wow your buyers. I sell all kinds of trains on eBay. Some of it is just junk for parts or repainting. No matter what it is it is always packed as if it is valuable.

Carefully packing your items tells the buyer it is special. Even if it is junk, it is special. After all who would spend the time to carefully pack garbage?

The post office provides free boxes for use when mailing packages by Priority Mail. You can order these online at:

<http://supplies.usps.gov/>

You can also save money on shipping supplies by purchasing them at a wholesaler. I buy 14 cubic feet of Styrofoam peanuts at a local wholesaler for 15 dollars. Office supply stores would charge over fifty dollars for the same quantity.

Everything is cheaper at packaging supply stores. Look in the yellow pages under Packaging Materials.

I wrap everything I sell in clean white newsprint. This costs me 80 cents a pound at the packaging supply house. You can use newspaper, but the ink comes off on your fingers and can damage or soil items. The fresh paper looks better and I think this is worth the small cost because it impresses my buyers.

Packing items really well lowers my complaints, and increases buyer satisfaction. It only takes a few more seconds to pack something fantastically.

Including the shipping cost within your auction description also allows you to send end of auction notices faster. Today, eBay sends end of auction notices with totals if you specify a fixed shipping cost within the listing. Also the eBay checkout system incorporates this data to help your buyers pay you for their purchases.

Ebay also offers a calculated shipping option. This option allows you to specify the weight and handling fees if desired and will calculate shipping based on the bidders zip code.

This is a fairly new feature and many sellers are not using it correctly. Some sellers seem to be including the flat rate shipping cost as a handling cost within this area. Whatever the reason for the errors I have seen too many auctions with exorbitant shipping quotes coming out of the calculator.

If you use the eBay shipping calculator and offer different types of service - say parcel post or priority mail, set the lower shipping cost so it displays first. This is done by entering the lowest cost service before entering the higher cost service.

When someone is looking at your auction listing, you do not want to distract them or surprise them. Because of this, unless you are selling heavy items, you are better off using a flat rate shipping. Keep it simple for your bidders, and you will get higher bids.

With the eBay shipping option, you can print labels for your packages right off your computer and use your paypal account to pay the postage. Don't print the postage amount on the label and buyers won't see the difference between what you charge and what you paid.

With the eBay shipping program I now check postage costs before packing. The newer Priority mail regional boxes are quite cheap and I've also started buying small boxes from Uline to ship items that will weigh under 16 ounces when packed.

Will You Ship Internationally?

Before we go on we also need to discuss International shipping options. Ebay allows you to specify where you will ship your items. The options are:

- Will ship to the United States only.
- Will ship worldwide.
- Will ship to the United States and the following: (check list).
- Will not ship -- local pickup only.

You can select any one of these options. The *Will ship to the United States and the following* option allows you to specify regions where you will ship your items. With this option you can specify you will ship only to the United States and Canada. The other options are self explanatory.

Many sellers do not ship internationally because they do not want to deal with the customs paperwork. If your item weighs less than four pounds you only need to fill out a sticker (USPS Form CN 22) and attach it to your package.

For packages weighing four pounds or more, you need to fill out a larger form (USPS Form 2976-A) that goes into a self adhesive bag placed on your package. Global Express and Global Priority mail have the customs declarations included within the shipping labels.

It only takes a few seconds to fill out any of these declarations forms. If you're using the eBay label service, the customs forms are filled out for you by eBay. The website says you need an 8.5 by 11 inch label, but half of it is a receipt that you don't need so you can save on labels by using the half left over when you printed another label.

Also you need to calculate the shipping to foreign countries. There is an easy to use calculator at:

<http://ircalc.usps.gov/>

About five percent of my sales end up leaving the country. Additionally, many of my auctions end with the second bidder being out of country. Any time an international bidder wins, or comes in second, I make more money because I welcome international bidders.

Some sellers charge a small handling fee for filling out the customs forms, while others do not. Depending on what you are selling, you might be able to charge an additional handling fee for international shipments.

I recommend allowing international bidders because the additional work is small compared to the additional profits resulting from foreign bidders bidding up the prices in your auctions. However, there are three things you need to pay particular attention to in order to protect yourself.

The first of these is Canadian bidders. I used to have problems with Canadians sending personal checks drawn on Canadian banks. Some sellers take Canadian checks. Now with PayPal being more widely used this isn't a problem.

I refuse to take any personal checks from bidders outside the US, and require foreign bidders to pay with money orders drawn on US banks or PayPal. While the bank does not always charge a fee for cashing a Canadian check, Canadian checks take a long time to clear. I once had one bounce and come back six weeks after I had deposited it.

I do not want to force someone to wait six weeks while a check clears, and the bank *sometimes* charging me a \$16 dollar fee to deposit a Canadian check makes it hard to tell the buyer how much to pay.

Additionally, I have had problems with the bank crediting the amount as a conversion from Canadian dollars. Depending on the date, a Canadian dollar is worth between 90 cents and \$1.20 of U.S. money.

I do not want to deal with currency conversion rates and bank transaction fees so I require all international buyers to pay with a money order drawn on a US bank or PayPal.

The second consideration you need to watch when selling internationally is fraud. Depending on what you sell, this may not be a large factor for you. I sell used toy trains and have never had a foreign buyer use a stolen credit card or fake cashiers check.

This type of fraud tends to happen more with expensive items like computers and electronics, but you should refuse to ship to foreigners who pay with an unconfirmed PayPal address from a credit card.

This also means not shipping an item to a US address that is not confirmed by PayPal when the buyer is out of the country. I heard horror stories from my students who have shipped items to unconfirmed US addresses only to have

PayPal refund the buyer's money when they couldn't prove the items were delivered to a confirmed address.

Speaking of delivery problems - if your buyer pays with paypal, you must be able to show the item was delivered with an online tracking number. For transactions over \$750 you need signature confirmation. Some countries like Mexico don't offer any form of delivery confirmation. This means a Mexican buyer can claim he didn't get it and eBay will refund his money. I don't ship items worth more than \$50 to any country I can't get confirmation of delivery.

Additionally some countries - like France - only offer delivery confirmation on First class packages and on express mail. This means any package over 4 pounds has to go by the more expensive express mail.

The third thing to watch out for is wire transfers. Some buyers – the Germans like to do this for some reason – will want to pay by wiring money directly from their bank account to yours. I allow Germans to do this, but they have to pay the bank fees. Most of them are now using PayPal so this is less common today.

Where this can be a problem is some rogue countries like Nigeria do not follow international law. That's why they are called rogue countries. The way this scam works is you give the buyer information about your bank account, and they take your money.

Today your buyers can pay with PayPal and buy money orders with credit cards from companies like Western Union so you do not need to allow wire transfers.

Before we go on to the payment selection screen, I want to cover a few notes about international buyers. These will help you avoid problems. Koreans and Japanese use a different character set for sending email.

If you get emails from buyers that are unreadable, contact the buyer through eBay. When you use the eBay contact member screen, eBay converts the email format so the buyer can read it. This happens less frequently today, but if it happens this is a way you can get a message to your buyer.

The second note concerns cash sales. Some buyers - particularly the Japanese and British – like to send cash in the mail. The Japanese will send money that looks like it was dry cleaned and then ironed. The British just wrap cash in a sheet of paper torn out of a full color (maybe I should say colour?) magazine and stuff it in an envelope.

I have never had a problem with money being lost in the mail. (It's always US currency.) But, if you allow this option, be sure to tell your buyers you will not be responsible if the money is lost. Then suggest they send payment by registered mail for their protection.

EBay has a new program for international shipping where you ship your item to an eBay transfer point and then eBay ships it to the buyer. I have heard nothing good about this program. If you're not willing to ship the packages direct to the buyer, don't allow international bidders.

While on the topic of international bidders, there are companies in the US that will bid on items for foreigners and then pay and reship the items. I've shipped to California and Kentucky firms with no problems.

This book is distributed on the honor system.
You get to read the book and then pay for it.
Even better, you decide what you want to pay.
[Use this link to pay.](#)

Selecting Payment Options

Ebay allows you to specify the ways buyers can pay you within your auction. This information appears under the auction description. Many buyers now look at this area to find shipping and payment information so you should fill this out.

This only takes seconds to fill out, and you can make it sticky. Sticky means eBay will save your preferences and put them in all your auctions so you only have to fill this area of the form in once.

In the payment information field you should check off all methods buyers can use to pay you.

The options are:

PayPal.

COD (cash on delivery) - This is used for items that are not shipped but rather picked up by the buyer.

Merchant credit cards.

I will cover PayPal last because it deserves a whole section.

Ebay no longer allows you to specify that you will take checks and money orders, but some buyers will want to pay with them. I like taking checks and money orders because there aren't any fees for dealing with them. When potential bidders ask if you accept checks or money orders, tell them yes and answer the question on the eBay system so others can see your answer.

One note about cashiers checks. Many people think a cashiers check is like a money order. It is not. Payment can be stopped on cashiers checks. Also many banks now offer counter checks in addition to cashiers checks. Counter checks and cashiers checks offer no security.

I always thought a postal money order was like cash but that's not true. In 2016 I had the Post Office refuse to cash a postal money order. The buyer can report it lost or stolen, and make it uncashable. Then he gets his money back 6-8 weeks later.

Another thing to watch out for is counterfeit cashiers checks. These are mostly used by people buying expensive electronics they can then resell. All real cashiers

checks have telephone numbers on them. You can, and should, call the bank to confirm the check is real if you are selling items worth more than \$100.

Now back to payment options.

Merchant credit cards means you have your own credit card account and will process transactions yourself. If you already have a merchant account specify this option. The added level of security this offers your buyers will get you higher bids.

If you are selling more than \$1500 a month on eBay getting your own merchant account may be an option for you. Because most of the readers of this book will use PayPal rather than getting a merchant account, I will not cover this here.

Now we will talk about PayPal. PayPal has become the preferred way to pay for auctions. Buyers want to pay through PayPal and are comfortable with the option. In fact, many look for it.

When you select the PayPal option you also need to fill in the email address for your PayPal account. PayPal charges fees for all payments. Currently all eBay sellers must accept PayPal.

Remember, when you are selling on eBay, you are competing for the attention - and dollars - of bidders against other sellers. Using a better title, better keywords, and better pictures makes you stand out. Offering multiple payment options will also give buyers an additional reason to bid on your item instead of your competitors.

While we are on the subject of standing out, the easiest way to stand out is with a return policy. This brings us to the next eBay listing screen - Payment Instructions & Return Policy.

Specifying Payment Instructions And Your Return Policy

The payment instructions box is a sticky box. That means you fill it in once and it remains the same for your future auctions unless you change it.

Mine says something like this - "I ship most weekdays. Pay by 8AM eBay time and your item should go out the same day."

Ebay wants you to also include your return policy.. Offering return privileges may increase your sales prices. When you are first starting to sell on eBay you should offer a guarantee and explain it within your listing.

When I first started selling on eBay I took any item back and refunded the shipping cost both ways if it was my error.

By 2010, eBay inserted itself between me and my buyers and started forcing me to take things back because the buyer had changed his mind, I changed my policy to no returns, but did take returns when I'd made an error.

In 2011, buyers started opening disputes with eBay claiming the item was not as described. These are almost impossible to win, and eBay will take the return shipping out of your paypal account if you don't accept the return and eBay finds in the buyer's favor.

I sell items that are broken for people to repair. Recently I got one back because the buyer decided he couldn't fix it. He didn't open a dispute, but I listed the item as running poorly so all he has to do is say it doesn't run and he wins. By telling him to send it back before he opens an eBay dispute, I save the return shipping.

Because ebay will give me a discount on final value fees for offering a return, and the fact that they will force me to take the item back if there is a dispute, I now offer returns on almost everything I sell.

The good news is just dealing with complaints as they come in will stop almost all problems

The majority of buyers won't be a problem, and when a buyer has a valid complaint I do refund his money. If I made a mistake I even refund shipping both ways.

I know some sellers who offer a no questions asked guarantee. They tell people if they are unhappy for any reason, just send the item back for a full refund. They also have buyers damaging items. This just sucks.

I think these are passive-aggressive buyers who are afraid they will not get a refund if they say they changed their minds. So instead of admitting the truth, they damage the item and then claim it was misrepresented.

I sell only used items, and I do make mistakes. I take responsibility for my mistakes, and make it right. But, I do not want to deal with the examiners who buy items just to examine them.

If you are just starting out and have fewer than 500 feedbacks (We will talk about feedback later.), you should offer a guarantee. You need the guarantee to instill an added measure of confidence in you.

I will talk more about guarantees in the section on handling buyer complaints, but before I move on one very important note about offering guarantees.

If you offer a guarantee, you must politely refund buyers money. I bought my dad a train years ago for his birthday. I actually bought it from a friend of his on eBay.

When it came in it was broken. In fact it was broken and then poorly repaired. I sent the seller a polite note telling him the item was not as listed and I would be returning it for a refund. The seller sent me a form email accusing me of damaging the item so I could send it back.

He lost a customer. He did refund my money - including shipping both ways – but I am still upset about being accused of damaging the item. I will never buy anything from him again, and whenever I see something he is offering on eBay I close the listing as soon as I see he is the seller.

I had bought thousands of dollars worth of trains from this man, and with one accusatory email, he lost my business forever. I have buyers who have returned items because I made a mistake who have gone on to become regular repeat customers.

So always be polite in your exchanges with buyers. And honor your guarantee without be accusatory. If you cannot be polite and take responsibility for your mistakes, do not offer a return.

Now that you have the basis for all your listings decided, you only need to take photos for your auctions and write the descriptions. We will cover photos now because you need to have them ready when you write your description.

I take my photos while I write my descriptions. This way I only have to handle each item once.

Using Photos In Your Auctions

The keys to getting a good picture are having a good camera and having good lights. When I first started taking pictures for my auctions, I had a video camera and I bought a converter box called a Snappy. I plugged the video camera into the Snappy, then plugged that into the computer. I had the camera on a tripod aimed at a white sheet draped over my couch. It took me 5 to 8 minutes to take each picture. And then I would get the pictures into the computer and they looked terrible.

I had an old computer that wouldn't handle anything else, and digital cameras cost \$700 or more back then.

Later, I bought one of those little golf ball sized web cams. I was visiting a webmaster who had one on his desk. He took a few pictures of my keys in a room with no special lighting. I could see the hair on the back of my hand. I could see my keys and could see where the one said GM with the little code numbers on it and I decided I had to have a web cam.

I bought a 200 dollar web cam. The camera plugged into the USB port on the computer, so I went out and bought a new computer with a USB port.

Today you can get a web cam for 15-25 dollars that will do everything the \$200 one did for me. All computers made after 1998 have USB ports so you probably already have the ability to use a web cam.

The web cam is a good option, but will not create fantastic pictures. In order to get the highest prices in your auctions, you need high quality fast loading pictures. A digital camera is the best way to go.

I treat my digital camera as a disposable tool. Most last about 2 years. I buy a camera in the 80-120 range with removable memory and replacable or rechargeable batteries. Currently I'm using a Canon Powershot. I've had Nikon Coolpix and Fujifilm cameras and been happy with them.

In addition to a digital camera, you will need photo editing software and a FTP program. We will cover these programs later.

Taking Quality Pictures

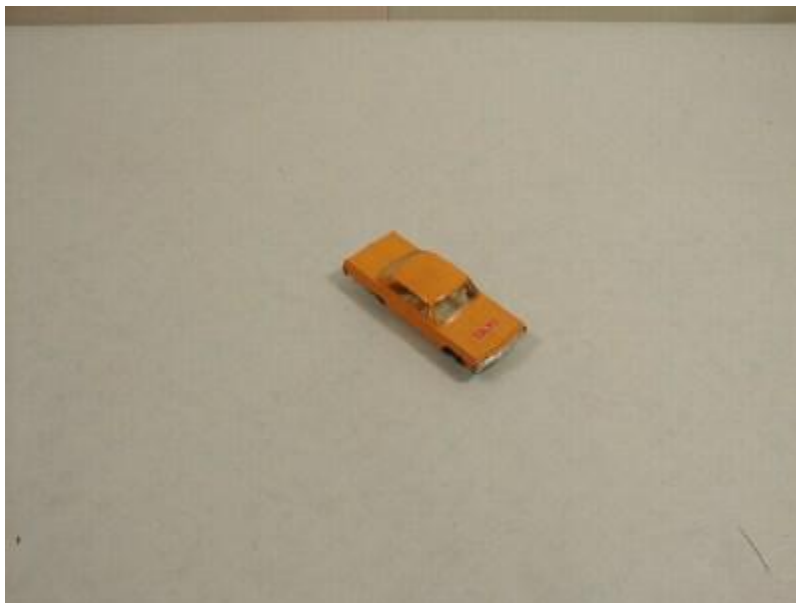
In order to take high quality pictures, you will need to learn to use your camera and become familiar with its features and limitations. Because each camera is different, I cannot tell you how to use your camera. Therefore, the best way to learn about your camera is to practice. Read the manual and experiment with all your camera's features.

Take lots of pictures with different settings to learn your camera's capabilities. You don't have to pay for film so take pictures with every possible setting until you find the best ones for you. As you practice with your camera you will learn to take better quality photos.

However, I will cover a few specifics applicable to all cameras. If you are going to buy a camera make sure you get these features – Today most cameras selling for over \$80 have these features.

One very important thing about your camera is the Macro setting. The Macro setting is used for taking close ups. Read your camera manual to find out how to turn the macro setting on and practice with it.

Only use the Macro setting for taking pictures of objects within two feet of the lens. I use the macro setting to take the big clear pictures in my auctions. Look at this picture of a Matchbox car from 1967. This car is almost three inches long. This is what many sellers use in their auctions.



Here's a picture of the same car taken with the macro setting on my camera and cropped a bit. Normally I would use a picture slightly wider in my auctions, but I have squeezed the picture down a bit so it fits on this page.



Which one of these pictures will get higher bids? Granted the car is not very clean and this can be seen in the second picture, but the second picture shows the bidder exactly what he will get. The bidder can see all the flaws and dirt on the car in the picture.

Big clear pictures give buyers higher confidence and result in higher bids. Always. Better pictures mean higher prices.

One comment about picture size. There are two measurements of size. Pixels measure the actual dimensions. The top picture of the taxi is 400 pixels wide by 300 pixels high. The second close up picture is 496 by 270.

You should never use a picture larger than 1200 pixels wide. This is because most monitors will only display 1200 pixels horizontally. You do not want to make your bidders scroll back and forth to see what you are offering.

The second way of measuring picture size is the storage or file size. This is expressed in KB for Kilobytes. The upper picture is 12 KB. The lower picture is 18 KB.

The storage size is extremely important because larger sized pictures take longer to download with dial up modems. You should never use a picture larger than 100

KB in your auctions. This is because it will take too long for your image to download.

Making shoppers wait for your image to load will cause many to just move on to other listings. Later, in the dealing with images on your computer chapter, we will go over how you make sure your images fit between the optimal ranges of 20 to 60 KB file size, and 700 to 1000 pixels wide.

Huge image file sizes are created because many new sellers use the highest quality setting on their camera thinking it is the way to get a great picture.

This is not true. A computer monitor only shows 72 dots per inch (DPI). The larger high resolution settings on your camera will record pictures with up to 1200 dots per inch. Some super mega pixel cameras will record at even higher DPI.

Any setting over 72 DPI does not have an effect on what your bidders see. The monitor will not display the extra dots. These larger DPI settings are for printing not displaying images on computer screens.

NOTE: Newer monitors do show more than 72DPI. With the majority of users having fast internet connections these days the file size is more important than the DPI. Maximum should be 120-150KB for each image.

It only takes a few seconds to create the better picture. The second picture was taken with the Marco setting turned on and the camera about 4 inches away from the car. The picture was then cropped to remove unneeded white space around the car and resized. I will explain cropping and editing in a few minutes.

Another setting that is equally important is the light setting. My camera's instruction book calls this exposure compensation. This allows you to force your camera to take brighter pictures. I set my camera with an exposure compensation setting of plus 1. This gives me a brighter picture without washing out the details. This brings us to the subject of lighting.

Lighting is important. When taking pictures indoors you will need adequate lighting. General Electric makes special blue bulbs to simulate sunlight indoors. GE part numbers BCA-1 or EBW-2. The BCA is a regular sized bulb and will work for any application. The EBW is a high output bulb. The BCA is cheaper and works just as well. You can get these bulbs at most good camera shops.

When I am taking photos for eBay, I use the GE blue bulbs and set my camera on an exposure of +1. This makes for a nice picture.

Note: These blue bulbs get very hot. You will want to turn the bulbs on for each picture, and then turn them off until you are ready to take the next picture.

I have the bulbs in clamp on adjustable light sockets above my photo table and use a terminal strip with a switch to turn the bulbs on and off. I take my pictures with the flash set to go off only if needed. The GE bulbs provide enough light and the flash only goes off when there are shadows. With a bit of practice, you will get good at taking pictures.

Most cameras will now adjust to whatever light is there. My Canon has a selection menu for different lighting options. I still use the big bulbs, but if you're just starting out play with your camera settings to see if you can get a good picture without special lights. Most of my students no longer use the special bulbs.

Your backdrop is also important. Some sellers take items outside to photograph them. Besides being a hassle, this results in pictures with unneeded items in the background. Buyers are not interested in your dog or pool, they want a clear picture of your doodad, so they can see exactly what you are offering.

I use unprinted newsprint for my backgrounds. This is plain white paper I buy at the packaging store. I wrap everything I sell in this paper – we will talk more about packaging later, so I always have piles of it. The great advantage of this paper is I can just replace it when it gets too dirty.

I also have a few different cardboard boxes I have wrapped in the paper. This gives me the ability to make shelves and steps to display the items to showcase them in the best way.

Craft stores carry thin foam sheets in many soft pastel colors. These are inexpensive and good looking. I have some earth colored sheets I use when I take pictures of white items.

While we are talking about photographs, and before we get into cropping and transferring them to the web, lets talk about staging the photos. By staging I mean the way the item is displayed on the background.

One thing that is very important is providing a reference. Look at the picture of the Matchbox Taxi above. If you didn't know what a Matchbox car was, could you tell what size the item is by looking at the photo?

No you can't.

There is no frame of reference. If I told you the yellow taxi is actually a seven inch long plastic model would you believe me?

It actually is a Matchbox car. Collectors know what a Matchbox car is so the reference is unimportant. But for many items including a familiar item in the picture will allow your bidders to see exactly what you are offering.

A few items you can use to create a frame of reference are:

- A penny or other coin.
- A dollar bill.
- A can of Coke or Pepsi.
- A D cell or nine volt battery – the nine volt is better because the D could be mistaken for a C cell.
- A ruler – only use a ruler if the viewer can see the markings and use them to estimate the size.
- Any other item that is widely known.

In addition to providing a size reference, you also might need to provide a color reference. When I sell Hot Wheels cars, I put a can of Campbell's soup in the background of the red cars. I do this because there are a few different colors of red cars and the soup can allows the viewer to decide which color I have regardless of his monitor settings.

This is important. One of the shades of red used on Hot Wheels is worth quite a bit more than the other shades. Many computers have poor quality monitors and the buyer is left guessing which color car I am selling. Also many sellers use darker pictures.

Buyers are hesitant to buy based on color information in the picture alone. For example, my dad bought a really rare dark red train car on eBay a few years ago. It turned out to be a common and inexpensive light red car. The seller's poorly lighted picture led him astray. Now we always ask for pictures of odd colored items with color references in the pictures.

If the picture is coming out dark, the can of soup will come out darker too. Using a can of soup allows any serious collector to get a can of soup out of his kitchen and compare it to the cars in his collection to decide the exact color of the car I am selling.

Food items from the kitchen are great for providing color references because everyone is familiar with them. We know what shade of blue a Kraft Macaroni and

Cheese box is. We know the red color of Campbell's soup. We know the green color of Kraft Parmesan cheese. We know these colors and can make reliable conclusions about color by seeing them with other items.

An important note here. We all know what shade of red a package of Marlboro cigarettes is. We also know the size of the package. Never use cigarette packages in your photos. Many buyers will not buy from you if they think the items will smell like smoke.

If you smoke try to avoid smoking around your packing materials. When a buyer gets your package he is looking for reasons to keep it and reasons to return it. A strong odor of stale cigarette smoke might just be the reason he needs to send the item back.

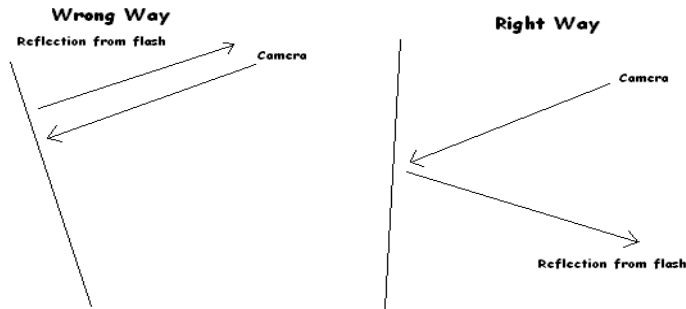
You will need a few other items for taking pictures. A small plate holder from a craft store will come in handy for selling books and other flat items. Thumbtacks work well to hold items in place when taking pictures, and some cardboard you can cover with white paper makes a great way to incline items. Just shove something under the cardboard to raise the back a bit. Half a shirtbox makes a good tray to hold small items.

It is also handy to have a nice 4 inch wide China bristle paint brush on your photo table to brush the dust off items. I do not clean most of the items I sell. I just brush the dust off and photograph them. I keep the brush right there with my collection of reference items so it is handy.

One last note about taking pictures before we move on to cropping and putting photos into your auctions. When you are selling flat items like books or mirrors, incline the item forward at the top. This will cause the camera flash to be reflected away from the camera lens removing the big flash spot from your images.

Remember the old Physics saying from high school? It went like this, "Angle of incidence equals angle of reflection."

Here's a picture to illustrate this:



In the drawing above you can see exactly how to remove the big camera flash spot from your pictures. This simple trick will make for better pictures of flat and reflective items.

Recently I've started using a Lazy-Susan spice holder for pictures of smaller items. This is a rotating platter about 10 inches across I bought at a dollar store. For items like the Matchbox car above, I don't need it, but for small trains I photograph on track it removes the need to put the little train on the track for each picture.

Transferring Images From Camera To Computer

Once you have taken your pictures, you will need to get them into your computer. If you are using a Web cam the pictures will already be saved onto your hard drive.

If you are using a digital camera you will need to transfer your pictures from the camera to your computer. Most cameras come with cords you plug into either the computer's serial port or USB port.

If you haven't already bought a camera get one with a USB cord. The USB is much faster than the serial cord. Your camera's instruction book will explain the transferring procedure.

A better and faster option is to use a card reader. Most newer computers come with built in card readers, and for computers without built in readers, you can get a USB reader for under \$20.

Note: there are different types of cards. Consult your camera's instruction manual to insure you get the right type of reader for your card.

The card reader is almost instantaneous. You just take the memory card out of your camera and insert it into the reader. You can then modify images right on the card or copy them to the drive.

I edit right on the card and then save to my drive using a program called XnView. This image program has free and paid versions. You can find out more about XnView at:

<http://www.xnview.com>

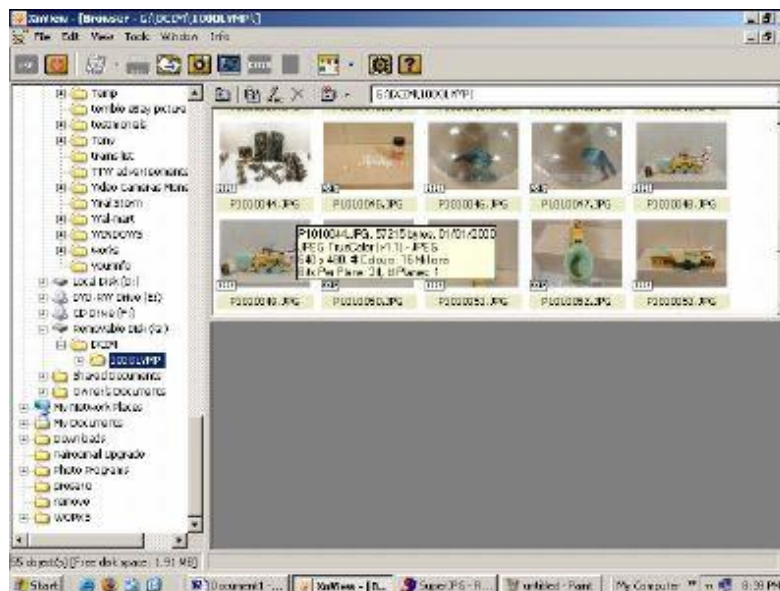
Editing Your Pictures

Some people use Adobe Photoshop or a free program that came with their camera or scanner. Photoshop is too complicated and time consuming, while most free programs are too limited and hard to learn.

There are also online photo editing sites. These are time consuming and depending on the site, can be quite expensive. Once you learn how to use XnView you will wonder why you ever considered anything else.

This program only takes a few minutes to learn – You will be on track and ready to create fantastic images within a few minutes.

After you have downloaded XnView and open the program you will get a screen like this:



On the left side of the screen you can see the folders on my hard drive. The camera card is in the G slot and my camera is the 100OLYMP.

On the right side of the screen are thumbnails of the images on my memory card. Each image has the name the camera gave it when I took the picture.

I am going to go through picture P1010048.JPG step by step and show you exactly how I convert the image from the raw camera picture to the final image I put in my auctions.

Here are the steps for each image:

1. Select the image by double clicking on it.
2. Crop the image by holding down the Shift key and dragging the cursor from one corner of the area I want to another corner.
3. Change the lighting levels if required.
4. Resize the image by setting the maximum width.
5. Save the image to my C drive within a folder called ebayimages

That doesn't sound like much work, does it. It only takes a few seconds to deal with each image.

Here is the process in pictures:

After double clicking on the thumbnail image I get this view:



By putting the cursor in just above the car and holding down the Shift key, I select a small area with just the car inside it. The next image shows the selected area.



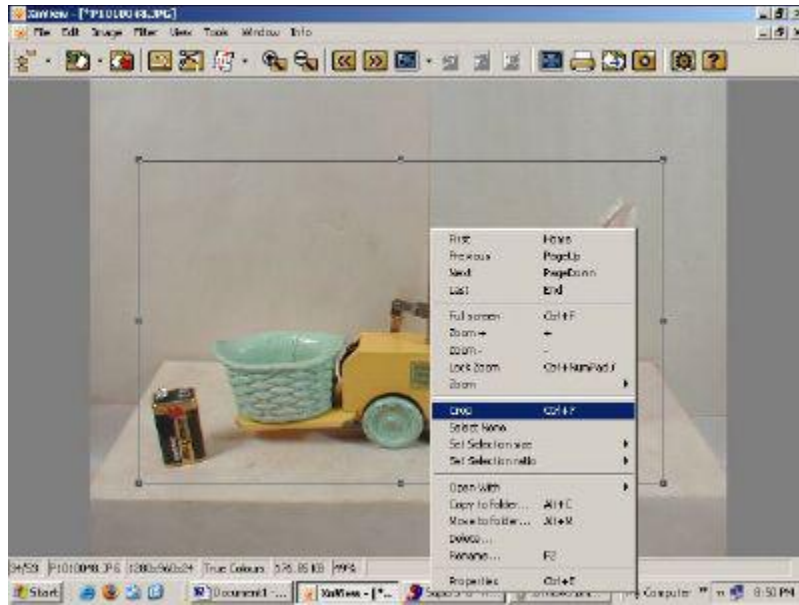
The dotted rectangle is outer edges of the picture I will end up with. Remember the original picture is huge. 1280 by 960 pixels. This is the size you want to take all your pictures with so they will be big even after you have cropped them.

The larger black dots are for changing the size of the selected area. Point the cursor at them until the cursor becomes a double ended arrow. Then hold down the left mouse button and move the boundary to the location you want.

The black dots in the center of each side move only the side they are on. The corner dots move the sides they join.

Once you have selected the area you want to keep, put your cursor WITHIN the rectangle and left click. A menu will open select crop on the menu.

Here's what it looks like:



After you select crop the program will delete the area outside the image and you will get an image that looks like this:

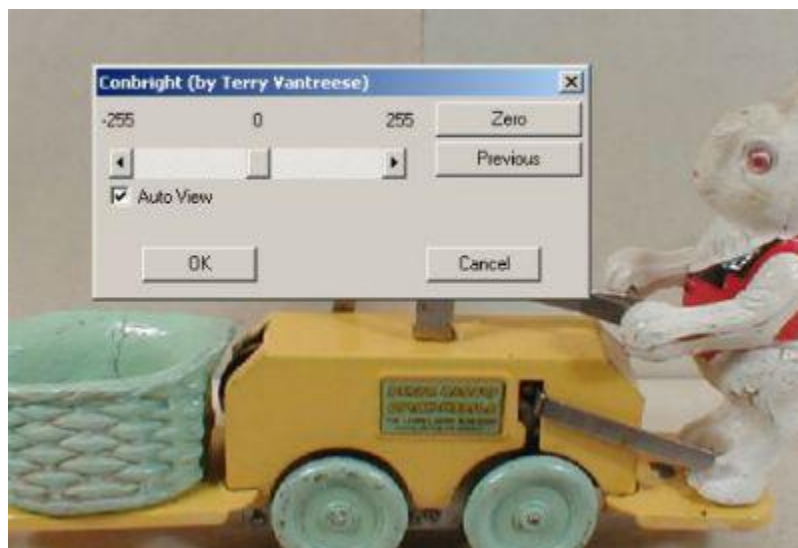


The image is now cropped, but it is a bit dark and it's still much too big to use in an auction. So we will adjust the brightness now.

To brighten the background, click on Image > Adjust and select Conbright. Here's an image showing you the path to the adjustment screen.



Once you click on Conbrigh, you'll get a window like this:



With Auto View checked, move the slide bar to the right in order to brighten the image. If you do not like the changes you make click on zero. Once you have adjusted the colors select OK to close the color adjustment screen.

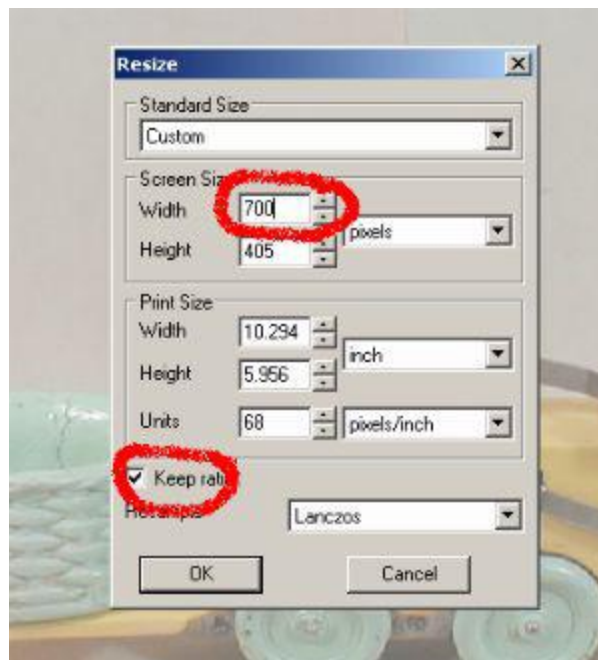
Note: You shouldn't do this step very often. I purposely created these images so they were darker so I could explain this step to you. I rarely do this step because it is easier to set up the camera and lights to create an image that does not need altering. If you do modify the colors and hues of an image be careful you do not change the actual colors of your items.

While XnView allows you to make other color adjustments, you should never change anything other than the brightness and contrast. Changing the gamma levels will result in different colors.

After changing the color levels of the picture or after cropping the picture if color adjustment is not needed hit Image > Resize.

This is where you set the image size in pixels. This will allow you to set the maximum width of your image.

Here's the resize dialog box:



You'll notice that I circled two areas in red. The upper red circle around screen size sets the maximum width for your final image. Here I have entered 700. You can enter any number, but should keep an upper limit of 1200.

The lower red circle is the Keep ratio checkbox. Make sure this box is checked.

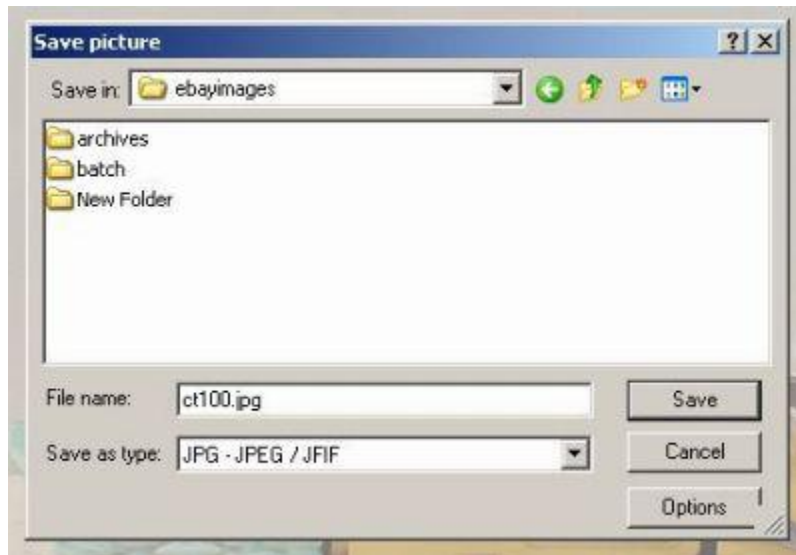
I am sure you have seen squished images on eBay. This is because the people have resized them without fixing the ratio between height and width.

Note: If you are doing images that are tall rather than wide, just change the height value to resize the image.

All the other areas on the resize dialog box can be ignored. If you decide to play with the other options available in XnView, use images you don't need, or make sure you always select the save as option rather than the save option.

Click OK and you are now ready to save your image.

To open the Save picture dialog box click on File, then on Save As. Here's the Save As screen:



I number all my images using codes I use to track my auctions. This little windup floor toy is number 100 of the series I am selling and the CT stands for my items. When I do consignment items I use different letters – like CM or CC -to keep them separate in my book keeping. The C is constant and I use it on all my items.

I started using these codes because I needed some way to keep track of every item I sold. Ebay auction numbers are not generated until the auction is started so you cannot use them. The numbers the camera generates are meaningless.

I use the numbers 100 to 999 and put removable stickers on everything as I take photographs. Then when I write the descriptions, I know what the numbers for the photos will be. (I do not use 1-99 because programs organize lists based on the first digit then the second digit if there is one and the numbers between 1 and 99 get thrown out of series.)

When I create more than one photo for an auction I number the additional images with letters like this ct100a.jpg, ct100b.jpg.

I save all the images onto my hard drive within a folder called ebayimages. There are subfolders within the ebayimages folder. Archives is where I move the images after I have copied them up to web.

You can create a folder on your drive by left clicking on your C drive in the left pane of XnView and then right clicking and selecting New Folder in the image preview area. The archive and other subfolders folders are created by right clicking within the ebayimages folder.

The system you use to create numbers for your images can be different from mine. I have taught thousands of people how to sell on eBay and you can see many of them using the advice I am sharing with you in this book.

One last note about naming images and we will move on to resizing images. Image names are case sensitive. This means browsers view CT520.JPG as a different image than ct520.jpg. In order to remove the possibility of using the wrong case, I strongly suggest you always name your images with lower case letters.

In the few times I have mistakenly used capital letters I have spent quite a bit of my time trying to figure out why the image wouldn't load in the auction, only to feel stupid when I realize what is causing the problem.

You will get very fast at cropping and renaming images. I can do a hundred images in less than 20 minutes. It will take you a while to get up to my speed, but you should be able to do an image in less than a minute within a few weeks. Remember the real goal is to have a streamlined system for listing lots of auctions in very little time.

The system I am teaching you here is the most effective way to create an auction listing that builds confidence in your bidders and gets you the highest possible bids every time.

You are now ready to move your images to the web.

Here's the final version of the picture I used for this example:



As a final note. I bought the toy handcar shown above on eBay. This is a very desirable toy, and I purchased it for a fraction of it's value.

Here's the picture the eBay seller used in his auction:



Now you know how to create fantastic pictures for your eBay auctions quickly and easily.

Time saving tip: If I need a close up of the nameplate on the side of the handcar, I crop it from the larger picture rather than taking another photo. This saves time because it's easier and faster to crop an image than take a second picture of a smaller area.

Image Hosting Options

There are four different ways to include pictures within your eBay auctions. These are hosting options because somewhere the image must be stored so others can see it on their computers. This is called hosting.

Each option has different benefits and drawbacks, so you should read over this discussion before going on the next section.

The four different image hosting options are:

1. Use eBay's picture service.
2. Use a third party service.
3. Host your images yourself on free space you get from your ISP.
4. Host the images yourself on your own purchased domain.

Many sellers use eBay's picture service because it is easier than learning one of the other options. Until 2012 I recommended not using eBay photo hosting mostly because it was more expensive than hosting your own images, but also because it is much slower.

Now eBay photo hosting is free, but still takes more time than doing it yourself. Today I use one image that becomes the gallery image in searches, and still put my images within the description.

Here's some advice about eBay photo hosting options if you're using them.

Enlarge Image. This option allows browsers to see a larger version of your gallery image on the search page. In some categories this is free, in others it costs about a quarter. I don't see any benefit to this, and think it's better to get the shopper to click into the listing than making a decision based on just the one photo.

Gallery Image. The gallery image is shown to the left of your title in search results pages, and on the upper left corner of your listing. It's free and will help you get more people to look at your auction. It's now required by eBay. This picture should be an overview of what you're selling rather than a detail shot.

Galley Plus. This is an upgrade (current cost is 35 cents) that causes your galley image to expand when a user scrolls over it. It is not worth the extra money.

The next option is using a third party image hosting service. This is basically the same as paying eBay except you are paying someone else.

Some of these third party services – I am not going to name them, but you have surely seen their images on eBay – will put a small image in your auction and require the shopper to click into their website in order to look at larger versions. Some companies will only provide you with a click here to see picture link for your auctions.

This moving of your potential buyers to the image hosting site is how the sites promote themselves. This is not only a major inconvenience to your shoppers, but costs you bids. And to top it off, you get to pay for the privilege of advertising their sites.

You pay in lowered sale amounts due to lost bidders, and right out of your pocket in hosting fees. If I did my job and convinced you eBay is a bad way to host your images, I don't need to say anything else about the third party providers.

The third option is to host the images on the free web space your internet service provider gives you as part of the package. I use Earthlink for my ISP, and most other major providers are similar. If you are using a discount provider you may not get this space.

NOTE: As of 2008 AOL no longer provides this service. This means you either have to use eBay hosting or set up a domain as described below for your images.

Earthlink provides me with 10 Megs of space to do anything I want with. Most providers will give you at least 5 and up to 20 megs. Remember when I mentioned image file size in KB?

If you average 50 KB in image file size, you can store 20 pictures per meg of space. Meg stands for Mega Bytes. Your average picture should be in the range of 30-40 so you can actually store a lot of pictures in five or ten megs of space.

We will go over transferring files to the web in a few minutes. It will take you five minutes to set up the system and then all you need to do is open a program and push a button whenever you start new auctions. There is nothing to buy. I will tell you where to get the program you need for free.

Using your ISP provided space is a great free alternative to using eBay or a third party provider as long as you have the space and are doing less than 200 auctions a month.

I used the Earthlink space for the first year I sold on eBay and it worked very well. You delete the pictures after the auction ends and keep using the same space over and over again.

Once I got to the point where I was listing more than 50 items a week, I ran into a serious problem. You see, most ISPs put a limit on the amount of information transfer you can do from your free space. This transfer is called bandwidth.

I exceeded the bandwidth limit and the ISP deleted all my files and blocked the account. All of a sudden, I had 50 auctions running with no pictures in them. When I contacted Earthlink and asked about the problem, I was told the free space was not for use in running a business; and in order to prevent this from happening again I should buy my own space.

It is OK for infrequent or occasional eBay sellers to use this free space, but I was not an infrequent or occasional seller. I was doing 50 auctions a week at that time. And I was soon doing 100 to 200 auctions a week as my eBay consignment business took off.

This brings us to the fourth option. Buying a domain and hosting the images yourself. This might seem like a complicated process, but it is actually very easy, and today it is very inexpensive.

Today, you can set up your own domain for about 50 dollars in start up fees and under 5 dollars a month in recurring hosting fees. I strongly suggest picking out a domain name and hosting your own images once your eBay volume warrants it.

The process of moving images to your web space is the same for the free space and purchased space. The only difference is the server location you move the files onto. The images are called files and when we transfer them we use a File Transfer Program.

This book is distributed on the honor system.
You get to read the book and then pay for it.
Even better, you decide what you want to pay.
[Use this link to pay.](#)

Transferring Images To The Web

In order to transfer your ebook to the web you need a FTP program. FTP stands for File Transfer Protocol. There are lots of good programs out there. Some are free; some you will have to pay for. I use WS/FTP.

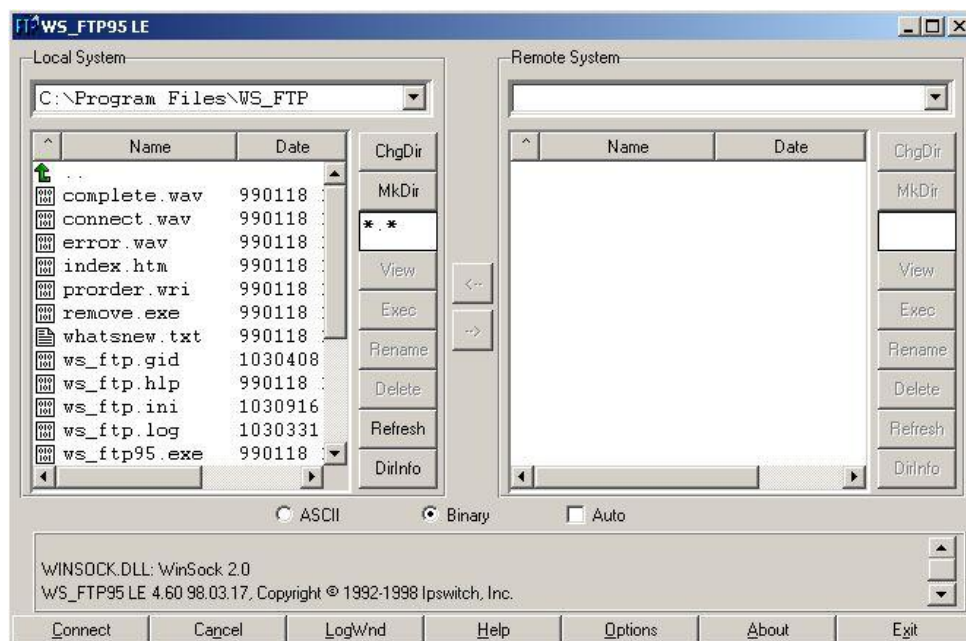
You can get WS/FTP from the maker. Here is the URL:

<http://www.wsftple.com/>

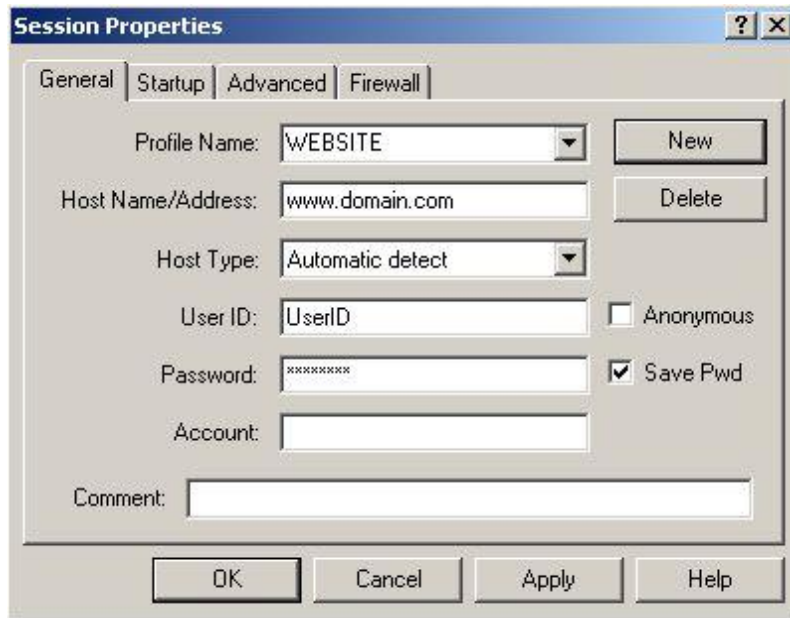
Note: This used to be a free program. Now they want you to pay a small fee to buy the program after a trial period. I think WS/FTP is the best FTP program, and recommend it heartily.

However, if you want a free program, there is an explanation of a free program called Filezilla in the back of this book. You can also do a search for "WS/FTP LE free download" on google and find older versions you can download for free.

The first time you run WS/FTP you will get a screen like this one:



Click on the CONNECT button in the lower left corner. This will open the session properties screen. On the session properties screen, click on the NEW button. The Session Properties Screen is shown below.



On the Session Properties screen, you need to fill in the Profile Name, the Host Name/Address, User ID and Password.

Free Space Users:

If you are using free space provided by your Internet Service Provider use EBAY for the profile name. The Host Name/Address is the URL of your ISP. For example: www.earthlink.com, or www.mindspring.com.

Leave Host Type as Automatic Detect. The user ID is the text before the @ sign in your main email account - [USER](#)@AOL.com, and your password is the log in password you selected when you created your account with your ISP. If you are unsure of your Host Name, User ID, or Password contact your ISP for this information.

Leave the anonymous box unchecked and check the Save Password box. If you share a computer with others or use a Laptop you might want to leave the Save Password box unchecked for security reasons. Jump down to the line Either Type of Space Users.

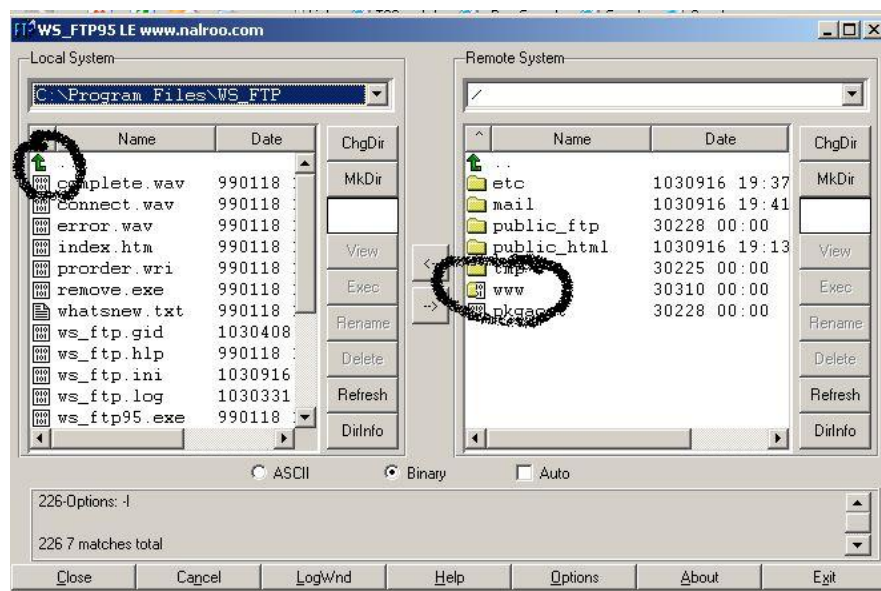
Purchased Domain and Hosting Users:

If you have purchased a domain and set up a hosting account, the Profile Name can be just the name of your site or you can use EBAY.

The Host Name/Address is the url of your website. You do not use the http:// in the host name. Just www.yourdomain.com. Your web host should have sent you your user ID and your password when you opened your hosting account. Enter these in the correct fields. Leave Host Type set at Automatic Detect. Check the Save password button, then hit OK.

Either Type of Space User:

Ws/ftp will now connect to the server. Your website or webspace will be on the right side of the screen and your hard drive will be on the left. Your screen will look like this:



Note to ISP space users: You will not have all the selections in the left window. You will have a WWW or Public_html which is all you need.

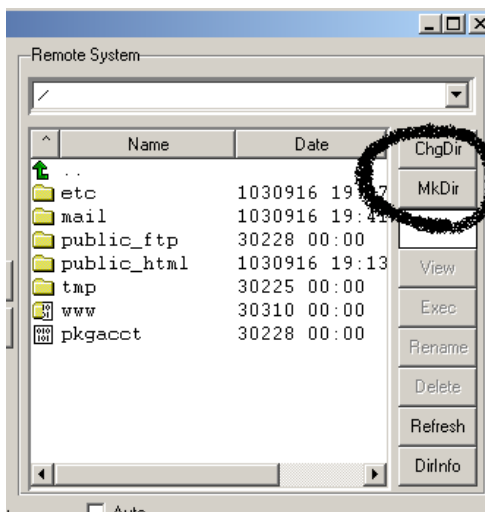
Double click on the green arrow (circled in picture above) on the left and navigate to the C:\\ebayimages\\batch folder on your hard drive. To do this, just keep clicking on the green arrow until you see the folders on your C drive and then click on the ebayimages folder twice to open it, then click on the batch folder twice to open it.

Then double click on the WWW folder in the right window. Your files go into the WWW folder on the remote server. If you do not have a WWW folder use the public_html folder instead.

You can put your files directly into the WWW folder, but I suggest you create a folder on the remote server called ebayimages. This way all your ebay images will be in one place on the server and you can create other folders for other areas of your website or other uses.

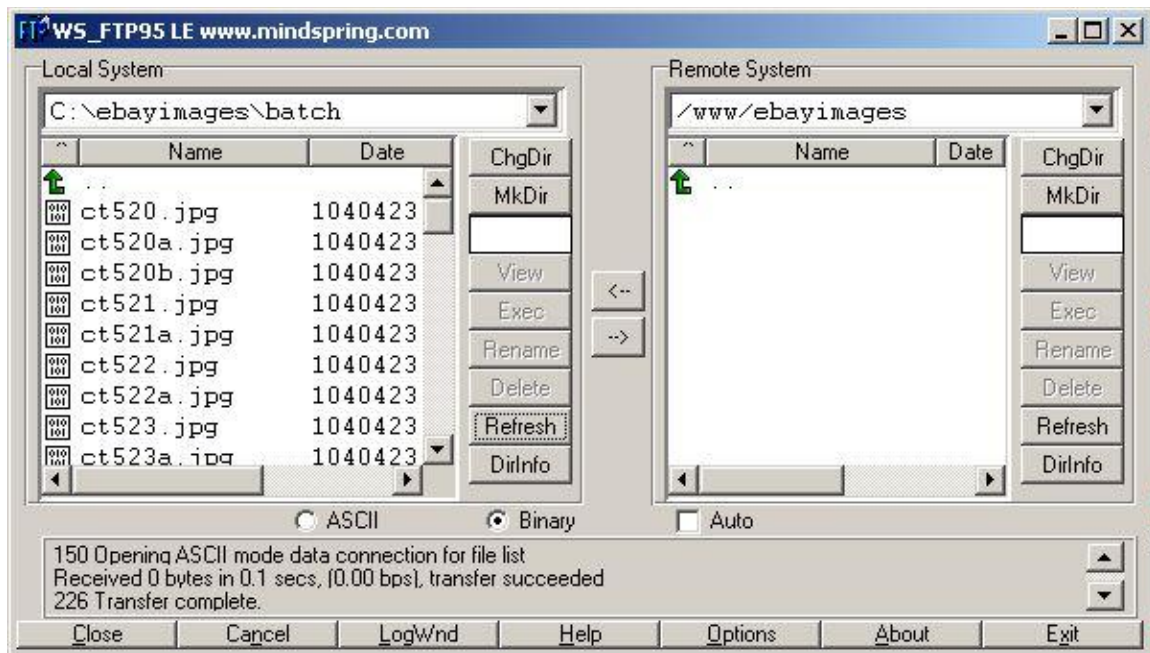
This only takes a few seconds and you only have to do it once. In fact, you will only have to set this whole system up once. WS/FTP will remember the folders and open to them the next time you start the transfer program.

To make an ebayimages folder on the server, click on the Mkdir button on the right side. A directory and folder are the same thing.



You will get a screen asking you to enter remote directory name. Enter *ebayimages* into the field and hit the OK button. Then navigate to the ebayimages directory by double clicking on it.

Now you should have your local ebayimages folder open in the left window, and your remote ebayimages folder showing in the right window. It will look like this:



At this point you are ready to transfer your images to the web. But, before you do that you want to make sure that every time you start WS/FTP and open the eBay connection, the program automatically opens to the right folders on both your computer and the remote server.

To remember these folders, click on the options button on the bottom of the screen. This will open a properties box. On the session tab check the box next to “*Save Current Directories As Connection Directories.*” Then hit OK. This way you will not have to search through your hard drive every time you want to move images to the web.

You are now ready to move the images up to the web.

In order to move your files from your computer to the web you just highlight them by clicking on them and then click on the transfer button between the two screens.



Note: You can also just double click on the files to transfer them to the web.

Hint: You can select all your images and move them up at once by single clicking on the top image in the left screen and then scrolling down to the last image and clicking on it with the shift button held down. Then use the transfer button and WS/FTP will transfer all the selected images.

After you have moved your images up to the server, click on close to exit WS/FTP.

That wasn't very hard was it? Many people avoid transferring images with a FTP program because they never spent the time to learn these simple steps. You are now ready to include fantastic images in your eBay listings.

Calling Images Into Your Auctions

In order for your images to appear in your auctions you must include a simple line of code wherever you want an image. I mention code and your eyes glass over and you think this is difficult.

This is because eBay and the other picture hosting companies want you to think this is hard. They want your money, and have worked hard to make this process seem more complicated than it is.

In 2017 eBay started requiring all content to be secure. This was done because google starting warning it's Chrome browser users about unsecure content. For me it was a \$35 certificate added to my server and changing the url of my images from http: to httpS: My host set the whole thing up for the \$35 fee. You need to conatct you host to set this up.

The code looks like this:

```

```

When we write the auction description, we will put this line of code into the template, so all you will need to do in the future is change the number ct520 to the number of your auction.

This line tells the browser to insert the image found at <https://www.domain.com/ebayimages/ct520.jpg>. If you purchased a domain your code will look exactly like the line above. If you are using space on your ISP's server the image address will look like one of the lines below.

For Mindspring Users:

```
http://www.mindspring.com/~userID/ebayimages/ct520.jpg
```

For Earthlink Users:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~userID/ebayimages/ct520.jpg>

For other Internet Service providers, or if you have questions about your account, contact your ISP's support desk. Note: it is not necessary to use the www in the address. The image will load with or without it.

Building Your Auction Template

Now you have everything you need to write your description. You have these items for your listing:

- Photos on your server and the URLs written down.
- Keywords relevant to your item.
- The eBay category number or numbers you will list your item in.
- The buyer's shipping cost.
- Listing upgrades – if any - you will use on this auction.

You have also decided these items:

- Payment types you will accept.
- Where you will ship to.
- Your return policy.

These last three items, and the basic URL for your images, will always remain constant. Rather than writing these out in every auction, lets build a template that includes all these items.

Then you can just use the template over and over again in each auction. The template we are building is not the same as the template eBay charges you to use and will cost you nothing to use. If you are listing on eBay you will need to copy and paste the template into the sell your item HTML preview panel. If you are using a bulk lister you can save the template within the lister. Bulk Listers are covered in the second half of this book.

Before we get started, lets talk about the purpose of the template. I know I just mentioned HTML and you might be a bit scared, but like images HTML is easy.

You don't need much about HTML. In fact, all the HTML you need can be written *and explained* on one sheet of paper. I'll explain the HTML cheat sheet later.

Right now, we need to discuss some of the things not to include in your template. You have surely seen auctions with fancy animated images. I really like the auctioneer waving a gavel. One woman uses a dog waving his tail in her auctions.

Whenever I see these images in auctions, I automatically bid a bit extra on the item. In fact, I like the dog so much – he's cute – I always bid twice as much.

Seriously, these animated images provide no additional value to the listing. At best they are ignored, and buyers bid whatever they would normally bid. They only serve one purpose – entertainment. Entertainment is distracting.

For this reason, the best auction templates are the simplest. You want to include only the images and text needed to describe your item.

Here's a simple version of the template I use:

```
<BR><Center><img src=http://www.domain.com/ebayimages/ct.jpg></center><BR>
<P>
```

type description here

```
<P> I automatically combine items that end on the same day to lower your shipping cost. See my other
auctions for more trains.. See my <A HREF="https://www.ebay.com/sch/EBAYUSERID/m.html"
TARGET="_blank"> other items</A>.
```

That doesn't look very complicated does it? By using this template you only need to put in the image number, replace the "type description here" with your description and change the shipping cost if needed.

This is what the text above looks like in an eBay auction:

Description

Centered Image Here

type description here

I automatically combine items that end on the same day to lower your shipping cost. See my other auctions for more trains. Insurance is available at cost. See my [other items](#).

For auctions with more than one image, just copy and paste the image line below the description and change the number of the image like this:

```
<BR><Center><img src=http://www.domain.com/ebayimages/ct520.jpg></center><BR>
<P>
```

type description here

Paste image line here as needed for multiple image auctions.

<Center></center>

<P>\$I automatically combine items that end on the same day to lower your shipping cost. See my other items.

Listings with two images will look like this:

<i>Description</i>	
type description here	Centered Image Here
	Centered Image Here
I automatically combine items that end on the same day to lower your shipping cost. See my other auctions for more trains. See my other items .	

For auctions with more than two images just paste additional image code lines into the template as needed. I just copy and paste the image line when I am writing each auction. This way I only have one template.

HTML Tags Explained

In the template there are five different HTML tags. These are really quite simple to understand. The tags are within the < > signs. The
 is the first tag in the template. BR stands for Break Line.

Break Line means exactly that. Wherever this tag appears the text will drop to the next line. We are using the BR tag before and after the image to put the image on its own line.

The next tag in the template is the <CENTER> tag. This is used in pairs. Everything between <CENTER> and </CENTER> will be centered. The / is a closing tag. Whenever you want to center something on the page, use these tags.

The next tag is the image source tag. Like we talked about earlier this tag tells the browser to load an image located at the URL in the string.

Then there is another BR tag. This second BR tag is included so the image will sit on its own line. When you copy and paste the image source line to include additional images in your auctions copy everything between and including the two BR tags.

The <P> tag stand for Paragraph. This is used he to put a line of white space between the image and the first line of text in the description. We are using a second one before the shipping information paragraph to separate it from the description.

If you write a long description, include a few P tags to divide up your copy and make it easier to read. You should try to keep paragraphs below 5 lines of text to make them easier to read.

The last tag in the template is the NAME This is called an Anchor tag and is used to make a link. Whatever appears in the NAME area is shown on the screen and when clicked the URL opens. The URL is the page aimed at.

The Target="_blank" tells the page to open in a new window. This way people can see your other listings without leaving the auction page.

That is pretty simple. Now you can build a template for your auctions that is easy to use, and contains all the information your auction needs. There is one thing missing from the template that should always be included.

I left this out because I wanted to explain it separately. See the line in the shipping information paragraph that says, “See my other auctions for more trains?”

This should be a link to allow people to easily view your other offerings.

Adding A Link To Your Other Auctions.

Adding a link to your other auctions to your auction template will increase your bids. Buyers will use the link to see what else you are offering. Sure, they could click on the view sellers other items link eBay provides, but you should make it easy for them.

In my template, I have this as a separate line below the shipping information paragraph. It looks like this:

```
<P><CENTER>See my <A HREF="https://www.ebay.com/sch/EBAYUSERID/m.html"
TARGET="_blank"> other items</A>. </CENTER>
```

This string of code puts this link in the bottom of my auctions:

See my other auctions for more trains. [See my other items.](#)

To create this link just replace the “EBAYUSERID” with your eBay user ID in the source code.

A note here. I used to use “*See my other auctions for more Lionel and American Flyer trains.*” I was warned about this by eBay because this violates eBay’s keyword spamming rules. You cannot use keywords not relevant to your auction in your description. Because of these rules, you need to be general with this statement. More trains is a general statement.

Other HTML Tags You Can Use.

There are other tags you can use in your auctions. Some tags are used in pairs, others are used singly. Here's a simple list of tags to use in your auctions.

Don't use these codes just to show off that you can use them, use them only when they add value to your description. Remember you are selling not entertaining.

Almost all codes have opening and closing tags. Everything between the opening and closing tags will be effected by the opening tag. Tags not used in pairs are noted.

⇒ To make a word bold: ` text here `

⇒ To italicize a word `<I> text here </I>`

⇒ To underline a word: `<U> text here </U>`

⇒ To center a line:

`<center> text here </center>`

⇒ To make a space between paragraphs: `<P>` Not used in pairs. For additional space insert another `<P>` for each line desired.

⇒ To make a line break `
` Not used in pairs.

⇒ To change font colors:

` Colored text here `

You can use many different colors, but should stick to red and blue. Remember, never use color unless you have a reason.

⇒ To make the font size bigger:

` larger text here `

You can use numbers up to 3, and can also make the font smaller by putting a minus sign in place of the plus sign like this:

` smaller text here `

⇒ To insert a photograph:

``

This will put a picture wherever you have it in the description. Text will be above and below it. You should place `
` or `<P>` in before the first picture and after the last one.

⇒ For multiple images your listing will look like this:

<P>

<P>

<P>

Writing eBay Auction Titles

New Longer Titles

In October 2011, eBay increased the length of auction titles to 80 characters. This means you can get more words into the title, and if you add additional words buyers may use to search for your item, you can get more viewers.

That's pretty simple, but there's more to it than that

Just after the change went into effect, I found an auction for a neat little cast iron fence on eBay I thought would look good on my toy train layout. The seller hadn't included the size in the description or put anything into his photos so I could guess the height of the fence.

So I sent him a question, and he responded that the size was listed in the title of the auction. I hadn't seen it, but when I looked at the listing again, the size was there in the auction title. It was at the end.

I use this as an example of people not reading the entire title. We tend to scan from the left to right, and make a decision based on the first few words. This means the first few words are the most important.

There are other exceptions to the longer titles:

1. In the watched items view eBay only shows the first 55 characters. So once a prospect watches your item, he will only see the first 55 characters unless he clicks on the link.
2. If you are cross promoting your listings so buyers click on a link to see your other listings, that page also only shows 55 characters of the auction title.
3. Also many eBay searches are cut off at 55 characters.
4. Many eBay affiliates who are running scripts have them set up to display only the first 55 characters.

In all of these cases, someone who clicks on a shortened title link is unlikely to read the title again.

So to sum this up, add more words to your titles, but use the most important keywords first.

eBay Auction Titles and Searches

Most eBay searches are done for title only (That's the default search) so you must include the most valuable words in your title. In the example above with the cast iron fence, the seller was correct to put the size at the end of the title, but should have included a size statement in the description and/or a recognizable reference item in the photos. (I use a 9-volt battery, others use coins or even rulers.)

eBay Title Examples

eBay auction titles shouldn't be sentences. Instead run keywords in a list. Here's some examples of eBay titles that are only keywords:

- Lionel 50 Gang Car from 1950s Postwar
- Stangl Pottery Double Bluebird 3276D
- Hubley 456 Horse Cast Iron 10" Doorstop w/ Original Paint

Notice all of the auction titles above have the brand name first. Two of them have the catalog number second, the Stangl bird has the mold number last because they are searched by the name "Double Bluebird" not the number. Extra keywords are put in the rear of the title like "from 1950s Postwar" and "Original Paint."

The word "with" is abbreviated as "w/" to save space because no one will search on eBay for the word. You can also use common eBay abbreviations in your titles.

In the last example I added condition information to the end. You should usually add condition information to your eBay titles. If your item is in exemplary condition, you'll want to move the condition statement to the front of the title.

NOTE: Don't use the words "like new" as a condition statement in your title. More on [Using The Word Like In eBay Titles](#).

If you use tracking numbers in your titles, they go at the very end.

Filling Up eBay Titles

Here's some things you should only use in your eBay titles if you have room left over AFTER using important keywords:

L@@@K
NICE
Rare

Unbelievable
!!WOW!!
Deal

None of these words mean anything, and certainly aren't keywords buyers use in searches. Instead of using these, use words from the list below as appropriate:

Vintage
VTG (a search using "vtg" returns listings with "vintage" in the title)
Old
Works
Runs
Complete

Do you see the difference between the two lists? The second list of words aren't really keywords, but rather are descriptive words that serve to give the reader a better idea of what the item is or does.

Using Complimentary Brand Names In eBay Titles

You can use a complimentary brand name in your title by using the words "use with" or "works with" as a modifier. In the example I gave on the page about eBay keyword rules I had a Marx tower listed with the word Lionel in the title like this: "Marx Metal Floodlight Tower use with Lionel." Lionel made cheap looking plastic towers so I also included the word metal.

Use keywords in this order in your eBay titles:

1. Manufacturer or brand name
2. Model number or name of item
3. Condition and operating statements (Exceptions - use first in title if wonderful condition)
4. Complimentary brand names
5. Your auction tracking number if you use one.

Once the title is written, your next step is the description. . .

Writing Your Auction Description

At this point you now have everything you need to list your auction except the description. In your description you will tell the auction viewer in words what he is getting.

Each description should answer the following questions:

- What is the condition of your item?
- Does the item work?
- Are parts missing?
- What is the manufacturer's name and model number?
- What are the identifying characteristics of your item? Use as appropriate. A few of these are:
 - Size
 - Color
 - Weight
- What the item is used for or what the item does.
- How old your offering is.

As you can see from the above list these items are really straightforward. You might not include all of them, but you should use all items appropriate to each listing. When you are answering these questions, use the keywords you found during your research.

For an example we will go back to the ticket punch we researched earlier. We found these keywords:

Ticket	Conductor	Fare
Punch	Bus	Passenger
Trolley	Pullman	Railroad

Lets assume our punch is not marked with a makers name but does say P.R.R. on it. P.R.R. means Pennsylvania Railroad. A quick search on eBay or Google would reveal that if it was not already known.

Here's a sample description using the keywords above to answer the relevant questions about our punch:

"This is a conductor's ticket punch used on the Pennsylvania Railroad – P.R.R. - to mark passenger tickets as fare paid. These type of punches were also used on buses and trolley lines. This punch dates from the 1930s and is used. Some of the nickel plating is worn, but it is not rusted or damaged. It even works. In the picture above you can see the shape of the punched out section on the red card."

You can see the keywords in red. I know this punch is from the 1930s. If you don't know when something was made and cannot find a reliable date range leave that out. This description answers all the relevant questions about the item and uses all the keywords we found in our earlier research.

Here's another example using the Matchbox Taxi we talked about during the section on photos. The keywords are:

Matchbox Series	Taxi	Yellow
Lesney	Chevrolet	Toy
Made In England	1960s	Car
Impala	No.20	Automobile

Here's the description:

Here is a nice Matchbox Series toy car. This is the yellow Chevrolet Impala taxi No. 20 in the series of automobiles made by Lesney in England during the 1960s. The condition is excellent with nice clear decal and very few paint scratches. It has black wheels.

Again, you can see the keywords in red. If we had researched this car we would have discovered these cars were made with black or grey wheels.

It is not important to use the words in order. The search engine on eBay only looks for the words themselves. There is an exception to this rule. If a search is done with quotation marks around the keywords, then only words that appear in the same order will be shown. Most people do not search on eBay with quotation marks so this is not a big issue.

Another factor to keep in mind when using the keywords is plurals. A search on eBay for the word book will not bring up items for sale with the word books in the description.

Because the eBay search engine is case sensitive, you should use both the singular and plural form of all of your valuable keywords.

After a while you will be able to write a description in a few seconds using the questions above.

Item Specifics

Recently eBay has added item specifics to listings. These are things like year of manufacture, brand, materials, color, size, UPC, MPN (Manufacturer's Product Number), and more. In June 2015, eBay started requiring some of these. MPN and Brand are almost always required. UPC is required if you are listing in item as new rather than used condition. The rest of them are not required.

Item specifics are bits of information about your item that eBay uses to get your listing seen on Google when people search for those specifics, and are going to somehow be used to create a new catalog structure to replace the category structure.

In June and July of 2015, I ran tests by putting unique phrases like "dfhwdhg" and "adfhnsthy" into the item specifics areas. These phrases were created by pushing down on the keyboard. (UPC has to be a real UPC number.)

When I searched on Google, auctions never showed up, but fixed price listings showed up after 5-8 days.

Oddly searching on eBay for those phrases didn't bring up any listings. The only way to find them with an eBay search is by drilling down within the item specifics.

As of January 2018, I am using the manufacturer's name or brand name and usually the model number on almost all of my listings. I hate doing this because it is so slow, but it is worth the time.

I never use other options. Note that you can set your template up for these values, but eBay will cancel your listings if you have a brand name other than the brand for the item listed.

Putting It All Together

We have now covered everything there is to know about listing an eBay auction.

Here are the steps and all the options available at each step in the eBay listing process:

1. Sign in to eBay
2. Select format auction, or fixed price.
3. Select category or categories.
4. Use category find function Not relevant to all searches- better method is looking at auctions as instructed in researching your item. The category you selected earlier should be in the list though.
5. Input category number on the form.
6. Browse categories to select appropriate category. This provides NO indication of proper category.
7. If doing second category Click on [Select Second Category](#) link. The web page will add a second set of category selection tools.
8. Insert Title and subtitle (subtitle is only seen in category searches and contents are not indexed in search results.)
9. Write description
10. Standard format is plain text auction. What you type in the box will be the description in the listing.
11. Enter your own HTML is used to create an auction listing with special formatting and links. Also for hosting your own images. You will need to paste your template into this screen.
12. Enter Pictures & Item Details screen
13. Pricing and duration screen
14. Input starting price
15. Reserve price if desired
16. Buy it Now if desired
17. Quantity – usually one, you cannot do multiple listings until you have 30 feedbacks. Also multiple listings cannot have a second category.
18. Duration of auction –1, 3, 5, 7, or 10. Extra 20 cents for 10 day listing.
19. Start time- additional 10 cent fee for this option.
20. Item location and regional selection
21. Add pictures
22. Ebay hosted. Not the best option.
23. Self hosted - If self hosted and using html description select picture in description to get picture icon in title.

24. Listing designer- a waste of money. Default is none. You can create better looking and unique auction templates for free with the HTML tutorial included with this book.
25. Increase your item's visibility with options.
26. Never check the Remember my selections box. You can end up running auctions with expensive listing upgrades. Always select these options if desired for each individual auction.
27. Enter Payment & Shipping screen
28. These are all sticky inputs. You only need to change them as appropriate to each auction. Most will be the same for all your listings.
29. Seller-accepted payment methods
30. Shipping costs
31. Payment instructions & return policy
32. Ship-to locations
33. Sell Your Item: Review & Submit Listing
34. Review your listing
35. Check details
36. Check options
37. Review the fees
38. Submit your listing

Answering Questions During Your Auction.

After you have listed your item you will need to answer buyers questions. Buyers can have some funny questions. They might seem stupid, but really the questions only prove eBay shoppers do not read descriptions.

I have had buyers ask me amazing questions. Once when I was selling some Matchbox toy cars I had a buyer ask me why the car was so big. He thought the picture showed the actual size of the car.

When you get a frustrating question, respond politely. I have found a little politeness goes a long way. I never tell my potential buyers to read the auction description, I just pleasantly answer their questions.

Always remember while answering questions to say things that will make the buyer feel comfortable with you. You want bidders to feel confident they will get the item they expect from you. Confidence means higher bids.

When you get the same question from a few bidders, or you get questions that suggest bidders are looking for variations, you should add the answer to your auction. This is important. I once bought a 5,000 dollar set of trains on eBay for only \$800. The train was a rare variation worth about 5 times the value of the common version.

Because the seller did not know about the rare variation, she had not shown the area of the set or mentioned the value multiplying aspect. I asked, and found out this was the rare version. I don't think anyone else asked.

But, if the seller had posted the pictures she sent me, and her answers to my questions, she would have gotten much more for her train.

If you are listing items you don't know about, the questions you get will key you in to desirable variations. In fact, if you have something really nice a helpful eBay buyer might even send you a note informing you. Don't count on this though. Some buyers phrase questions so the seller doesn't know what they want to learn.

A warning here. Sometimes you'll get "questions" from buyers that are designed to make you think the item is less valuable. Many eBay sellers automatically post questions and answers at the bottom of their listings. If you get statements that might lower the selling price of your item, check online by posting questions on a relevant forum before adding the information to your listing.

Modifying Or Adding To Your Auction Description

To modify your auction before you have bids, log in to eBay and go to the specific auction you want to change. Click on the [Revise Your Item](#) link in auction header area. The link is on the left side of the screen near the auction ending times and bidder information details.

To modify an auction use the preview auction page to change or add details. This is similar to the screens you used to list your item. Make sure you use the HTML tab if you are adding images.

If your auction already has bids, you cannot modify the description, so you will need to add to your description. You can add text or additional pictures.

To add information to an auction, log in to eBay and go to the specific auction. At the top of the screen to the right of the bid amounts column there will be a link. The link will say [Revise Your Item](#).

Click on this link and you will get a page to input your additional information. If you are adding images use the HTML tab.

After you have inputted your changes or additions, you will get a preview screen. Look over your submission and click on Save Submission or Back to edit some more.

If you are answering questions sent through the eBay system, you can add the question and your answer to the bottom of the listing by checking the post box just above the submit button.

After The Auction

When the auction ends, the real work begins. Listing an item accounts for about 30 percent of your time. The post auction tasks account for 70 percent of your time.

Here are the tasks done after the auction.

1. Identify buyers who purchased multiple items.
2. Pack items.
3. Compute totals.
4. Send buyers an email with a total.
5. Track payments.
6. Ship packages.
7. Leave feedback.
8. Follow up with non paying bidders.
9. Deal with complaining buyers.

These activities can be tracked online through third party websites (for a fee) and your *My eBay* pages.

Identify Buyers Who Purchased Multiple Items.

If you are using the Seller Hub features, there is a link to “Orders eligible for combined purchases” in the Order section. Just click on that link then click on send invoice for each buyer. When you've sent an invoice, back your browser up a few pages to return to the list of buyers needing combined invoices.

If you're not using the Seller Hub features, you can identify buyers needing combined invoices with your My eBay sold page.

The My Ebay area allows you to view items you've sold in different ways. For these examples we'll use sold in the PERIOD “LAST 24 HOURS” and orient the results by SORT BY “BUYER ID: ASCENDING”

Just scroll down the list to find buyers who have purchased more than one item.

Packing Items.

How you pack your items influences the buyer's first impression of his purchase. If you use clean new packing material and pack well, you will make a buyer think his item is valuable.

Think about it. No one would go to the trouble of packing junk well. Because this is so important, I strongly recommend over packing your items. When your buyer opens the package and sees the care you spent packing his item, he will know he got something good.

Fantastic packing is the best way to remove buyer complaints. After a buyer purchases something, doubts set in. This is called buyer's remorse.

When a buyer has second thoughts about his purchase, he begins to look for reasons to be unhappy. If he can find a enough reasons, he will ask to return the item. Packing well removes one item the buyer can complain about.

First pack multiple purchaser's items. Then pack everything that is left.

When you pack a box with multiple items you will need to weigh it to find out the weight. Write the weight down on your print out. Any box with a side longer than 12 inches you'll need to measure because the post office and UPS base shipping costs on weight and size for priority mail. For parcel box dimensions aren't needed.

Here are the URLs for the online shipping calculators:

USPS: <http://postcalc.usps.gov/>

UPS: http://wwwapps.ups.com/calTimeCost?loc=en_US

Added 2013 - I now just use the print label link eBay provides on the My eBay Sold Items page to figure shipping charges. I add 15% to the cost shown to cover my packing materials and the eBay/PayPal fees. If this is lower than the amount I would have charged for one item by itself, I charge the shipping quoted in the auction.

Invoicing Buyers

Today eBay makes it easier to send invoices. You can quickly send invoices by clicking on the send invoice link on the right side of your ended items list on your My eBay Sold Items page.

Speed Tip. You can right click on the send invoice link, then select open in a new tab or open in a new window to open all your invoices at once. Send each invoice and then close the tab or new window and send the next invoice.

Tracking Payments

Use your My eBay Sold page to see sold items. On the page under SELLING REMINDERS there will be a group of links showing what needs your attention.

ADD SCREENSHOT HERE.

When a buyer pays with a check or picks the item up and pays with cash, I click on the I am awaiting payment for # items link and mark that item as paid. Ebay will then move it into items awaiting shipment group. If it's a pick up I mark it as shipped, otherwise I print the label as if it was paid with paypal.

WARNING: PayPal users can report not receiving an item, and will get a complete refund if you cannot prove the item was delivered. Delivery confirmation is considered proof for transactions under \$750. Signature Confirmation is required for transactions above \$750. Note: PayPal may consider shipping costs as part of the \$750, and reverse charges if you cannot prove the item was delivered with a signature. The language is buried in the PayPal user agreement and is unclear. Even the PayPal representatives don't know if the \$750 limit is the amount sent with PayPal or the sales price before shipping. Because of this ambiguity, I ship everything I sell with an ending price above \$700 with signature conformation.

Using eBay Labels

Added to 2013 edition. Using eBay labels and the tracking functions within my eBay is quicker and cheaper than handwriting labels and going to the post office.

From the Sold Items screen in My eBay, click on the link that says you need to ship ## packages. If you have packages to ship this will be shown just above the list of sold items. This will remove items that haven't been paid for from the list.

Then work your way down the list right clicking on the Print Label links and selecting open in a new window. I do one package at a time to decrease the chances I will send the package to the wrong buyer, and double check myself as I go along.

If you're shipping a package out-of-country, the screen says you need a 8.5 by 11 inch label. This is false. The bottom half of the label has tracking information that will also be shown in the email and on the eBay item details page if you ever need it. I use one of the sheets that I've already used one label from for international labels so I don't waste labels.

The advantage of using eBay labels - other than saving time and money - is you can see the costs for shipping various items. If you specialize like me, you can get the shipping to be a profit center because you'll know the best way to pack each item.

IMPORTANT - The shipping costs quoted by eBay within the labels system include discounts that change based on your seller status. Seller status is based on the number of complaints, returns and cancelled transactions.

A note about profiting from shipping charges. . .

I used to break even or lose a little money each month on the shipping. Now I make a dollar or more on each box I ship except for books where eBay limits me to charging \$6.00 shipping for media mail where I break even or lose money on each sale.

If you think it's wrong to make money on the shipping think about these examples:

1. When I list something on eBay with a flat rate shipping of \$12.77 based on the cost to ship the box across the country to New York, and a California bidder wins the auction meaning my shipping cost will be \$8.00, if I give the CA buyer a refund on the unearned shipping, his cost for the item is now lower than the cost the NY buyer would have paid. Is this lower price for the CA bidder fair to the NY bidder?
2. A 12.8 ounce box sent by first class mail costs \$4.00, while a 13.1 ounce box will cost \$6.00 by Priority Mail. If I weigh the box when I'm packing it and see it weighs over 13 ounces before I tape it shut, and then trim some cardboard off the inner flaps of the box to lower the weight, I can save \$2.00 on postage. If I take the 20 seconds to weigh and trim the box before taping it shut, what has the buyer done to earn the \$2.00? Additionally, if I refunded the \$2.00 I saved on postage by trimming the box, what incentive do I have for trimming the box?
3. I've had many newsletter readers email me saying they never charge more than the postage for shipping. These people pay eBay and PayPal fees on the shipping they collect. Currently that's 12-13%. This means these sellers

are losing 12-13% of the shipping cost they collect on every package. Some of the sellers even refund the buyers when they collect too much shipping. When asked they do this because it makes the buyer happy, but none of them has ever had a buyer thank them for this refund.

I doubt these examples will change your mind, but remember you are running a business. Not a Charity, Not an enterprise to make friends, a business.

This book is distributed on the honor system.
You get to read the book and then pay for it.
Even better, you decide what you want to pay.
[Use this link to pay.](#)

Following Up With Non Paying Bidders

Some buyers will forget to pay and need to be reminded. About one percent of buyers will fail to pay, and about five percent of your buyers will need a reminder. Because you are dealing with people you do not know, you cannot tell if they are planning on paying you and forgot, or if they are just not going to pay.

Because you cannot tell which type of deadbeat you are dealing with, you should treat all non paying bidders like they forgot. Be polite and pleasant if you email the buyers directly. Remember, while it is a common cliché, the post office actually does loose mail. I have had checks from buyers come in weeks after the postmark.

EBay will refund your end of auction fees when buyers do not pay for items. You can also get partial credit when you collect an amount smaller than the bid price. The first step in getting a refund of your end of auction fees is to file an unpaid item claim.

You can easily file an alert by clicking on resolve a problem on the right drop down menu on your sold items page or by clicking on the report an unpaid item link at the top of the original auction listing.

Sending a non-paying bidder alert is required to get your end of auction fees back. You must file the alert at least 3 days after the auction ends and you cannot file a report after 45 days. And you must wait 5 days after filing the alert to request a fees credit.

A warning here. Some sellers abuse this process. I had a seller take a week to send me a total, and then file an NPB the same day! I had another seller start this process and then when I emailed to say I had sent a check the day after the auction ended she told me she did alerts in case the check bounced.

You should send non paying bidder alerts only as needed. Don't make more work for yourself. Keep things simple and remember to always be polite.

If the buyer does not send payment, go back to the eBay non paying bidder page and request a credit for your end of auction fees.

Ebay's Unpaid Item Assistant

You can automate this process by setting up the nonpaying bidder assistant. I have mine set so it sends out notices automatically 4 days after the listing ends. The assistant then closes the cases if they aren't paid automatically.

I also have a list of excluded bidders who don't get notices. These are buyers who pick up locally, or who buy frequently and get special shipping like one box a month.

To set up the assistant the path is My eBay > My Account > Preferences > Unpaid Item Assistant Preferences.

You click on show on the Unpaid Item Assistant pane, then on edit to get the screen. Excluded buyers are listed at the bottom of that screen.

Dealing With Buyer Complaints

Sooner or later you will surely get complaints from buyers. It is a sad fact, but for some people- maybe too many people – complaining is a hobby.

If you get a complaint from a buyer BEFORE the item is shipped cancel the sale. When you cancel a sale on eBay and select the reason "Problem with buyer's address or Buyer changed his mind," eBay will refund the buyer if he's already paid, and refund your final value fees. Additionally, the buyer cannot leave feedback for you when these reasons are selected.

If those options aren't available and the buyer hasn't paid, raise the shipping price so the buyer's total is under \$650. The buyer won't pay this and your fees will be refunded when the unpaid item case is closed. Buyers who don't pay and get an unpaid item strike aren't allowed to leave feedback.

I talked about [offering a return policy](#) earlier, and will continue the explanation here.

Your return policy is your best response to buyer complaints. When I get a complaint from a buyer I immediately send this email in reply:

Name,

I am sorry you are not happy with your item. I want you to enjoy owning the trains you buy from me.

You see, I look at the trains in my collection and they all have stories associated with them. Memories. I want to be able to look at my trains and

enjoy owning them. I don't want to have second thoughts, or misgivings about them.

In fact, I want you to enjoy your trains as much as I enjoy mine. If you are not happy with this item send it back. I will refund your money – including shipping and handling both ways.

Please include your name and address and my five digit tracking number beginning with a C in the package so I can get your refund out immediately.

Sorry for your disappointment,
Terry Gibbs
PO BOX 842
Mesa, AZ 85211

* * *

This is a powerful email. I really do want people to enjoy owning the trains I sell. I also want them to buy more trains from me in the future.

After I send this email out, the people who complain because I made a mistake in the description send the items back and I refund their money with a note like this:

Name,

Here's your refund for the train you sent back. Sorry you were not happy with the item.

Bid:	\$75.18
Shipping:	8.00
Return shipping:	8.00
Stamp you mailed payment with	.37
Money order fee:	<u>1.00</u>
Total refund:	\$92.55

Enjoy your trains,
Terry

* * *

Notice I refunded the cost of the money order and the stamp the buyer used to mail his payment. I stand behind my errors and want to turn unhappy buyers into repeat buyers. The \$1.37 is the final step in creating repeat buyers.

If the buyer paid with PayPal, I just reverse the payment after the item is received, and then send a second amount to cover return postage.

When a buyer is complaining about nothing, they read my “I want you to be happy email” and usually decide to keep the item. In fact, over 95 percent of the people who get the email keep the item.

Every now and then I get a buyer who comes back and asks if I will renegotiate the price. If this request is made in the first email I send my standard “I want you to be happy email” and refuse to renegotiate the price. If the buyer asks for a discount after I send the refund email, I will give the buyer a portion of the shipping costs back. This is cheaper than paying return shipping.

If you give partial refund through PayPal make sure they are tagged to the original payment. This is done by logging in to PayPal, bringing up the original transaction and selecting refund this payment at the bottom of the screen.

This is important for 2 reasons:

1. If the buyer later complains, PayPal can see the partial refund,
2. PayPal will reverse the fees associated with the refunded amount.

Remember, this is done on a case by case basis. I never negotiate with anyone who is rude with me. I once had a buyer send me an email after receiving a train I sold for parts or repainting that went like this:

It was bound to happen sooner or later. Some #@ \$! like you would rip me off on eBay. I took the trains to the local hobby shop and everyone there was amazed at the piece of @\$#% you sent me.

You should be ashamed of yourself. This item has three small dents in it and it will cost me 80 dollars to have the repair person at the shop fix them. Please send me \$80.

Name

* * *

I am not going to allow anyone to treat me this way. You shouldn't either. I sent the buyer my standard refund email and he said, “No, I want the \$80.00.” I replied with his choices- keep the item or return it.

He became even ruder and more abusive..

Some buyers use these tactics to get discounts. This is nothing more than extortion. I will not deal with people like this. I do not want him as a repeat customer, I don't even want to talk to him.

As of 2018, I'm seeing that complaints aiming for a discount are mostly people buying items for resale and trying to knock the price down so they can make more money. Currently I get 12-1500 feedbacks a year, and see more of this when I have no negative or neutral feedbacks. Once I get a few bad feedbacks from extortionists the rest of them leave me alone.

Update 2011 edition: With eBay's buyer protection program I now list most items sold for parts or repair with no returns. This is done by changing the return policy checkbox in the listing to No Returns. This prevents the buyer from going to eBay and getting his money back, however won't prevent the buyer from claiming the item was not as described.

Update 2015 edition - eBay now gives buyers prepaid postage that comes out of the seller's paypal account for returns. This is done under the managed returns program and when the buyer wins a dispute. I don't use managed returns and try to keep the buyer out of the eBay dispute process.

In 2014, I had two buyers win disputes and fail to return the item with tracking. When the buyer doesn't upload tracking information within 2 weeks of winning the dispute the dispute is closed and the buyer can no longer return the item or leave negative feedback.

To sum this up before we move on to feedback, treat buyers with respect and accommodate the polite ones. Stand behind your mistakes and you will create repeat buyers. But above all do not allow anyone to take advantage of you.

What To Do If A Buyer Opens An eBay Protection Case Against You

You've seen the ads on eBay offering buyer protection. These ads usually say if the item is not as described or you don't get it, eBay will refund the buyer's money as long as the purchase was paid for with PayPal.

The way this works is a buyer complains to eBay that the item isn't as described. Then eBay gives you a chance to respond. eBay doesn't send emails, the only place you'll see them is in the messages tab on your My eBay page so you'll need to watch that.

Since 2011, I've had about a dozen buyer protection cases started against me. That works out to about 1 case for every 800 sales. The first one I lost because the first time I saw it, was when PayPal sent me an email telling me eBay had removed money from my account. I'm certain based on the later cases that eBay would have ruled in my favor if I'd responded to the buyer's complaint. I described this case earlier.

There was a case in September 2013 with a man who bought a \$25 item for \$45, then decided he'd overpaid so he claimed it didn't work. I knew by then that I had to respond to the buyer with the eBay message system and that failing to respond would result in eBay finding against me.

I answered every message from the buyer with the same mantras - The listing clearly says "This item works when tested but is being sold as is with no guarantees. This is sold as is based on cosmetic condition with no returns or exchanges."

After a week or so, the buyer escalated his claim to eBay. About 10 minutes later, eBay decided in his favor and told him to send the item back and they'd refund him. I think this was a wrong decision on eBay's part and later events showed that, but I can live with it.

A week later eBay took the money out of my PayPal account because the tracking showed the item had been returned. I went to the post office and it wasn't there. I even asked about it.

It turns out the buyer sent it back to my PO Box by UPS. Because the driver can't deliver to a PO Box, he magically discovered an address he assumed to be close enough and left the box with someone at the front desk.

When I complained to eBay that UPS hadn't delivered the package to my post office box and I didn't have a physical address to receive packages much less a front desk, eBay put the matter on hold while they "investigated."

As soon as they put the matter on hold, the buyer filed another complaint with eBay. This time he claimed the item was counterfeit. I'd never looked at the buyer's feedback prior to this point, but he's left negative feedbacks for 1 out of every 70 feedbacks. Currently I'm running 1 negative for every 6-800 positives.

I used to assume that eBay looked at these percentages when deciding cases. After all, seller with very few complaints coming up against a buyer who complains frequently should get the benefit of his reputation when a complaint arises. I doubt this is true anymore.

Today I think - this is just an opinion, that eBay only looks to see that both parties to the dispute are being polite. If one party is being rude, the rude one loses. If both or neither parties are rude, eBay decides in the buyers favor.

In the case of the buyer above, eBay told me to fax them a signed declaration saying I hadn't received the item. I did so and they returned the buyer's money to my account. Additionally they removed the negative feedback the buyer had left me. I don't know if he got his money back or not.

I had a buyer win a case against me in 2015 because a train loco I sold as is for repair didn't run. My description clearly explained what needed to be done to make the loco run. The buyer didn't want to do the work and complained to eBay. He was told to return the train and given a return label with the postage cost added to my account.

I never got the loco back. Tracking showed it came from North Carolina to AZ, and then was returned to sender as undeliverable. I assume the label was damaged in transit.

I called eBay to complain and was told it was my fault because I gave the buyer the wrong return address. It took me a half hour of asking each representative in India for a supervisor to get to an eBay employee here in the US who immediately reversed the decision and refunded my money.

The buyer got his money back and got to keep the train. I got my money and the buyer's feedback removed.

If you read the last four paragraphs again there is a lesson there. Actually two lessons. The easy lesson is to politely work up the representative ladder until you get a supervisor who can solve your problem. I leave the other for you to figure out because I won't recommend methods of possibly committing fraud.

I bring this story up for a reason. That representative told me any buyer who complained about getting a train that didn't work would win the case. The reps don't even read the description.

Buyer says it doesn't work, buyer gets his money back even if the description clearly says the item doesn't work.

Adding the words broken or not working for repair to the title might change the result of a dispute, but probably won't.

This changed the way I listed many items. I put “BROKEN” or “4 REPAIR” in the titles. I also make NO statements about operation in the description.

This lowers the number of problems because it scares off buyers who think they can buy a broken train and then play with it as is without repairing it. That's what was happening.

I'm selling junk trains for parts and people are buying them to run on their layouts. The cheap @&%%\$ers. Oddly listing trains as broken doesn't seem to lower selling prices and might even increase them a bit.

Items Not Delivered Complaints

Another type of eBay dispute case is items not delivered. If you mail the item to a confirmed address using an eBay label and the tracking shows it's delivered, you win the case. You need signature confirmation for items over \$750, but otherwise it's the same.

In these cases eBay will ask the buyer to affirm the item wasn't received. eBay will refund the buyer and you get to keep your money.

If the tracking doesn't show it as delivered, the buyer gets his money back and you get the money taken out of your paypal account.

If you mail an item by Parcel Post sometimes the postal workers will bury the box and it will be delayed. In 2017, I mailed a Tonka truck by parcel post. Track went to in transit with no updates 3 days after I mailed it. 7 days later eBay refunded the buyer's money and added the cost to my eBay bill.

Luckily, in this case the buyer called me on the phone and paid me when he got the truck, but we can't count on that happening. I've seen boxes just stop getting tracking updates many times. They are ALWAYS parcel post boxes.

Because of this, I recommend you never use parcel post. You get different discounts open shipping depending on your seller status, but it seems that most sellers with acceptable selling ratings pay about the same for parcel post as Priority mail unless the package is large and heavy. Just pass this cost on to your buyers.

Leaving Feedback

EBay allows buyers and sellers to leave feedback for each other. This feedback is designed to give others an idea of the trustworthiness and ethics of eBayers.

There are three types of feedback:

1. Positive
2. Neutral
3. Negative

As a seller you can only leave positive feedback. I leave feedback once a month during the first weekend of the month.

Much has been written over the years about getting good feedback.

The truth is it's easy.

Just treat your buyers the way you want to be treated and you won't have problems. I stopped leaving negatives for buyers long before eBay stopped allowing them because almost all of the negatives I received were retaliatory negatives.

Detailed Seller Ratings

As of 2016, I recommend you just ignore these ratings, but have left this material here. EBay doesn't use the ratings for any purpose anymore.

In 2007, eBay introduced Detailed Seller Ratings (DSR) as part of the feedback process. This allows buyers to rate sellers between 1 and 5 on four areas, and is shown at the top of the feedback page. Here's one:

Criteria	Average rating
Item as described	★★★★★
Communication	★★★★★
Shipping time	★★★★★
Shipping and handling charges	★★★★★

The ratings shown above are from my feedback page. The values range from 4.9 for shipping time to 4.7 for shipping charges.

There are four problems with these ratings:

1. They are subjective. A happy buyer could give you a 4, while a somewhat happy buyer might give you the same 4.
2. They are biased. Because it takes more work to leave detailed ratings, buyers who are upset are more likely to fill out the form.
3. Buyers are unreasonable. I regularly lose money on shipping, but get dinged by buyers who feel my shipping charges are too high.
4. If you are a low volume seller - under 50 transactions a month - two unrealistic buyers can push your numbers down by reporting low satisfaction.

Since this program was introduced I've tried many different things to push my numbers upward, and only leaving feedback quickly after the auction ended had an effect. That is the only thing I recommend you do.

If you're doing a good job, you should see numbers between 4.5 and 5.0 in all areas. If your numbers go below 4.5 for any criteria you need to look at the way you are doing things to see why, and take steps to improve your results.

If you're a PowerSeller with high volumes, make sure you leave feedback for your buyers. PowerSellers get discounts on Final Value Fees for having high satisfaction ratings. I cannot see any correlation between my actions and the discounts.

I do exactly the same things every month and get discounts about 60 percent of the time. I used to get upset about not getting the discounts, but now I just don't expect them, and don't pay any attention to the numbers.

Update to 2011 edition: Since the DSRs were implemented eBay changed the program to throw out the worst reports each month. This means you now need two unrealistic buyers to have your score drop. Additionally, eBay buyers don't seem to be as harsh in their judgments anymore. In fact the eBay average has moved up a few points.

One note here. EBay sometimes runs promotions like double the final value fee discount on items with free shipping if you have high ratings for the month. Because you cannot be sure you'll get these high ratings, do not use the expectation of getting higher discounts when figuring shipping charges.

Selecting The Best Listing Type

EBay has different types of listings. Up until now we've only discussed auctions because we assumed you're selling used items, and usually auctions result in the lowest fees. Sometimes this assumption is false, so now we'll look at when to use fixed price listings instead of auctions.

Currently eBay charges the same listing and final value fees for all types of listings, so the cost of listing in different ways is the same.

Lets begin by examining the different types of listings:

STRAIGHT AUCTION (SA): A listing where the highest bidder wins regardless of amount. In this report I assume a SA to have an opening bid of \$9.99 or less.

The Straight Auction with low opening bid should be used when selling high demand and low priced items outside the electronics categories. As long as there are enough bidders to drive the price up, you'll save on eBay fees with this option.

For higher valued items with high demand, running an auction can result in higher prices meaning you make more money in some cases.

Additionally, running auctions can be better for your cash flow than doing fixed price listings. An auction ends and you get paid. With a fixed price listing, you might have to wait months before a willing buyer comes along.

An odd example here is a vase I had listed with a fixed price for \$125. It sat for months with no action. I changed the listing to an auction and the vase sold for \$165. Now usually you'll get a price at or below the fixed price when relisting as an auction, but this happens frequently enough in the antiques and collectibles market.

If you don't have enough bidders to drive the ending price up to the item's value, you'll use one of the following options to prevent low closing prices.

STRAIGHT AUCTION With HIGH OPENING PRICE (SAH): Some sellers use high opening bids in straight auctions to set the minimum selling price.

RESERVE AUCTION (RA): A listing with a low opening bid and a higher HIDDEN reserve amount. The high bidder only wins if the reserve is met. EBay charges a reserve price fee of either \$3.00 or 2% of the reserve amount whichever is higher.

I don't recommend using reserves. If you feel the need to prevent your item from selling below a specific price, list it with a fixed price above the price you want and the best offer option. This way you will get people to make you offers on your item and take an offer meeting your expectations. Or use an auction with a higher opening bid.

BUY IT NOW (BIN): This is an added feature and can be used with either auctions or reserve auctions. It's free.

If BIN is used without a reserve the opportunity to use buy it now is available until the first bid is placed, or in some cases until the bidding reaches approximately 50% of the BIN. When used with a reserve the BIN is available until the reserve is met.

Three ways to use Buy It Now:

1. **SABIN:** Straight Auction with low opening bid and a BIN at the expected selling price. For example a starting bid of 99 cents and a bin of \$7.99. Not a good choice with wide spreads between opening bid and BIN price, so do not use with BIN price above \$12.00
2. **SAHBIN:** Straight Auction with Higher Opening Bid and BIN. For example a starting bid of \$24.99 and a BIN of \$27.00.
3. **RABIN:** Reserve Auction with BIN. For example an auction with an opening bid of 99 cents, a reserve of \$250, and a BIN of \$260. In this case the BIN gives pricing information to bidders and improves the chances of meeting the reserve.

FIXED PRICE (FP): With this eBay option you set the price you want, and there is no bidding. From a buyer's point of view this is like a Buy It Now listing, but there is no chance to place a bid. You can run fixed price listings for a 3,5,7,10,30 days and as good to canceled. I always do 30 day listings., and recommend you do not use good till canceled.

See [The Fixed Price Trap](#) for more information about using fixed price listings.

The fixed price listing is often used with a Best Offer option so I'll explain the best offer before giving additional details on fixed price.

BEST OFFER (BO): You can add the best offer option to fixed price listings. Best offer allows viewers to offer you less than the price specified. Because the best offer is free, you should use it with all but the lowest fixed price listings. You

don't want to use BO with a \$10 fixed price MP3 player because it's not worth your time to deal with offers.

Before we look at examples, if you use the best offer option, you should set an amount at which all lower offers will be automatically declined. I've had people offer ten dollars on 100 dollar items and waste my time.

Here's a few examples to show you how to use this listing option.

Fixed Price Example 1: I listed a rare item on eBay with a fixed price of \$1175. Anyone willing to pay that could buy it immediately. I thought the item was worth about \$1100, but really didn't want to sell it.

Fixed Price Example 2: I listed an extremely rare item on eBay for \$2697 with the best offer option. This item rarely comes up for sale, and prices fluctuate widely. I've seen them sell for between \$900 and 3100. After letting the listing run for 5 days I took the highest offer - \$1500.

The Best Offer option is also a great way to discover what your item is worth. Use a high fixed price and bidders will make offers. Throw out the ones at the bottom and average the higher offers to get an estimate of the value.

Another note about fixed price offers. I sell heavy toy train transformers. They weigh up to 15 pounds when packed. All buyers pay the same shipping costs so I'll take a lower offer from closer shoppers.

Advanced Fixed Price Technique: I see people listing items with fixed prices and then relisting when the listings end at lower prices or with auctions.

That works, but takes time and increases your listing fees every time an item ends without selling.

Here's a better way.

List your item with a fixed price for 30 days at the upper range of what it's worth and then at the top of the listing tell viewers you'll change the listing to an auction with a lower opening bid on a specific date. Then when you relist the item, use the eBay online relisting button in the seller hub or from the ended listing so the watcher are notified that you relisted the item.

By doing this they will watch the item and hopefully bid. I've done well with this technique.

Should You Sign Up For An eBay Store?

An eBay store costs between \$19.95/24.95 and \$300/350 a month. Lower amounts reflect a discount on the store fee when you agree to pay for a year of fees. The more expensive store options get more free listings. The final value fees are the same for all types of stores.

Without a store sellers pay 10% final value fees, with a store it's 9.15%. This means that if you sell \$2347 or more a month a store subscription is worth it. Remember that \$2347 includes shipping charges. If you do \$2347 or more every month go for the yearly subscription.

If you're just an occasional seller having a store is not worth the cost unless you sell expensive items. Then you'd want to sell the expensive items as a store and cancel the store during months when you sell cheap items.

A store subscriber also gets more free listings a month and pays lower insertion fees. But remember, eBay will refund insertion fees for listings that sell.

This makes calculations difficult to see if a store is worthwhile for sellers with less than \$2437 a month in sales.

Basically the math for a basic store is

$$(A-250)*.25 + (F-250)*.20 + 19.95 + S*.0915 = (A+F-20)*.30 + S*.10$$

To compare a premium and basic store:

$$(A-500)*.15 + (F-1000)*.10 + 40 = (A-250)*.25 + (F-250)*.20$$

Where:

A is auction listings that end without a sale.

F is fixed price listings.

S is total sales including shipping costs paid by the buyers.

I've simplified the last equations.

Uses For eBay Watched Item Counts

When you look at your listings on your My eBay Item's I'm Selling Page there is a column that shows you how many people have viewed it and how many people are

watching your listing. Watching means they've bookmarked your listing so they can bid later, or so they can see what it brings.

There are a number of ways to use the number of watchers to help us get higher amounts in our auctions.

An easy test if we have multiple items is to run one auction in different categories and see which results in more watchers. That way we can select the best categories. We also want to pay attention to the prices realized because we are after dollars not watchers.

One note about this, you can run up to 10 auctions for the same item at a time. This means if you find categories that work, you might want to run your auction in more than one category.

Side note: if you have many of the same item a way to get great results is to run an auction for one item, and then send second chance offers to other bidders who bid more than your minimum selling price.

Using second chance offers lowers your eBay fees and usually results in higher prices because the items seem scarcer.

Now back to ways to use watchers to do better on eBay. . .

Another way to use the number of watchers is to decide whether to let an auction end, or cancel it before it ends. You can cancel an auction and all bids in one click up to 12 hours before it ends. In the last 12 hours you cannot cancel bids if you end your auction.

For example I had an auction running when I wrote this with 21 watchers. It's currently at \$103, and I expect it to end tomorrow at \$225-275. With that number of watchers I can be confident the auction will move up. (The item sold for \$345!)

I have another auction ending tomorrow with no watchers and no bids. I expected that auction to end in the \$20-25 range. Based on the number of watchers I can be confident it won't reach my expected selling price. So I'll cancel the auction rather than risking only one bidder buying it for 99 cents.

In the second auction, I can relist the item later, or I can just sell the item at a local show.

I rarely do reserve price auctions. By tracking the number of people watching my auctions, I can save money on listing fees and insure I get a reasonable amount for my items.

When I cancel items I also take into account the price. I want my items to reach at least 40% of the expected selling price with 24 hours left. If they aren't at 40% or don't have at least 25 people watching them, I end the auction.

That's a few ways knowing the number of auction watchers can help your selling.

Congratulations

You now know more about selling on eBay than 95 percent of eBay sellers. Using your superior knowledge you will get higher bids in your auctions. You will spend less time listing items and have more time to enjoy your life.

My goal in writing this manual is to help you succeed with your own business.

The rest of this manual explains how to expand your auction business and find products.

Terry Gibbs
Feb 26th 2018.

This book is distributed on the honor system.
You get to read the book and then pay for it.
Even better, you decide what you want to pay.
[Use this link to pay.](#)

Advanced EBay Techniques

Finding Items To Sell

You now have more knowledge about eBay than 95 percent of eBay sellers. You will get higher bids in your auctions and are able to list items much more efficiently.

But, there is more to having a successful eBay business than knowing the right way to sell on eBay. You'll need products to sell. Maybe you already have items to sell, or have a way to get new products. Maybe not.

When I first wrote this manual, I often met people standing in line at the post office who were flush with anticipation. They were just starting to sell on eBay and were making money fast.

Actually most of them were not making money. They were just turning unwanted items in their homes into cash. This is a great way to start selling on eBay, but it is not a strategy for long term success.

After you have sold everything that wasn't nailed down, you will need to find a reliable source for items to sell on eBay. There are a number of different avenues available to find items for resale.

Before we start discussing where to get products, we need to discuss specializing. The most successful eBay sellers specialize. For example, I sell used toy trains and toys.

You can specialize in more than one type of item, but should start with something that interests you. When I started selling on eBay I was already buying and selling toy trains.

I will buy anything I can get for a price I think I can make money on, but I do not sell most of the non-train items myself.

You see, I believe so strongly in the power of specializing that I have others sell items for me. I have a woman who sells dishes for me, a man who sells old tools for me, and another guy who sells all the comic books and sports cards I find.

The reason I pay others to sell the non-train items is because they also specialize. By specializing in specific types of antiques or collectibles, they build high confidence with their buyers.

Almost sixty percent of my eBay sales are to repeat buyers. I have earned their trust, and get higher prices. The people who sell items for me have the same repeat buyers.

They also have a deeper knowledge of what they sell. Just as I can look at any toy train and know exactly what it is, and how to sell it, these people can look at what they sell and assess it without researching on eBay.

If you unsure what to specialize in, sell a wide variety of items until you find something you like. I will talk a bit later about doing consignment selling. EBay consignment selling is a great way to learn about antiques and collectibles.

You can specialize in anything. The only requirement is the availability of enough items to make a good profit.

I know successful sellers who specialize in the following types of items:

- Used Music
- Used tools.
- Used books.
- Dishes.
- Toy trains.
- Auto parts.
- Sports Cards.
- Dolls.
- Toys.
- Autographs.
- Action Figures.
- Star Wars items.
- Coins.
- Stamps.
- Clothes.
- Movies.
- And many, many more.

As you can see from the short list above, you can specialize in almost anything. Some of these sellers even specialize in specific manufacturers like Lennox dishes or designer clothes. You can be as general, or as specific, within your specialty as you want.

Now that we have covered specializing, lets get into finding products.

Here are a few different ways to get products:

- Your network.
- People rather than products.
- Drop shipping.
- Yard sales and flea markets.

- Discount stores and outlet malls.
- Closeouts and liquidation sales.
- EBay consignment.
- Getting people to call you and invite you into their homes to buy their unwanted items. This is what I do.
- EBay arbitrage.
- Create or Make items yourself.

You can use one or all of these methods to get a steady stream of items to sell on eBay. I will discuss each method separately.

Your Network

I put this section first because it introduces important considerations when you search for products to sell on eBay. Rather than looking for products to sell, let's consider what the people you already know may have that you can sell.

When we start by looking for people with products we can sell, we are more likely to find items with low competition. Even better, by creating our own opportunities, we lower the chances others can copy our efforts.

If we find products through wholesale lists, it's easy for others to start copying us; all they need is the list.

Before I explain how this works, I'll give you a few examples of going from people to products so you can see this in action:

Shortly after I first started selling on eBay, I began selling trains and toys belonging to people who were also members of a local train club. This is how I got my start doing eBay consignment sales.

- I know a woman who manages a thrift store. She calls me every time old toys come in. I give her pricing advice and usually either buy the items for cash or sell them on consignment. I also leveraged my relationship with her to get into other thrift stores.
- My sister does consignment sales for people at her church. Her clients see her every week during the services. Rarely a week goes by that someone doesn't approach her at church and ask about her consignment services.

Note: I love consignment selling because I don't have any risk. If the stuff doesn't bring any money, I don't lose anything. Whereas when I pay cash for something, I risk my money.

- One of my friends (*I know a lot of people, as I'm sure you do!*) knows someone who works at a large manufacturing company. He buys excess materials. For example, the company made umbrellas for a while. These weren't big sellers, and they canceled production, so he bought all the left-over cloth.
- Another friend of mine worked for a software company. He no longer works there but still knows people who do. This company provides many of its employees with laptops. When the laptops break, they issue their employees new ones. My friend buys boxes of these broken laptops, repairs them, and sells them on eBay.
- One of my students recently told me a great story about how he found unique products to sell on eBay. His wife forced him to attend a local home-and-garden show. While he was walking around, bored stiff, he saw a display set up by a local manufacturer. Spotting an item he thought might sell on eBay, he bought one. It did, and the rest is history.
- A few years ago, one of my friends was moving his office. I offered to help out in exchange for the items he didn't want to move. I ended up hauling off a truck load of toner cartridges, computer accessories, fax machines and other goodies I then sold on eBay.
- Another one of my friends started a business years ago. He never promoted the products because his other businesses took all his time. He had cases of these products made for him. I buy them from him for just over his cost and then sell them on eBay. I've been slowly cleaning out his garage one or two boxes at a time for three years.

In all of these examples, the people with the products are either busy running other businesses, no longer running a business, concentrating on other sales avenues -- or they just plain don't have the time or knowledge to sell their items on eBay. These are the kinds of people you want to find: people who will see the money you earn for them as extra income that requires little or no effort on their part.

It's almost like getting something for nothing.

In the case of obsolete products, you're converting boxes into cash. For manufacturers, you're creating additional sales they wouldn't get otherwise.

Read the last paragraph again.

That's the **value** you provide to people with products. The ability to turn unwanted items into cash.

Now Let's Talk About Finding People...

To find people with products you can sell on eBay, just answer these questions:

Who do you know?

Friends, relatives, neighbors, coworkers, etc. . .

Who do they know?

Their friends, relatives, neighbors, coworkers, etc. . .

Who is close to you?

Local stores, wholesalers, manufacturers etc. . .

What is close to you?

Trade shows, events, clubs and organizations, etc. . .

Once you've identified people who may have products, you simply contact them and tell them you can clear out their unsold merchandise.

This sounds really simple because it is simple.

When you first start out, you should work with people close to you. This will make it easier because you won't have trust issues.

Remember, there are lots of people running around who are all talk and no action. They can suck up huge amounts of time, so people with products may be reluctant to meet with you unless you can demonstrate prior success.

Starting with people you know will allow you to develop a track record you can point to when you approach people you don't know well. Your experience will open many doors.

Once you've gotten someone interested enough to talk with you, you have three options:

You can:

1. **Train the business owner to sell on eBay.**
2. **Sell items on consignment.**
3. **Buy items for cash**

The first option -- **teaching people to sell on eBay** -- is the least profitable because there is no continuing stream of money. The good thing is, few people will take you up on this offer. Remember, this whole concept works because you are offering people sales for no work. If they had the time or ambition to sell their excess inventory on their own, they would be doing it themselves.

The second option -- **selling the items on consignment** -- is a great, no-risk way to handle these deals. You just charge a percentage -- I charge 30 to 35 percent -- of the eBay selling price, and if the items don't sell, you return them.

The last option -- **paying cash for the items** -- is more risky but can be more profitable. If you know what the items will bring on eBay, this is the option for you. For example, my friend who buys the laptops knows that for every ten broken laptops he buys, he'll end up with seven working laptops to sell. He can look at a pile of laptops and make a good guess concerning their value.

If you are unfamiliar with the merchandise, do consignment sales to get started; later, when you've learned the ropes, you can start buying items for cash.

There is another option when you're paying cash. This applies more to manufacturers, but you might also do it with store owners or people who used to own businesses:

Remember the example of the home-and-garden show I mentioned?

After my friend had successfully sold the items for a few months, he talked the company into shipping them directly to his buyers. Each time he sells one, he makes a phone call, and the company ships the item and charges his credit card.

Sweet!

This man has created the perfect scenario. He runs new auctions every week, never handles any products, and gets paid up front!

Warning: This could backfire if the products aren't in stock or the company doesn't ship them in a timely manner. If you are setting up this type of arrangement, you need to know and trust the people you're dealing with, so don't jump in too fast.

In fact, you should move slowly in almost all these situations. The only time I don't is when I'm doing train and toy consignments. Then I take all the expensive stuff the first time so I can lock in the profits even if the relationship later goes south. (This also helps me wow the owner by returning with a big check for the first week's effort.)

By starting out slowly, you'll be able to stay on top of any problems that come up and build trust both ways.

People Rather Than Products

In the last section we talked about identifying people with products you can sell on eBay. In this section we'll turn that around.

Most people think of eBay as a place to sell stuff. It's really something more.

EBay is a place to reach buyers.

Write that down. It's the most important lesson you can learn when considering the products you'll offer on eBay.

Selecting products to resell on eBay is about people. . .

Back when I started teaching eBay selling skills, the most common question was "How do I put pictures into my auctions?" Today, few people ask about pictures because eBay has made adding photos easy.

Now, 16 years later, the most common question is, **"Where do I find products to sell on eBay?"**

Back then, almost no one asked about finding products. It just wasn't a concern because we were all collectors and dealers selling used items.

That's not the case anymore. Now everyone wants to know what to sell on eBay, and eBay has become all about finding products.

EBay is trying to become a marketplace like Amazon where people go to buy new things. In fact, I got a catalog from eBay in the mail recently. The catalog showed pictures of new items along with their average selling price.

EBay has even added pre-filled item specifics for sellers of the most common new items. This makes listing items easier for sellers, and helps buyers comparison shop for new items, but there is a problem.

This is product focused not people focused.

Maybe that's why so many people ask where to find products?

A better question is, "How do I identify groups of people who want to purchase items?"

When you start with that question others naturally come to mind:

- What else do these people want?
- Why are they buying these items?
- What are they used for?

Starting with people rather than products has another important advantage - it helps you add value to your listings.

Here's a simple lesson on value - Copywriters talk about features versus benefits. Features are product focused statements like these:

- 92 pages
- gold plated terminals
- die cast construction.

On the other hand, a benefit demonstrates value to the buyer. Here are the same statements, rewritten as benefits or "value statements":

- At only 92 pages this book is to the point
- Gold plated terminals will not corrode reducing connections
- Detailed die cast construction resists damage and increases pulling power.

People buy items based on benefits -- not features -- and you are selling things to people. When you shift your focus from products to people, everything else becomes easy.

When I look at items, the first thing I ask myself is who will buy them.

For example, earlier this week, I bought an item on eBay which I'll relist as soon as it comes in. I expect to get about \$300 more than I paid for it because I know what type of person will want it and exactly how to appeal to potential buyers.

This is one way of doing eBay arbitrage: looking at items listed on eBay from a buyer's viewpoint. More on eBay arbitrage later.

Now, I know what toy train buyers want because I have years of experience. I'm also a collector, but I'm finding that helps less and less because my tastes aren't the same as most newer collectors.

In order to stay current with my buyers, I track what sells. I also read discussion boards and talk to buyers and sellers in person and on the phone.

No matter what you sell, you should be doing the same thing. Ask your buyers questions. Send your phone number to your buyers, or put it in your auctions and encourage them to call.

Go to shows in your area and see what people are buying. Simple questions like, "What are you going to do with that?" or "Why did you buy that?" will provide you with a wealth of information.

If you're caught up in looking for eBay products -- **STOP**. Start looking for people, and the products will identify themselves.

Drop Shippers

If you have an email account, you have surely received Spam promoting a make money on eBay opportunity. Almost all of these emails promote lists of drop shippers.

These emails promise you unlimited access to a wide variety of products you can sell on eBay. A drop shipper is a company who will ship items to your buyers with your name on the label.

Over the past 19 years I have met hundreds of people who bought into the promise of the drop shippers. Of these people, I know no one who successfully made any money this way.

They all fail and move on to something else.

The reason most drop shippers fail is because there is too much competition. The margins are razor thin because everyone competes on price.

Drop shipping is not the way to go. I know it sounds attractive because it requires little or no investment, but there is little or no profit either.

If you are interested in using a drop shipper for product, make sure you are dealing with a real drop shipper.

There are companies who promote themselves as drop shippers who are actually just standing between you and the real drop shipper. No real drop shipper will charge you a membership fee. A membership fee is a quick tip off to a broker.

Also, no real drop shipper will allow you to sell items until you have provided him with a sales tax license. All wholesalers require sales tax licenses because the law requires them to keep them on file. Contact your state's Chamber of Commerce for help with sales tax licenses.

There is one good use for drop shipping. If you have an existing list of buyers for an item, sourcing it through a drop shipper makes sense. I know someone who writes about 4wd vehicles and conversions. He has a newsletter and a website about these customized trucks.

He teaches people how to customize their trucks, and offers parts through a drop shipper. He is teaching, then selling.

I strongly recommend you avoid drop shippers unless you are offering items to an established list of people. Just offering the same products as everyone else to buyers on eBay has little chance of succeeding.

Yard Sales And Flea Markets

Yard sales and flea markets can be a great place to find used items you can sell. If you are fortunate enough to have a flea market or swap meet in your

area you should go. Here in Arizona, the swap meets have been taken over by vendors selling cheap imported garbage.

If you want second quality socks you will find them at our swap meets, but you won't find anyone selling old treasures from their attics and garage. Go to your local swap meets a few times to see what you can find.

There are only two things to remember when going to flea markets:

Get there early. You might need to go with a flash light so you can see the stuff in a good light.

Take CASH. Most sellers will not take a check and even if they would you don't want to spend the time writing a check. If the seller won't take a check, you don't want to spend the time going to the ATM to get cash. You want to pay and move on to see what else is there. Get enough cash the night before.

While shopping at flea markets, keep an eye on the tables. If a seller has not set all his stuff out, ask if they have the items you specialize in.

You will need to walk the market place a few times to see everything. While walking you should network with the sellers and the other shoppers. Don't forget to hand out your business cards.

Flea markets are a great place to find items and network. You'll also get some exercise, so be sure to wear comfortable shoes.

There is a series of articles about buying at garage sales on the website at:

<http://www.news.iwantcollectibles.com/garage-sales.shtml>

Dollar Stores and Outlet Malls

Dollar stores and outlet malls can be a great place to find items to resell on eBay. Here in Arizona we have hundreds of outlet stores selling everything from Lennox dishes to designer clothing at discounted prices. You can find last year's designer clothing at deep discounts in these malls.

I do not know enough about clothes to decide what is worth buying for resale and what is not, but I know people who make a good income picking through these stores.

Look for items with a large profit margin. This is important. You do not want to buy something at a dollar store to sell for five dollars. You want to find items for 5-10 dollars that will sell for over fifty dollars.

One of my mother's friends makes a few thousand dollars a month buying items at *Last Chance*. *Last Chance* is Nordstrom's outlet store for returned items and obsolete inventory.

She works down the street from the *Last Chance* store, and drops in a few times a week when she has time. She specializes in designer items like purses and shoes.

Hey, there's the word specialization again. It's the cornerstone of being successful.

You want to find items you can sell for 20 to 30 percent of retail and make 2-3 times your investment.

I know other eBay seller's who do well with dollar store items. If you have access to large quantities of the exact same item, you only need to write the auction once and just keep relisting it.

Dollar stores are a good place to find items, but you need to be more careful about what you buy.

I once saw cases of ceramic buildings in a dollar store. I thought they would be nice for train layouts and picked up a half dozen of them as a test. I paid \$6.50 for them all, and listed them within the train categories on eBay.

They all sold for at least the \$3.99 opening bid, but not for much more than that. Based on the test, I decided it was not worth my time to make \$2.00 per sale.

Some eBay sellers would continue to sell the buildings and make a small profit on each of them. This might be a good source of extra income for you.

It depends on what you want. I want to make a lot of money with a minimum of work. Some people are content to make a few extra dollars a week.

Closeouts and Liquidation Sales

Closeouts and liquidation sales are another way to find inventory to sell on eBay. When stores go out of business, or discontinue a product line, you can get great deals on the merchandise.

Watch out for fake “liquidation” sales. A lot of times businesses will hire companies to oversee the closing of the stores and the liquidators will fill the stores with junk.

I once went into a hardware store that was closing to find all the regular quality inventory had been removed and replaced with garbage. Instead of quality brand name 100 dollar socket sets, they were selling garbage sets with \$100 dollar fake price tags marked down to \$19.99.

You could find the same set of sockets in any discount tool store for \$9.99. So make sure you are buying real inventory with resale value.

Closeouts can be quite profitable, especially if the stores have older inventory. Years ago, I bought a hobby shop inventory that had been packed away in storage for 20 years. The store had been unable to sell the trains and moved them into a back room in order to make space for other items.

The lesson here is to get in the back room of stores that have been in business for a long time. You never know what will be hidden away in the back.

EBay Consignment Sales

Selling other people’s items on eBay is a really easy way to locate items to sell. When you sell on consignment, you have no cost of inventory, so you can start selling items with no investment.

Because there is no investment in inventory, there is no risk you will buy something for more than it is worth.

To run a consignment business all you need are people with items to sell. These can be friends, coworkers, business owners, or anyone who has something to sell on eBay. You simply take possession of the items from the owner, and then list the items on eBay.

After the auction ends, the buyer pays you and you subtract your commission and pass the rest of the money along to the consignor.

Setting Consignment Fees

Before you can sell things for other people you need to understand and decide how you are going to charge them. There are many different ways to set your fees.

Flat Rate

You can charge a flat rate per item, say five dollars for every item. This might be appropriate for selling items in Dutch auctions or when there are lots of similar items. I sold audio tapes for a while for \$9.99 each. I made \$5.00 for every one I sold, and ran them in fixed price multiple items listing. The seller only made a few dollars on each sale, but I put some advertisements for other tapes in the boxes when I shipped, and he made it up with additional sales from the ride along ads.

You do not want to do flat rates if the items are different and you have to generate a new auction listing for each item. It takes too much time. For the audio tapes mentioned above, I wrote one auction and relisted it every week. You can relist auctions easily by clicking on the relist link on your eBay Items I Am Selling page.

Straight or Fixed Commission

You can charge a fixed commission, say 10 percent of the selling price. This is a straight percentage. It doesn't vary, and is real easy to figure. This is the main way I charge today. I charge 30 percent of the selling price. The consignor knows he gets 70 percent of what ever their item sells for. There are no hidden fees.

Variable Commission

You can charge a variable commission, say 20% up to 100 dollars, then 10% of the amount over a hundred dollars. This works really well when you get a person who balks at paying a high fixed rate. You do the same amount of work when you list a \$1000 dollar item as when you list a hundred dollar item.

A variable commission recognizes the nature of listing and allows the consignor to feel like he is getting a deal. I never do variable fees. It is just as easy to charge a flat rate, and make more money.

However, a lot of other sellers do variable commissions so you should be aware of the option.

You should avoid variable fees if you can. In the 20%/10% example above, you will get $\$20 + 90 = 110$ for selling a \$1000 item. At a flat 20% rate you will get \$200. That ninety dollar difference can be yours once you learn to sell your services. Do not give up your fees easily.

Combinations

You can charge some a combination of flat rate, say five dollars per item plus 20% of the selling price. When people are insistent on having reserves on their items I charge 10.00 plus 30 percent. They pay the ten dollars whether the item sells or not. The \$10 is a research and listing fee.

You might want to negotiate with somebody that has a larger estate, if they have enough stuff to make it worth your while. If it is just somebody with one item, you do not want to negotiate and give away your profits. When someone has a nice stream of stuff, like a shop owner, or a retired elderly woman with a house full of antiques, do a special rate with them. You might want to charge an hourly fee for cleaning and sorting too.

Hourly Rates

On some of the estates I do, I charge an hourly rate for cleaning and sorting their items into lots. Then I also charge a percentage of the selling price. I charge between ten and twenty dollars an hour for sorting.

This is only for large estates with a lot of work involved in preparing the items for auction. If you can get this extra money take it, but remember your real income comes from selling items - not doing labor.

General Consignment Rules

Once you start selling things for people on eBay, you will need to have some rules with them. You need to explain these to the people that are giving you items for consignment. These rules will protect you and your reputation. Do not take them lightly.

No Shill Bidding

The most important rule is no shill bidding. eBay will suspend your account, and you might get prosecuted for fraud for allowing this. If you aren't familiar with the term, shill bidding is when the seller bids on his own item in order to inflate the price.

You do not want to risk your reputation, so be sure to tell all your clients they are not to bid on their own items.

A Contract

You need to have a contract with the consignor. Your contract explains the arrangement with the consignor. It explains the consignor's responsibility - they give you the item. It explains your responsibility - after you've been paid by the purchaser you will give the consignor his money, less the costs and consignment fees.

The contract also explains what happens in case of damage or theft of the items while in your possession. And what happens if the reserve is not met. And finally it states you are acting as an agent of the owner in selling the items.

There's a contract included in my [eBay Consignment Package](#).

Taking Possession

You must actually take possession of the consignment items. In some cases if you are selling things for your mom or someone you trust, you might not have to do this; but I strongly suggest that you always take possession of the items. You do not want to list something on eBay, sell it, then go to pick it up only to have the owner say "I think it was worth more I am going to keep it." These sellers will damage your reputation.

You have your eBay feedback to protect. Sure, you could sue the owner to force them to give it to you or to pay you for your time, and probably win. But, if you take possession of the item, it removes the possibility of this happening.

Also by allowing you to take possession the client is saying, "Yes, I am giving this to you to sell." I have had people I sell things for decide they want to keep things. Then I cancel the auction and return the item to them. They still pay me a small amount for my trouble.

If you have problems getting the consignor to give you the items, here are some reasons can give them to persuade them:

Tell the owner you need to take it with you so you can use your camera setup to get the perfect pictures that are so important to getting higher bids. Many people think digital pictures are complicated. You and I know differently, but it is to your advantage to let people think your work is more involved than it really is.

When you sell someone on your services, explain how you take your wonderful pictures. Tell them about your expensive digital camera and your special eight dollar light bulbs that you have set up so you can get perfect pictures. Reinforce that you need their item so you can take the best quality picture.

Tell the owner you need to have the item in your possession so you have it for reference when you are researching it to find the best category and writing the description.

Tell the owner you need to have the item in your possession so you can look right at it and answer them when bidders ask questions. You do not have to call the owner and try to puzzle out what the answer is to a question over the phone.

Tell the owner you will give him a receipt for the item. The receipt is their copy of the contract.

If you have a seller who is leery of giving you stuff, show them some of the testimonials you have from other consignors. Give them a list of referrals from the people you've dealt with in the past. Give them the whole lecture. You need it for the pictures, you need it for researching, and you need it to answer questions. If someone is not going to trust you with their items, then walk away. They are not the kind of person you want to deal with.

The above material was taken from my book on eBay consignment selling. The material I excerpted above explains setting prices, some general rules, and how to take possession of the items. This information is enough to get a consignment business started. If you want more information about eBay consignment selling, I advise you to get my complete package.

My [eBay Consignment Package](#) contains a sample contract, an inventory sheet, and specific instructions for finding and signing up consignments.

Finding Antiques And Collectibles

Many people who decide to make a living selling collectibles on eBay soon fail. I meet them in the line at the post office. They tell me they just quit their job in order to sell things full time on eBay. I ask everyone of them, "What are you doing in order to find more items to sell?" Only the people who can answer this question last more than a few weeks. The others soon run out of things to sell and give up.

I got started buying trains and toys when I was in grade school. My dad and I collect toy trains, and this was how we built our collection. We didn't have lots of money so we ran ads, put signs up, handed out cards, networked and tried all kinds of methods to get people to sell us their trains. Then we kept what we wanted, and sold the rest in order to keep the cash moving. Over the years, we have refined the system so it constantly generates calls.

Remember, you are always better off making someone call you, than competing with everyone else. When you go to yard sales, auctions and antique malls, you are in a race against all the other collectors and dealers. When people call you, it is because you have made them think about converting their unwanted items into cash by selling them to you.

Sure, you can go to yard sales and rely on luck. But if you are serious about selling on eBay you need to have a steady stream of collectibles coming in. You can't rely on blind luck or getting there before the other dealers. You need a system to get a constant stream of new items to list.

This is what I do. I focus on making my phone ring with anxious sellers. In my books on buying antiques and collectibles, I share these secret techniques with others.

This manual is more about eBay, than finding antiques and collectibles, but I do want to share some simple techniques with you. So I have put together this short list. These 27 strategies will get you thinking about ways to get sellers to call you.

I buy and sell toy trains, but so you can better focus on what you specialize in, I have substituted the word widget for toy trains.

1. Develop a marketing plan outlining exactly how you are going to make your phone ring.
2. Consider how you are going act in order to make the seller take your offer.
3. Ask the person in line behind you at the post office, bank, and supermarket if they have any widgets for sale.
4. Change the message on your answering machine so it tells everyone who calls you pay cash for old widgets.
5. Invite some people over to see your widgets.
6. Put some of your widgets into a display case at your local library or anywhere with a secure display case.
7. Put a display ad in your local paper, "Top Dollar Paid For Widgets."
8. Run an ad in the classified section of your local newspaper saying you pay cash for widgets.
9. Ask the person in line in front of you at the post office, bank, and supermarket if they know anyone with widgets.
10. Put signs up in the local businesses you frequent saying you pay cash for widgets.
11. Have business cards made saying top cash paid for widgets, and hand one to everyone you meet.
12. Run a free ad in the weekly shopper papers like the Pennysaver and Thrifty Nickel saying "No one pays more for widgets."
13. Buy a sign on the outfield fence at a Little League or Pop Warner field.
14. Run an ad in your company's newsletter saying you collect widgets.
15. Put 3 by 5 cards saying collector will pay cash for widgets on bulletin boards in grocery stores and Laundromats.

16. Send a letter to local real estate agents telling them you pay cash for unwanted widgets.
17. Tell other widget dealers you will buy any widgets they don't want.
18. Drop off your business card at local pawn shops.
19. Call everyone who offered you widgets and then didn't sell, and ask them if they have changed their mind about selling.
20. Join the local widget club and try to buy the other widget collectors duplicates.
21. Look at every ad you see and think about how you could modify it to get widgets.
22. Run an ad in Val-pak or Money Mailers saying you pay "Cash For Widgets."
23. Hang signs on telephone poles saying "Collector Pays Cash For Widgets Call 777-7777." (Local laws might prohibit this tactic.)
24. Tell the person in front of you in any line, you will pay them if they get their friends to sell you widgets.
25. Send thank you letters to everyone you bought widgets from in the past, and remind them you pay when they get their friends and neighbors to sell you widgets.
26. Tell your barber or hair stylist you like widgets and tell them you will pay them for sending you widget sellers.
27. Put a sign on your car that says "I Pay Cash For Widgets."

All these methods and more are fully explained in my collectible buying system. You'll learn "How To Get An Endless Stream Of People To Sell You Their Antiques And Collectibles. 67 Strategies To Make Your Phone Ring With Anxious Sellers." This is a complete turn key system to make your phone ring with anxious sellers.

The [Collector Strategies Package](#) is available online.

Ebay Arbitrage

When you know how to find poorly listed items on eBay, you can profit from your knowledge. You must have a knowledge about a specific type of items in order to make this work.

If you do not have a background knowledge of a specific type of items, you will not be able to identify items you can purchase and resell at a profit.

For example, I am a collector of toy trains in addition to being a dealer and have found some great deals on eBay. I know what most trains are worth, and know where to sell them for the best return.

There are six basic subsets of eBay arbitrage:

1. Finding items listed with poor pictures or in the wrong category and buying them to resell on eBay.
2. Finding items listed with poor pictures or in the wrong category and buying them to resell locally.
3. Finding items outside the country and buying them to resell locally or on eBay.
4. Finding large hard to ship items you can sell locally and can get without paying shipping costs by picking them up from the seller.
5. Finding local items listed poorly and negotiating a deal with the seller at his home.
6. Buy It Now listings with low prices.

In order to demonstrate how eBay arbitrage works, I will share a few examples from my own exchanges. These examples will give you an idea of ways you can profit.

Every few days, I go through my bookmarked searches and see what is new on eBay. A few months ago, I found an auction with a pile of Lionel Trains from the 1920s and 30s containing a pair of cars I wanted for my collection. Also included in the auction were a few other cars and a locomotive. The pictures were terrible.

I save bad eBay images to my drive and then enhance them to see what the seller has. It takes a few minutes to clean up an image, but it is worth the effort. (Use the photo program explained in the first half of this book to enhance the pictures.) After I cleaned up the images the stuff looked really clean. So I figured up what it was worth and set up a snipe. I bid \$425. for the group of trains and bought them for \$87.91.

This big difference between what I bid and what I ended up paying was due to the poor pictures and because the auction was listed in the wrong category. Also the seller had grouped everything in one auction and didn't take the time to focus on the two rare cars.

After I got the items in the mail, I pulled the two cars I wanted out for my collection, and listed the rest on eBay. I ended up selling everything except the two cars I wanted for \$480.00. I got \$400 for the loco alone which was an aberration because it is only worth \$175. Two bidders had fought over it and both lost! But I won.

I put a pair of cars worth about \$350 into my collection and made \$375. Not bad for a half hour of work.

I do this regularly. Here's another example, in December 2003, I paid \$9.99 for a box of junk on eBay. I took something out for my collection and sold the rest on eBay for \$132.00. With the shipping and eBay fees I made 115 dollars. (this was possible because again, the seller had not focused on the desirable items in the group he listed.)

Another form of eBay arbitrage is buying for resale locally. I have been buying and selling trains for almost 30 years, and have a good reputation and following. I know lots of collectors who do not buy trains on eBay. Either they are too busy, or they do not want to risk getting ripped off.

Because they will not buy items on eBay, I can make money off them. When I see something that will interest them, I bid on it. When I buy something I offer it to these local collectors.

Probably the best example is a few years ago, I bought a train set on eBay for \$581 including postage. When the trains came in, I made one call and sold them for 1600 dollars. I made over a thousand dollars for an hour of work. Even better, the seller took credit cards so I paid with my Visa card, and sold the stuff for cash before the credit card bill came in.

This might seem like free money, but it is really a result of knowing what the stuff is and where to sell it. Note: the items do not have to be poorly listed to make this work, but it helps.

There is also a variation of this. I started buying trains out of England on eBay and then sell them locally or even on eBay. This is the true definition of arbitrage. Taking advantage of geographic price differences.

When I am looking for items out of England, I look for really clean boxed items in groups. I need to get 5 or more items at a time because the shipping cost eats into my profits. I buy common items in England for up to 10 pounds each (An English pound is about \$1.60 so that's about 16 dollars each.) Here in the US I can get 30-50 dollars a car at the local shows.

It's a no brainer. For every dollar I spend, I get at least two dollars back. Sometimes I get much more.

There are also foreign language sites like the German ebay.de. I can't speak German, but do know the manufacturer's names and model numbers for the items I want. When I find something interesting on the German site, I check to see if the seller will ship to the US – the site is laid out the same way as the English site we are familiar with, just look for the word “Weltweit” which means worldwide.

Once I make sure the seller will ship to me, I translate the page by copying and pasting it into the text translation tool at Dictionary.com.

<http://dictionary.reference.com/translate/text.html>

Many Germans speak English, and those who do not will be able to pull your address out of the translated messages. So you won't have a problem communicating. Use the Dictionary.com site to convert your emails from English to German.

Look for sellers that take PayPal because it is the easiest way to pay. If the seller doesn't take PayPal, you can safely wire transfer money directly to the seller's bank account for a 20-30 dollar fee from the United States. Make sure you specify the amount the seller receives in Euros, not converted dollars as the amount to send.

Make sure you factor in the wire transfer fees and currency conversion costs along with the shipping cost to determine your bid amount.

Another form of arbitrage has to do with location again. I also buy large steel pedal cars and wagons. I look for desirable ones in areas where I can pick them up.

Last year, I bought a pedal car out of Southern California for \$85.00. I had a friend pick it up from the seller, and another friend bring it back to Arizona. I cleaned it up and sold it for \$750. A profit of \$665!

Still another form of eBay arbitrage is searching eBay for local auctions. This is not as profitable as the other forms, but every now and then it pays off.

You can restrict the search results to items listed in your area by searching regionally in the advanced search options page. Click on the advanced search tab on any search results page, and then select your region.

I look for local auctions where people are selling all their trains in one lot. If they have an insane reserve or ridiculously high opening bid that is even better. Then I contact the sellers through eBay and go over to see the stuff personally. It is almost impossible to buy trains from these greedy sellers, but I am more interested in getting into their homes.

You see, these sellers have “researched” their trains, but not the toy car sitting on a shelf in the garage, or the guns in the closet, or the bicycles in the back yard.

Have you figured out what I am doing here? I am going into these people’s homes with a pocket full of cash and buying other items. A good recent example of this is a few months ago, I bought a small toy car for \$35, and then sold it on eBay for \$335.00. I never even made an offer on the trains!

The last method of profiting from eBay arbitrage is the Buy It Now search. Do a search on eBay for some keywords with the search results ordered to show newly listed items first. Then click on the Buy It Now tab to see all items you can buy immediately.

In the first half of this manual, I recommended you only use the Buy It Now option when you do multiple item auctions. One reason I gave for this recommendation is you accidentally might under price your item.

This happens a lot, and you can easily profit from others' mistakes. Just save a few searches with the Buy It Now auctions oriented so newly listed

items come up first and search through the first page or so of each result when you have some free time.

You will find lots of overpriced items, but you will pick up some bargains too. I have gotten some nice items for my collection and made some quick profits this way.

I'll wrap this section up now with a few last pieces of advice. To do eBay arbitrage successfully you must use two different eBay accounts. I have my main selling account with the high feedback that everybody knows about. I also have other eBay accounts I buy with. I use these buying accounts until I get 30 to 40 feedbacks, or until people figure out it is me, then move on to another account.

Never buy something for resale using your selling account. Keep your buying account private, and do not become attached to it.

When I originally wrote this advice about separating your buying and selling accounts anyone could see your purchases. While that is no longer true, you still need two accounts.

In 2017, I bought a train on eBay for 35 dollars. Two weeks later I sold it on eBay for \$600. The original seller saw my listing and became irate. Using two eBay accounts lowers the chances of this happening.

One last note here. I know a few of you readers are going to get upset about these techniques. You will say it is wrong to take advantage of people who list their items incorrectly.

If you feel this way, answer this question – “If you saw a hundred dollar item you wanted at a yard sale for a dollar, would you buy it and tell your friends about your great find, or tell the seller it was under priced and pay \$100 for it?”

If you said you would buy the item for a dollar and then brag to your friends about it - which I bet you did, why is it different on eBay?

One last method of arbitrage needs to be addressed. You can also send sellers emails offering to buy the item if they will cancel the auction. I know people who have done well with this technique, but today eBay rules prevent these offers to buy outside eBay.

If a seller forwards an offer to buy outside eBay to eBay support you risk losing your account. I will not advise you to violate eBay's rules, and will leave further details of this technique up to your own invention.

Creating Your Own Products

You can turn your hobby or your skills into a steady stream of profits. This is a very profitable way to make money on eBay.

One of the first products I created to sell on eBay was a simple screen saver with pictures of my trains. I spent four hours taking pictures of some of my more interesting trains, and then used a program I found online to make a simple slideshow screen saver.

I made floppy disks with the screensaver and sold them for \$8.00 each on eBay. I sold thousands of them in multiple item listings with Buy It Now.

Unfortunately, screensavers do not sell very well anymore. They sell around Christmas, but not very well at other times. You might still be able to sell screen savers if you specialize in an area with highly motivated collectors or enthusiasts.

You can find screen saver creation programs by searching on your favorite search engine site for "make screen saver."

Another product I created and sold on eBay was my O Gauge Source Book. This was a simple spiral bound book listing every company with items for the O gauge train market. The book sold really well. (Today eBay rules prohibit the selling of these compilation catalogs.)

The reason I use the screen saver and the source book as examples is I only had to create a master, and then I just sold copies of it. I call this leveraging my time.

Leveraging is a secret to creating wealth. I will talk more about the source book and leveraging in the Becoming An "Infopeneur" section of this manual.

Other items you can make and sell on eBay are any type of craft or hand assembled item. I met a woman last month who makes a pretty good living selling handmade jewelry on eBay.

When I went to the post office to ship I would see a man who assembles model kits and sells them on eBay. He has a crew of high school students putting together the kits, and then he lists them on eBay.

I hate to be behind him in line because he always has a few hundred packages to ship. I don't know how much he makes, but he ships 200-300 packages a week.

Maybe you can profit from your hobby by making items and selling them on eBay. Just in the train categories, I see people selling handmade buildings, trees, electronics, and more.

To summarize this chapter on finding products, remember whatever you decide to sell on eBay, you must have a steady and reliable source for products. Whether you create the products yourself, or use some of the strategies explained here, the product comes first.

One Last Word About Finding Products

As I was writing this manual, I read about people standing in line at a Wal-Mart grand opening to get first crack at the toys. They are searching for variations of collectible action figures and Hot Wheels Treasure Hunt cars. Then they sell these odd items on eBay for a premium.

According to the paper when the doors opened 20+ people rushed to the toy department. One woman found a doll with a red shirt instead of white. She will sell it on eBay and get about 20 dollars for it. She paid 9.99 plus tax for it. She will make 10 dollars less eBay fees.

The better return is on the Hot Wheels cars. They cost 99 cents plus tax in Wal-Mart, and sell for 15-25 on eBay.

One of the Treasure Hunt cars was found. For \$1.08 the lucky finder will get about \$20.00 less eBay fees. Or about \$18.00 in profit.

This week, I also heard an interview on the radio with a woman who teaches people how to sell on eBay. She spoke of selling a Victoria's Secret Catalog on Ebay for \$9.99 in a buy it now auction.

She talked about the listing and searching for pictures at the Victoria's Secret Website, etc. . . All told, she spent about 45 minutes putting together the listing and dealing with the sale. The cost of the starting and

ending eBay fees plus PayPal fees was about \$2.40. She mentioned she made 15 cents on the postage.

So for 45 minutes of her time, she turned a free catalog she got in the mail into \$7.75. That is just over ten dollars an hour.

Does this kind of money sound good to you?

I think this is thinking in a very limited way. These people are chasing nickels and dimes. They might as well spend the time at a casino or buying lottery tickets.

The big problem here is this income is not repeatable or, more importantly, CONSISTENT.

If it is not consistent, regular and reliable, you are not running a business. You are only entertaining yourself. You must engage in activities that are consistently and regularly profitable.

There is nothing wrong with a hobby, but a business needs to be treated like a business.

If you are going to run a successful eBay auction business, you must have a steady and reliable source of items to sell.

Buying and selling collectibles is easy. By collectibles, I mean small items sold decades ago that are now in demand by people seeking to connect with the past.

Many people get stuck at this point because they think they do not know enough about antiques and collectibles to buy them correctly.

In order to help you learn about antiques and collectibles, I have put together a list of suggested activities to help you learn.

Here are some things you can start doing now to build up your knowledge:

- Start looking at the eBay auctions in a category that interests you on a daily basis. Spend a few minutes every day watching the selling prices. Look for patterns and unusual items.
- Go to a book store or library and get some price guides. Get books on specific subjects. General books are not helpful. While the prices

in the books are not accurate, they will help you see relationships. Look at the differences between items, and try to figure out why specific items command premiums.

- Go to shows or antique malls and handle items. Talk to sellers and ask questions. You have to get a feel for the items and this requires touching.
- Learn the grading standards and specific areas of common damage to look for. In every type of item there are common problem areas. For example, dishes and china get chipped or cracked. Old lamps are common and usually worth very little, but old lampshades are hard to find in nice condition.
- After doing this for a while, you will learn what to look for. You will know when you see something worth buying for resale. You can then start using a system to find items for resale.
- If you do not have a interest in a specific type of collectible, or want to take a short cut in the learning process, start selling other people's stuff on consignment.
- You have to handle items to get a feel for them. (I am not trying to be funny – it just came out that way.) With consignment selling you have little risk. The owner pays you a percentage based on the selling price. You will learn and make money at the same time.
- Ebay consignment sales also provides you with a fall back position when you are out buying collectibles. If you are unsure of the value or cannot talk the owner into selling, you can offer to sell the items on consignment.

It is time to stop limiting yourself. Widen your horizons and start reaching a little. Don't rely on luck, make things happen in your life.

Demand Bubbles and Seasonal Cycles

Changes in demand due to demand bubbles or seasonal cycles are an important consideration on eBay. I sell toy trains to collectors, and they will pay market value at anytime of the year for most items.

However, the common and inexpensive items are subject to seasonal demand. I get train track with almost all the trains I buy. For most of the year it is almost impossible to sell. Beginning in November, people who aren't collectors start buying track for their Christmas set ups.

I hold the track to list in November and December when I get higher prices for it. This is a seasonal demand.

A demand bubble also results when something newsworthy happens. For example, when John F. Kennedy Jr. was killed in a plane crash years ago, people were buying the first edition of his *George* magazine for crazy prices on eBay.

For a few weeks anything related to the Kennedys brought higher prices. Savvy eBay sellers were able to buy the magazines in used book stores for a few dollars, and then list them on eBay for a good profit.

When the terrorists flew the planes into the world trade center, the same thing happened, but the outpouring of grief caused eBay to cancel all auctions with World Trade Center items.

September 11th was a much different event than the Kennedy's plane crash. It impacted more people's lives, and was more emotional.

Another way to profit from demand bubbles is with hot toys and gadgets. Fifteen years ago the Tickle Me Elmo doll was a highly desirable Christmas gift. People bought cases of them and sold them for huge mark ups to parents who had to have a doll for their child.

That was before eBay, but this still happens today. Two years ago, one of the game consoles were very hot and sold for a few hundred dollars more on eBay than in the stores because the demand exceed the supply.

One other item that you can sometime make money on is regional items. For example, the Hess gas stations on the east coast make a special Christmas toy truck every year. There are people who collect these trucks,

but no longer live in areas where there are Hess stations. These collectors will buy the trucks on eBay for a small premium.

Fast food stores like Burger King, Macdonald's and Wendy's run promotions for toys, and for a short period of time collectors will go crazy about specific toys.

I once saw someone pay 75 dollars for a toy from a burger joint kids meal. It sounds crazy, but these people want it now and are willing to pay a premium.

Keep your eyes open for these high demand items, but remember the demand is short lived. You might even want to consider doing a three day, or even a one day, auction to get the best results.

Power Listing

Ebay is no longer offering the Turbolister program to new users. As of this writing (February 2018), I'm still using it and it can be downloaded and installed from this link:

https://download.ebay.com/Turbo_Lister2/TurboListerInstall.htm

Ebay is trying to force sellers to migrate into the new Seller Hub. This might have advantages – I hate windows 10 and online forms should work with other operating systems.

Once you have created a good flow of items to sell on eBay, you can streamline the listing process by using eBay's Turbo Lister program to create your auctions. Turbo Lister is a free program that allows you to list items faster than using the online eBay *Sell Your Item* pages.

The big advantage of using Turbo Lister is you can insert your template into the program and then quickly write a simple description and add a few photos. With Turbo Lister, I can list 30 items in an hour, and send them all up to eBay at once.

The program will take you about a half hour to learn and is frequently updated by eBay. The updates are important.

There are many other listing and seller management tools available from third party vendors.

I used to use one of these tools and it frequently had problems because eBay would make changes to the site and the program would need to be upgraded. By using a program provided by eBay this doesn't happen.

Ebay does provide some third party vendors with advance notice of site changes through the API program. If you consider a third party solution make sure the company is a member of the eBay API program. This should be prominently mentioned on the company's website.

Most of these third party vendor programs either have fees or are supported by advertising. I am not going to evaluate the programs here because I am not versed in their use.

I do not use third party solutions, and prefer to run my auctions with Turbo Lister and my *My eBay Items I Am Selling* page. When eBay kills off turbo lister I will write an article for the newsletter and revise this section.

This book is distributed on the honor system.
You get to read the book and then pay for it.
Even better, you decide what you want to pay.
[Use this link to pay.](#)

Additional Resources.

Here's a list of the additional resources available on IWantCollectibles:

- [Start Your Own eBay Consignment Business](#)
- [The Collector Strategies Package](#) explains how to get a constant stream of people to sell you their antiques and collectibles. Simple strategies to make your phone ring with anxious sellers.
- [Get Into Estate Sales Early For The Best Deals](#)
- [Twelve Simple Ways To Find And Buy Antiques and Collectibles](#)
- [Learn How To Spot Fakes, Frauds, and Forgeries](#) as a guest contributor.
- [The eBay Buyer's Guide](#) is a **free report** explaining searching on eBay and how to safely buy on eBay. The most read eBay ebook in the world with over 470,000 readers since the first edition in 1999.
- [Getting Started On eBay](#) is a **free report** that explains how to get started selling on eBay. Contains the famous laundry basket example.
- [eBay Images Made Easy](#) is another free report. This is actually an excerpt from The Auction Revolution and explains photos and photo hosting for eBay.
- [Improve Your eBay Auctions -- 44 Common Mistakes Found In Many eBay Auctions Explained](#) is another **free report**.
- [Buying Antiques and Collectibles In Stores And Malls](#) is an interview with Gary Hendrickson. Originally sold for \$23.47, it's now only \$3.47. You'll save \$20.00, but get the same valuable tips and tricks for finding antiques and collectibles.
- [Moving Beyond Ebay - The eBay Seller's Guide To Becoming A Successful Online Entrepreneur.](#) explains how to go from eBay seller to profitable online marketer quickly and easily.
- [Prospecting On eBay](#) How to generate leads for your products and services on eBay. Step by step instructions for building a newsletter list on eBay by selling cheap products and diverting auction viewers to a newsletter sign up form. Explains product selection, using bonuses to get newsletter subscribers, turning freebie seekers into buyers and much more.
- [Escaping The eBay Volume Trap.](#) In this **free interview**, Jim Cockrum and I talk about how we both got started on eBay, how we changed the way we looked at eBay, and went on to build the businesses we have now.
- [Conquering The Chaos Of Your eBay Business.](#) Is your eBay business chaotic? Get Conquering The Chaos Of Your eBay Business **for free**. This short interview will help you improve your eBay business.

- [**Finding Wholesale Products To Sell On eBay.**](#) I keep coming back to the topic of eBay product sourcing. This is because the most frequently asked question I get about eBay is. . . **'Where Do I Find Products To Sell On eBay?'** Scott Prock has a different answer than most people. He says rather than looking for products, you should be looking for groups of people called markets and niches first.
- [**Adding Backend Sales To Your eBay Sales.**](#) Interview with Sydney Johnston. Sydney started selling on eBay in 1996. Since then she has perfected selling small easy to deliver items and then moving her buyers up to more expensive items. One of the best interviews I've ever done, and a perfect follow up to the interview with [**Jim Cockrum.**](#)
- [**Setting Your Ebay Business Up For Growth**](#) This interview is designed to help eBay sellers become business owners. I've priced it at \$3.47 to make it more accessible to eBay sellers who are just starting to make the transition from being an occasional seller to running a business.
- [**How To Sell At Antique Shows And Flea Markets**](#) Antique Shows can be a lot of fun. With the right mix of doing shows, selling on eBay and selling on the phone to people you meet at shows you can increase the profits of your antiques and collectibles business. This interview will help you have an easier more productive time at shows and flea markets.
- [**The eBay Seller's Guide to Finding Profitable Hidden Bargains at Garage Sales**](#) Robbin Tungett's best selling book about buying items at garage sales to sell on eBay. The book is now available from IWantCollectibles.com at a lower price, and comes with an interview I did on garage sales to make it an even better deal.
- [**Selling Public Domain Items on eBay and Online**](#) Public Domain refers to books and other works that don't have copyrights. Because there is no copyright protection, it's called being in the public domain, and you can do what ever you want with the information. This means you can sell them, use them as incentives to get people to sign up for your newsletter, or add them to your existing products as a bonus.
- [**Negotiating When Buying Antiques and Collectibles**](#) Two long time antique dealers discussing how they negotiate when buying items for resale. During the interview we talked about everything from when the phone rings to when we carry our purchases out of the seller's homes. If you're interested in buying antiques and collectibles - whether for your collection or to resell on eBay or at antique shows, this interview will help you.

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