

"Escaping The eBay Volume Trap"

Terry Gibbs

Interviews

Jim Cockrum

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- [Adding Backend Sales To Your eBay Sales](#) 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.

Terry: Today, I'm here with Jim Cockrum, the author of [*The Silent Sales Machine Hiding On eBay*](#). Jim and I are going to discuss escaping the volume trap. Maybe we'll make that Jim and I are going to discuss escaping the eBay volume trap.

Many sellers get involved with eBay and then believe that the only way to improve their earnings is to run more auctions.

Jim was responsible for showing me the way to escape that trap of constantly listing and shipping items. Today, Jim and I are going to discuss how Jim teaches his other students how to do the same thing. Are you there, Jim?

Jim: Yeah, it's great to be part of this, Terry. I'm excited about your idea here, getting this information out to folks. I hope it helps make your listeners a ton of money, and I know we've got some good information for them.

Terry: Yeah. Let's get started by getting a little bit of background from you, Jim.

Jim: Sure.

Terry: Can you tell us how you got started selling on eBay?

Jim: I'm like millions of other people, that kind of stumbled on eBay. I was actually at work, I think, if I remember correctly. And someone told me about it. They said, "Man, you can find anything out there." This was years ago, probably 6 years ago. In eBay years, that's a long time ago.

I think I bought a couple things and played around. I'm an entrepreneur at heart, and I think anyone who's probably listening to this tape is an entrepreneur at heart as well, always looking for ways to get that home business rolling and be independent and have your freedom and make a decent income at the same time.

I started to think that eBay might be a tiny piece of that. I actually had that thought pretty early on. And one of the most exciting things that happened to me very early on, Terry, that kind of got me hooked – if I have to go back to one single event that got me hooked on eBay – I've told this story many times. If anyone's ever heard me talk about eBay, I've told this story, but it's a cool story. So bear with me if you've heard it.

I had an old pair of Nike tennis shoes, Nike Air Jordan tennis shoes. I'd actually worn them about 10 times. They were horribly uncomfortable. But I had worn them a few times, so they were showing some wear and tear. I'd played ball in

them. But I put them on my shelf. This was back in the late 80's, that I'd worn them.

Jump forward about 10 years, 10, 12 years, and all of a sudden I pull them out of the shelf one day and I think they're really cool. But now I'm married, and my wife doesn't think they're all that cool. I want to put them out on a shelf and display them, because classic original Air Jordan basketball shoes, wow, those are cool. For a bachelor pad maybe, not when you're married.

So my wife said, "We're not going to display those." And I thought, "Well, I can just throw them out or I can put them on eBay and see what happens."

To make a very long story short, I put them on a 7-day auction, ended up selling them to a guy in Singapore. Now, these shoes I paid \$20 for. I sold them to a guy in Singapore for just shy of \$700. He sent me the money, and I couldn't believe it when I actually got paid. I shipped him the shoes and he loved them.

I was just giddy excited about the potential. All of a sudden, I just saw the worldwide market opening up to me. And it had only taken me a couple days to really pretty much grasp the concept of what eBay had to offer. It came to me very quickly.

So I got excited about eBay very, very early on, the potential for business income. And that's kind of how it all got started for me. That was the first few days and months of my experience on eBay.

Terry: So then you spent the next month going through your house, listing everything you could find, that you didn't want.

Jim: Right. When eBay sellers start off, they sell stuff in their house or their grandma's attic. You find miscellaneous things here and there. It's just a whole mishmash of various things and things you never expected would bring in the big bucks do.

The things that you thought would do well, don't. You kind of start off and you play around. And most sellers, Terry, my guess is about 80% of the sellers on eBay, stay right there.

Terry: I think that most sellers bumble through their first auctions, and then they become - I call these people: "eBay know-it-alls." Nobody that's listening to this is an eBay know-it-all, because they're obviously trying to improve their knowledge. But most people get in and they follow along and bumble along in their first couple of auctions. They get that first check, like you with your first \$700 check, and they figure, "Well, I know how to do this. I know everything

that's needed to make money with eBay." And they never go on and improve their skills.

And that's one of the big things that I try to teach people, is that it's about continual improvement. I call it incremental improvement. It's important.

Jim: Absolutely. I have a philosophy now. I buy a ton of information products. If I buy let's say an e-book, a \$40 e-book, and I get 2 good ideas out of that e-book, Terry, I'm excited.

I get people who buy my books, and they'll email me back and say, "We learned a couple of things from that. I knew everything else." But those 2 things, those could be worth tens of thousands of dollars. Come on!

So any little tip that gives you a shove in the right direction. I've gotten little tips and little hints from people that knew a whole lot less about eBay than I did, but they came along and they had a good idea, an original idea, and it sparked something inside of me, and I turned it into thousands of dollars.

So never discount, like you just said, the value of constantly learning. Pretty much any eBay book, resource or material that's out there, unless it's totally unreasonably priced, I'm going to pick it up, I'm going to read it, I'm going to get some good ideas, and I'm going to pass it on to the people who are on my newsletter mailing list or I'm going to implement it myself and test it out, and then tell other people about it.

So, like you said, constantly learning. At the point you think you've got it all figured out, trust me, you don't. I don't, you don't, and no one listening to this tape does. The eBay game, the rules are changing on a constant basis, and there's always more to be learned.

I think we're going to really open up people's eyes when we talk about escaping the eBay volume trap. I think that's a great title for this session. People may not even know what we're talking about yet, but that's going to be some good info that I guarantee is going to turn some light bulbs on.

Terry: So when you got started selling on eBay, you basically had a full-time job and you were going through your house and selling things. Maybe you did some consignment for your friends. Obviously, you moved on from there.

Jim: Right. I turned a corner. It was another significant event. And I can remember the 3 or 4 days of this event like it was yesterday, even though it's been 10 years ago, close to it.

I'd bought a ticket to an NBA game. It was actually the Pacers versus the Knicks. I think it was the second round of the playoffs. I only got one ticket. I

wanted to get 2 and take my wife, but I only got one. And as the game approached I said, “You know what? I’m not going to go to this game by myself. That’s ridiculous. I’ll stay home and watch it on TV.”

So I put the ticket on eBay, and lo and behold I made about \$50. Sold it to a guy, drove down from Chicago and went to the game here in Indianapolis.

That sparked something inside of me, that little event. I said, “You know what? I bet I could buy tickets using information that I could either learn on my own or read about other people who know how to get their hands on good tickets and sell them on eBay.”

So I started doing that, and I started making an extra \$500, \$1,000 a month on eBay, just total spare time. We’re talking 15, 20 minutes every other day kind of thing, Saturdays for an hour, maybe, trying to buy tickets. It’s just a good day to buy tickets.

So I turned that into a little income stream, and I was proud of myself. But I was getting all of these questions, Terry, from people that were saying – and this was the big light bulb moment for me, Terry, and I imagine you had a similar moment at some point – I had a lot of people saying, “Hey Jim, how are you getting those good tickets? How are you getting your hands on such great tickets all the time? What are you doing? What’s your secret?” And I’d just tell them, “Hey, you do this, you do that,” and I would just email them back and they were my customers, I was friendly with them.

Jim: What I did is I wrote a little 20-page e-book. It still sells on this little website, 321Tix.com. It still sells, to this day. I haven’t touched that website. That is an ugly little website. Haven’t touched it in years, literally. It’s probably been 3 years since I changed anything on that site. I still sell 2 or 3 copies of that book every day.

The light bulb moment for me was saying, “You know what? We’re living in the information age. If people have questions and they want answers, why not be the one who supplies them that answer via information in a little 20-page PDF, simple website, and I’m making between \$40 and \$60 a day, every day, have been for years, answering people how to buy tickets and sell them on eBay.

Terry: So this book about how to buy tickets and sell them on eBay, that’s basically the result of you deciding, “Hey, I can make money by buying tickets and selling them on eBay,” and then going out. Did you have previous experience buying and selling tickets?

Jim: No. I read the rules on eBay, I read all the information I could. I read a couple other books by people who knew what they were doing. I paid attention

to what other eBay Power Sellers who sold tickets were doing. I learned, I experimented, put together basically a tip sheet, literally no more than 20 pages, and it's tip after tip after tip on here's how you do it, how you get the good tickets. Here's how you improve your odds.

Terry: And that's the entrepreneurial mindset, much similar with me. I collect toy trains and I couldn't afford the trains I wanted back when I was in grade school and early high school.

So what I did was I decided I would buy any train that I could get my hands on, sell the ones I didn't want, and then use the money to buy the trains that I did want.

So I went out and actually developed systems to buy the trains, without knowing, and went and talked to other people around the country who did that and put together a network. And I think that's one of the things that's very important, to make that leap of going out and doing it.

I know an awful lot of train collectors that won't ever go and think about how to run an ad in order to buy stuff or how to call somebody on the phone that has something for sale and try to buy something else.

Jim: Right. You've got to always be paying attention. I think the key is paying attention to your customers and paying attention to what else could I upsell these customers. What else might they be interested in?

And the beauty of eBay is I can take my grandma, who hasn't touched a computer in probably ever, has never touched one, and in a day I can get her confident and comfortable buying on eBay and, within a few days, selling on eBay.

Anyone can jump out there and immediately, if you put a hit count on your auction, you'll see you're getting a lot of customers walking through your virtual store. You're exposing yourself to hundreds, if not thousands, of customers just by putting up a simple auction.

Terry: When you talk about counters, you're talking basically the eBay or Andale counter?

Jim: Sure. I usually keep it invisible when I use counters, for various reasons that we don't have to necessarily go into. But I think it's important to see how much traffic your auctions are getting. That's a vital statistic, as far as I'm concerned.

Terry: One of the things that I've been testing in some of the new auctions that I'm doing, and we'll talk a little more about my prospecting auctions as we get more into what you teach people, is counters by a company called SellAThon.

Jim: Absolutely. Very detailed. I actually mention that in my *Silent Sales Machine* book, the last update. I have a link to SellAThon towards the end. It's one of the bonus chapters that tells people about that.

Terry: Yeah. I find it's great, because it tells me not only how many people are coming through the auction, but it tells me the searches that they were doing to get there, seeing 92% of the people that come into the auctions as a result of searching for keywords or searching titles only, not titles and descriptions. I'm able to fine-tune my headlines or my titles, which is the auction headline, in a matter to get more searchers in there.

I think it's \$49.95 a year or \$4.95 a month for this service. But from what I've been doing with it, it's very much worth it. It's one of the best tools that I've found so far.

Jim: I can't remember who authored that, but SellAThon.com, I believe, is the website. It is a fantastic resource.

Once you understand the importance of monitoring your traffic, you'll want to have a tool like that. At a minimum, you'll want to be tracking your visitors, just to know how many you're having. But once you get serious about it, knowing where they're coming from, how they're finding you and – I think you just made a very good point and, if nothing else, people can jot that point down – most people searching for items to buy on eBay are simply typing in the keyword search. They're not using an advanced search of any kind. They're not checking the search title and description. Most people don't do that. They just use the keywords in that one description box.

Terry: I'm finding – and these are auctions that are run in the book categories – that there's 2 things that they're doing. They're either searching in category for a book on a specific subject using eBay's pre-filled information stuff, or they're searching for the author of the book, which is bringing them in.

I find people are either searching in category or they're searching by the author. But it's just wonderfully relevant information. On the IWantCollectibles website, in the news section, there's a review of SellAThon for those of you that are interested in more information about it. You can look at that there, or find the link in the back of Jim's *Silent Sales* book, and we'll give you links to get that later.

So you started selling this e-book about how to buy and sell tickets or how to find tickets cheap, and then what happened?

Jim: Well, along the way, I was listening to my customers. I was selling 2 or 3 copies of this book every day, which was a very exciting time for me, Terry. The thought of adding \$40 to \$60 a day, an extra \$1,500 or so a month, that was huge back then. I had a full-time job. And there's no such thing as a full-time job where an extra \$1,500 a month isn't a significant side income.

So I was very excited about it at that point, and I very well could have stayed right at that point. But I kept listening to my customers and I kept paying attention to what they really wanted. And these people that were buying this e-book from me, a lot of them started saying, "Hey, how'd you put this e-book together and how'd you set up a little website to sell this e-book? And how are you using your eBay traffic to sell to customers off of eBay? Doesn't that violate eBay's policy? Are you allowed to do that?"

I stumbled across, on accident almost, a fantastic way to tap into the potential of eBay, meaning all of those visitors, all of those customers that are flowing through your auctions, grabbing onto them and, without violating any eBay policy, marketing to them in other ways, other creative ways.

That's what I teach and that's what's allowed me to grow an audience of, at last count, about 80,000 people that subscribe to my newsletter. Because I look at eBay from a very creative standpoint, from a very creative marketing standpoint.

Again, the title today is Escaping The eBay Volume Trap. There's really 2 ways you can go on eBay. If you want to earn more money, you can either list more items and make more money that way, which means a lot more work, a lot fewer vacations, a lot more hours put in, a lot more shipping boxes and packing tape and broken and dropped and lost items, and returns. You can go that route. There are people doing very well going that route, Terry. I don't want to discourage people that are doing that.

But there is another option. And that is to grab onto all the customers you can get your hands on. And even if eBay disappears tomorrow, for some reason, if they're wiped off the internet for some reason or they cancel your account, God forbid, for some seemingly unknown reason, and let's say your business is shut down for a month, you'd continue to make money because you've got this customer database and you're not relying solely on eBay. But you've got these customers that you've met through eBay, again, without violating eBay policy. And you can tap into that resource.

That's what I teach people. That was the next step after my ticket book. I wrote *Silent Sales Machine* to answer the questions that people had. The website SilentSalesMachine.com, the book title, *The Silent Sales Machine Hiding on eBay*, I've sold somewhere between 35,000 and 40,000 copies of that book.

People just eat it up. They love it. It's a very creative book. And what I've done is I've solicited ideas from my subscriber base, people who subscribe to my newsletter, and they give me ideas and I put them in the book. And I revise it and send it out free to everyone who's bought it. It's just kind of a self-perpetuating process, at this point.

And we can dive into specifics, if you'd like. But that was kind of the next step that took me to the next level of both income and I'm being called a guru all over the place now. And I don't know if that's a title that I like or not. But being called by *The Wall Street Journal* and *Entrepreneur* magazine and doing interviews like this, and all of a sudden I'm on the map. And I didn't even do any of it intentionally. I just found a creative niche and jumped out there.

People say, "Well, you're making all of your money teaching people how to sell on eBay. That's not fair. You should be making your money selling on eBay."

You know what my theory is, Terry? Every city in the United States needs 4 or 5 really good eBay gurus at this point, and they could all be making a killing teaching classes, teaching courses, starting a newsletter, teaching people in your local area, getting together for a free eBay class, adding them to your newsletter, and then selling them resources.

There's just so many ways to make money on eBay, besides listing another 150 items over the weekend.

Terry: Actually, I get that, too. Because prior to meeting you and getting involved with you, which actually I think I met you in April or May of 2002, is that when you published that book?

Jim: I'm not good with dates. I'm happy to remember my birthday. I can't remember. It's been at least 3 years, though. That sounds right to me.

Terry: So I met you if we say May, and at that time I had my consignment business going full-bore and was doing 500 to 700 auctions a week across eBay. And then in August or late July, I got suspended from eBay, which actually was the first vacation that I'd taken, because I couldn't do anything else. All of a sudden, bam, I went from all this volume and spending 20 hours a week at the post office and doing the shipping, to nothing. So I went to Mexico for a week.

When I came back, I decided I had to change my business. And I get people that say, "Hey, how can you, somebody that's only doing 25 to 50 auctions a month, what gives you the credibility to teach me how to do this when I'm running more auctions than you?"

My answer to that is always, “First of all, I’ve done over 13,000 auctions, which isn’t credibility, that just means I’ve done a lot. But the big difference is that I’ve thought about every auction that I’ve done and I have tested and improved my results. Whereas most people don’t do that.

Jim: Absolutely. I used to find it necessary to prove my value and to try to prove my worth to people, and I would get those questions of, “Hey, you don’t have 50 auctions going. I know people that are running 300 auctions a week, and I should be listening to them, not you.”

But that goes against the very thing that I’m trying to teach. I’m impressed by someone who’s running a handful of auctions and they’re making a killing on the backside, upselling those customers and getting a database going and having a newsletter where they sell other affiliate products, because I look at that person and they’re making more money than the guy listing, like you used to. You probably make a lot more money now than when you were running hundreds of auctions. Don’t you?

Terry: Yeah. My golf game’s a lot better.

Jim: Exactly. You’ve got more time to spend with your family. Who’s the loser there? Again, there’s a fork in the road that comes with every eBay seller. You can either drop out of the game or you can start listing a lot more stuff if you want to get serious about it. Quit your full-time job. You can list a lot of stuff. And we’re talking like 100 auctions a week kind of volume, minimum.

Or, you can start tapping into that volume, those customers, and creating some backend products for yourself. That’s what I teach.

So when people challenge me, “Hey, you’re not even running a bunch of auctions,” that’s the point. Of course, I’m not. I’m not an eBay slave. And I don’t mean that to demean anyone. Because, again, some people have a great business, and I respect them. They hire employees and they do take vacations. But that’s not the route I want to go. I don’t want to have 7 employees running my eBay business, and firing people and hiring people and having to worry about all of the laws about having employees and W-9’s and taxes. It’s just little old me, and when I need some help, my wife and my virtual secretary that answers some email when I need some help.

And that’s the way I want it. I make a lot more money. I guarantee you, I make more money than 95% of eBay sellers out there that consider themselves Power Sellers.

Terry: It’s not just about making money, it’s about the quality of life.

Jim: Absolutely.

Terry: Back when I was doing consignment, I worked a 4-day schedule running 5-day auctions. My auctions would end on Monday night, I'd pack on Tuesday, list on Wednesday, which those auctions would end the following Monday, and then Thursday I would pack the auctions that ended Wednesday night, and Friday I'd list new auctions, which would end the next Wednesday.

I basically worked 10 to 12 hours a day doing nothing but eBay. And I had the one day off, which was my quality of life.

Whereas today, I do not do that. I might sit down twice a month, while I'm watching Law & Order on TV on a Wednesday night, and throw a couple of auctions up just to clean some stuff out. But for the most part, my life has changed.

Now, I tried to do the employees and outsourcing and contracting, which is actually what my [Auction Revolution](#) book was. It originally was the manual for my employees to sell my stuff on eBay.

Jim: Right.

Terry: The whole first half is how to sell anything on eBay. And I wrote that so that I could hire these college students, the housewife at home, and then just show up and say, "Here's all the stuff, sell it on eBay."

What happened was, and part of this is about me because I'm really poor at managing people and I'm not a very good teacher face-to-face because I expect people to understand what I say and ask questions if they don't understand it, or I selected the wrong people, but what happened was my sales volume, as far as the items selling, stayed the same. But the total average selling price went down because the listings weren't done as well. They were missing the keywords, or they weren't describing the items as well as I was doing.

So my returns, everything I sold with the 100% money-back guarantee, including shipping both ways, all of a sudden this stuff is coming back or it's getting damaged in shipping because the people decide, "Hey, the box only needs half as much peanuts. It will be fine."

To me, it became an absolute nightmare. Now, I know other people who have successfully managed to get employees or contractors to do that work for them, but that's not me. And that's a big part of what I did and why I changed my business, is identifying the strengths and weaknesses and what I'm not good at.

Jim: Sure. Every eBay success story out there that you read about in the media or the people that eBay marches out in front of the crowds, I love those people as

entrepreneurs that are making a killing on eBay. They're doing great and they're loving their eBay business; stay-at-home moms are now bringing in an extra \$1,000 a month and they couldn't be more excited, all the way up to the Power Sellers that are selling tens of thousands out of the house.

But the kind of people that they don't march out there are the kind of people we're talking about right now. We don't get a lot of press out of eBay for these concepts, because we are talking about selling fewer items on eBay. And that means eBay's going to make less money off of our efforts.

So eBay isn't going to teach you these concepts that we're talking about. Nor is it intuitive. It doesn't just happen because you spend time on eBay and you learn eBay and you read the eBay help menu. These are very different concepts about tapping into that traffic and recognizing the power of that and escaping being tied and married to eBay.

I didn't realize that your eBay account had been suspended.

Terry: Yeah, I was actually keyword spamming, which I was guilty of doing that, and they suspended me for 2 weeks and then it took another week and a half to get back on.

That all happened as a result of I was selling those eBay success videos at the time. And the purpose in creating those eBay success videos, like you, where you're at today was not by design. You kind of followed along the stream, looking for the best harbor to go into would be a good way to describe your business.

For me, I decided that I was going to escape the whole eBay volume trap by moving into teaching other people about how to buy antiques and collectibles, which I've become very good at that.

So in order to sell my package on buying antiques and collectibles, I created the eBay video that I could sell for \$20 and later \$30, and then wrap a sales letter around that because I figured it would go to people who were highly-qualified prospects for my antiques and collectibles buying strategies.

When I first started selling that video on eBay, it was fantastic. I was selling 40, 50 copies a day. Then, eBay, because I'm high-profile and eBay is pretty much governed or policed by their self-appointed – I don't want to use the nazi word, but...

Jim: That gets thrown around a little too much. But I know what you're talking about. People with nothing better to do than scour eBay for policy violations.

Terry: Yeah. Let's call them the eBay policy police.

Jim: Yeah, exactly. And they don't work for eBay. eBay doesn't pay them. These are just people that have too much time on their hands. They go from auction to auction, looking for, "You're not allowed to have that link there. Report it to eBay."

Terry: Actually, at that time, I found a news group, Alt.news something or other, that was people playing a game of let's see who can spot and report the most violations to eBay in one day.

Jim: There's a way to make a living, huh?

Terry: Yeah. Let's not work on our own businesses, let's go attack the other successful people.

Now, I'm not going to say that I wasn't breaking eBay's rules, because it's almost impossible not to. If you're causing a problem for eBay support staff, they will find a reason within their very confusing rule set in order to harass you.

Jim: Absolutely. The rules, there's no clear lines in the sand on a lot of the policies. If you're a Power Seller or if you've been around a while, you can get away with a lot more than if you're new. And that's actually one of the things I coach people when they're first starting out on eBay, is keep your nose very clean. Don't experiment. Don't push the envelope with eBay's policies.

But then once you've been around a while, and I give several specific examples in my book and I've made note in my newsletter, you see people that have been around a while and they're doing a high volume and they're one of the shooting stars on eBay that's been to eBay Live and on the stage, and you look at some of their listings and, oh my goodness, violations all over the place.

But eBay can't afford to lose them and doesn't want to lose them, because they're one of their star players.

So there definitely are different rules for different folks.

But I don't even use that as an excuse to violate policy. When I look at eBay I say, "Okay, what are the policies? I'm going to know everything I can about the policies and then I'm going to get every bit of marketing exposure I can when I pay my eBay fees."

My eBay fees aren't just an expense, they're a marketing expense. When I spend \$1 on eBay, I want to know what kind of return I'm getting. It's not just selling an item, how many new customers have I gotten potentially down the road for my other products? How many people have I added to my newsletter mailing list without, again, violating policies?

So I want to be very clear with people that we're not talking about violating policies here.

Terry: We're not talking about how to go out and break the rules. And that's everyone's personal decision.

When I wrote my newsletter for June, about one of my eBay accounts which was actually set up for one of the contractors that I was using to do my listing, got suspended in June. eBay's first message was that it was for fraud, which this is an account that hasn't been used in over 2 years, with no buying or selling activity. And I was very confused about that.

There's nothing I can do, because I don't even remember who was selling on that account. So I don't know the name it was registered under or anything like that. I just know that the emails all come to me, because they go through my servers.

So I'm not saying you should violate rules. But before we go on, let's talk about that it is very important that you set up different eBay accounts or multiple eBay accounts.

There's an article in the news section on IWantCollectibles that will show you exactly how to do that, so that if you do end up having your account suspended or having problems as a result of either you going into the gray areas or just something beyond your control happening, you don't lose it all.

Jim: Absolutely. And at a minimum, people should have 2 separate accounts: one for buying, one for selling. That's an absolute minimum. Within your first few months of starting to use eBay, you need to establish that. Because what that allows you to do is you can leave negative feedback.

If you have a bad experience as a buyer, you can leave negative feedback for the evil seller, without them coming back and damaging the account that you use to sell. As a seller, you don't want negatives. And most people, if you leave them a negative, they're going to retaliate.

So you want to split up your buying and selling for that reason alone. I've written articles as well. There's a whole host of reasons that you should have multiple accounts. It allows you to kind of create a niche. And you can have several niches that you can experiment with on eBay, different niche markets, and just have your whole theme surrounding that niche, create the perception that you're an expert in that area and sell items only related to that niche. And you can try different areas and see what works.

But again, importantly, like you said, eBay's policies, eBay's ever-changing policies, it's kind of like the IRS. It's changing constantly. You almost have to be

a professional eBay policy expert to stay on top of all the constant shifts and changes. It's a real tug-of-war.

On the one side, you've got eBay. They get 14% of all money spent online goes through eBay. They want to keep that and grow that. And I can't blame them, they're in business to make a profit. So they want every transaction, everybody that meets on eBay, they want a piece of the action forever and ever.

On the other side, you've got people like us that are creative, but you've also got larger companies like Dell or whoever, really big companies that pump a lot of volume through eBay, but they have an agreement with eBay that, "Hey, we could very easily pull out of eBay anytime we want. You've got to allow us to make some connections with customers here. We want to put our phone number in there. We want people to be able to contact us through our website. We want people to find us on eBay, maybe buy something once, but then every other transaction is going to be through our website." And eBay says, "Okay, you're big. That's okay. We're cool with that."

If those rules are good for the big boys, they should be okay for the little guys, too. So that's the game you play. And if you've never been exposed, it's a real game. It really is, with a lot of gray areas, a lot of strangely-written, strangely-worded rules and regulations. But man, it's to your benefit to learn them and to learn to play it.

I'm ready to jump into some specifics. I think we've got people pretty curious now what we're talking about.

Terry: When I first started selling on eBay, I put into my auctions links to my website. At that time, my toy train website was one of the biggest toy train websites in the world. eBay was, for me, a place to convert the trains that I didn't want and the excess stuff into cash and also a way to get people into my website.

And back then, I'd written one book that I'd sold on the website, and I also sold the book on eBay.

So it was this big circular deal. And then I guess it was about 2000 or 1999, eBay changed the rules and you could no longer link to your website in your auctions.

And over the course of the past say 5 years, eBay has made it more and more difficult to build a relationship with your customer, to the point where today, when you sell something on eBay, eBay no longer allows you to opt-out of the checkout system. To me, the eBay checkout system was designed because eBay thinks everyone on eBay is their customer. They're not my customer or

Jim's customer or you, the listener's customer. They're eBay's customer. And they want to stay between you and your customer.

And eBay has made this so much more difficult.

Jim was one of the pioneers of not only how to build relationships with eBay buyers, but more importantly how to build a relationship with the people who just look at your auctions.

So can you give us a little information about the genesis of that, Jim?

Jim: Sure. You've got to keep in mind something here. You just made a statement that things are tougher now than they've ever been and eBay really guards itself. And all of that is true. But at the same time, on the positive side is 40,000 people per day – these are customers now – that have given their credit card number. They want to go spend some money online, and eBay's got them. The fastest-growing company in the history of the world, and you can set up shop and have this stream of customers flowing through your store overnight.

So the challenge becomes, "Okay, I want to stay within eBay's policy, but I want to expose myself to some of these customers beyond one customer at a time, one auction at a time.

Here's a few basic, simple tips. The *Silent Sales Machine* book goes into detail on a lot of these concepts. But the "About Me Page," if you're not familiar with it, everybody who sets up an account to sell or to buy on eBay, you have a free service called the "About Me Page." And you can go in there and personalize it. And even while you're setting it up, eBay says, "Tell us about yourself. Tell us about your hobbies." Most people put a picture of their dog or their grandkid. It's all cutesy-wootsie, and there's 5 or 6 pictures. And yeah, that's sweet. "Okay, now I know more about you and I trust you," is the idea.

But one of the things eBay says is, "Tell us about some of your favorite websites," as you're setting up your About Me Page. It just so happens, Terry, that some of my favorite websites happen to be sites where I sell other things. I have sites where I've got to sign up for my free newsletter, for example. Or here's an affiliate program.

Now, what you can't do on your About Me Page – and, again, you've got to dive into the language, but it all comes down to this – you can't sell straight from your About Me Page. You're not allowed to sell.

But that's okay. One of the most powerful marketing concepts in the world is the 2-step sales process. What I mean by that is people visit your auctions, they visit your About Me Page, and we can maybe tell the listeners how to make sure the

maximum number of customers get from your auction over to your About Me Page, but they visit your About Me Page and they see a link to your website, they jump over there.

You give them a free report, free information. You're not selling anything. You're giving them something for free, or you're asking them to join a free newsletter where you can keep them informed on all of your future eBay auctions, or some such pro-eBay language.

You're keeping eBay happy, you're not violating eBay policy, but you're growing a list of customers.

And then once you've got that list of customers, you can expose them to what you promised them. And, absolutely, you want to give them what you promised them, but you can also have little signature lines, for example, that say, "Interested in starting a home business with eBay? Here's a great tool you should have. Click here." You've got an affiliate link for one of Terry's products or for one of my products, for example.

The thing I encourage a lot of my customers to do is say, "Hey, you want to check out my favorite free eBay newsletter? Click here."

All you're doing is telling people about something free. You're not selling them anything. There's nothing being sold. You're not seeking a transaction off of eBay. You're just telling them about a free resource.

It may sound like we're talking about gray areas here, but eBay created all of these gray areas. We are talking about a realm of gray areas.

But here's one. I think it was Adam Ginsburg was one that I remember this idea starting with originally, and he's grown huge mailing lists using this concept.

But basically, you put a form right in your auction that says, "Want more information? Need more information? Email us." And you send them back specific information, whether it be about shipping. It's very eBay-specific, a very eBay-related response that you give them. You're not trying to sell your customers anything when they email you, you're just giving them that lead, giving them the eBay-specific information, but you are also then asking them, "Hey, do you want to opt-in to a newsletter about X, Y or Z?"

NOTE: In the summer of 2011, eBay prohibited sellers from including email addresses or links within auctions. I think you can still do this in classified ads, but other listings can only use the contact form through eBay. You should include the newsletter announcement in any response you send through the ebay system.

So it's a 2-step process.

Terry: So when you do that, is that the form opts them in and then you ask them if they want to stay opted-in or the email they get as a result of using the form tells them that, "If you want to opt in, go to this page?"

Jim: To stay clearly within eBay's policies, you can only inform them of whatever it is that they're asking for, and you can't add them to your mailing list. That's the definition of spam right there. You say, "Hey, I'll end you a one-time mail-out with free report about X, Y and Z, and all of a sudden the customer starts getting 15 emails a day from you. That's spam.

But if you tell them, "Here's the free report that you asked for," or you say, "Here's the information that you asked for in the auction, by the way, if you'd like my free newsletter that currently goes out to thousands of people who are interested in model trains, visit this website."

And on my website, sign up for the newsletter, that's all you've got. You're not selling anything.

Because what eBay has is they have human people that go through and evaluate, "Okay, he's not selling anything. Okay, got the newsletter, he's not selling anything, it's clean." You've got to make it a 2-step process. And you also don't want to spam people.

It may sound like you're filtering out and funneling out an awful lot of prospects doing this, well, you kind of are. But when you're talking about thousands of people, the end conversion rates are going to be adding 10 or 20 people a day to your mailing list. And when you've got a very specific niche that you're adding people to a mailing list for every day, that list grows very quickly. You put together a quality newsletter maybe once a month, or even you just do it as an affiliate.

One of the things that I talk about is autoresponders. And I know you know how to use them, Terry, but they're very powerful tools. You can write the message once, set it up to be automatically delivered over the course of say 3 weeks, every 4 days the customer gets a new message, you're not doing anything, you're just growing a customer list.

Terry: I call them prospecting systems. They're similar to your Silent Sales things, that in one case it's actually now I think there's 22 messages on the series. And when people go into the auction, it sells them the item that we're selling but it also has a column on the right side that's a little narrower and says, "Get a free sample," and sends them to the Me Page with a link to the Me Page there.

And then on the Me Page, it says, “You’ll not only one free sample, you’ll get 5, one every day. Click here for more information.” It takes them into a web page, which is just “give me your email address, give me your first name, give me your email address, and we’ll send you these 5 free gifts.”

Then, it sends them the 5 free gifts and it drops down to every 3 or 4 days. So it’s 2 a week from there, and it just rolls out.

I’m actually trying to stay ahead of those, so that there will be a year’s worth of emails all pre-written, pre-designed in order to sell the products that we want to sell, and build those relationships.

Jim: And eBay isn’t so naïve to think, nor do their policies try to prevent customers from meeting the people that they do business with on eBay and doing business with that person off of eBay, at some point.

eBay just wants to make sure that that initial transaction, they get credit for. So don’t try to avoid eBay fees on that first transaction. Don’t try to burn eBay by ending your auction early and then contacting the high bidders and saying, “Hey, you guys want to buy this item? We’ll skip the eBay fees.” eBay will shut you down for doing those kinds of things.

We’re not talking about those kinds of things. We’re talking about 2-step marketing, where you offer a free product, you offer a free report, you have a mailing list.

I know people who use these concepts just to grow their eBay business. For example, one customer of mine, one lady that read my book and uses these concepts, sells handbags

I visited one of her auctions one day, I signed up for her free report. And every time she lists new handbags, I think it’s once a week, I get this email, “Hey, here’s all the new handbags we’ve got. Join our newsletter to stay on top of the cool new handbags.” And she’s got a little newsletter that goes out, and it has some Google AdSense ads in it, so she’s generating some revenue there.

If you don’t know what Google AdSense is, we’re not going to dive into that right now. But it’s a great way, if you’ve got any website or newsletter that’s getting significant traffic, you just drop a little piece of code in there and Google starts paying you for everyone who clicks on one of your ads. It’s a really cool thing, and I’m making an extra \$50, \$80 a day doing that creatively with some things I’m doing on a totally different topic.

But when you don’t know how to make money with a website that’s getting traffic, check out Google AdSense. It’s kind of a catch-all way to make some cash.

But she's doing some of that. She's not violating any eBay policy. She's not trying to send customers to a non-eBay website. She's just generating customers that are going to come back and be repeat buyers to her eBay store, to her eBay auction listings.

You can stay way within eBay's policies and use these concepts to grow your existing eBay business. And it just kills me when I see power sellers that aren't doing anything to capture the backend customers, the backend business, the upselling opportunities.

That tells me immediately, when someone talks to me about their eBay feedback, "Oh, I've got 4,442 eBay feedback." I say, "I don't care what anyone's feedback is. How many people are on your customer list? That tells me the story."

Terry: That's the thing that blows my mind. I talked a little bit earlier about the autoresponder with all the messages. On that, we are selling marketing information. It's actually a subscription. It's some audio interviews with marketing geniuses and people who have written, New York Times best-selling authors, and all of this fantastic information.

When I went into eBay setting this thing up, which it's a joint venture with a friend of mine, these people are selling these fantastic marketing information packages on eBay, and they're not doing any of this stuff that Jim and I are talking about here. They're not prospecting, they're not looking at, "Okay, we're putting this package up, 8 audiotapes about 2-step marketing, which this is disgusting, they're selling a package on how to do 2-step marketing and they're not even doing it in their auctions.

Jim: It cracks me up. I think it's people who just haven't educated themselves on the possibilities of eBay. They're very afraid of eBay policy, the same kind of people that are probably paying about 20% more than they have to on their taxes. That's the same mentality.

Personally, I look for every tax deduction I can possibly get my hands on legally. If I'm audited, I'm clean. No question. Because I've done my research, I understand the rules of the game, I take my deductions that are legally owed to me.

Some people don't have that philosophy. They just say, "I'm in the 32% tax bracket, I'm going to pay 32% taxes this year."

They don't go after those deductions that are rightfully, legally theirs.

Terry: But that's the mindset of avoiding problems and it locks us in.

We talked about having multiple accounts, and that gives you the ability to be creative.

I think this is important. I've been suspended from eBay and, with the exception of this last suspension, which I still don't know what that was about, in the past it was always a warning and then a suspension. It was not bam, you're gone.

I think that it's about risk-taking. As entrepreneurs, we're taking risks. Granted, I could go out with my college degree and get a job working in a bank, pulling down as much, maybe even more money than I make now, if I had been doing this since I graduated.

But that's not my mentality. I don't want to be sitting in an office 8 hours a day, being judged by how much time I sit in the chair. I want to live my life like this.

So I am looking for ways to make myself the most money. One of my friends said this really well. "Maximum profits in minimum time." That's what I'm looking for.

The whole thing about capturing the eBay traffic, even if I was still the eBay Power Seller doing 500 to 700 auctions a month or even a week, and if I was still doing that volume, to have just adding the "go to my Me Page and give me your email address," that would make it an extra source. And it's that 2-step marketing. It's changing the emphasis from every time you sell something on eBay you make money and the only way to make money is to sell another item, to eBay is the eighth largest website in the world, or eighth most visited website in the world, and I want to be on eBay so that I can get in front of the people on eBay.

Jim: Absolutely. And 40,000 a day, that's my favorite number to pull out.

When people get a computer for the first time and jump on the internet, one of the first 5 websites they're likely to visit is eBay. They've seen the commercials.

I've had some questions lately. Yahoo Auctions just made their auctions free. People are saying, "Is eBay going to go under? Is Yahoo going to take over eBay? Yahoo's free now." Don't pay attention to where the seller's are attracted to. Who cares where the sellers are trying to sell their stuff. I don't care where the sellers are. And when sellers whine and complain and moan, "eBay raised their fees," sellers whining and moaning and complaining and moving and changing the way they do business doesn't concern me.

Tell me where the customers are. The customers are on eBay. That's where my business is going to be. If the customers are on Yahoo someday, that's where my business will be. But right now, overwhelmingly, the numbers are astounding

worldwide. Tens of thousands of people, billions of dollars per month is changing hands. It's just crazy, astronomical numbers. And that's where the customers are. They're on eBay.

When eBay jacks up their prices, Terry, it doesn't concern me; when they beef up their fees. I'm only running a handful of auctions. I can swing the extra few bucks a month, no big deal. I'm raking in new customers. And that's what I'm teaching people how to do.

It's very encouraging to me when the lights kind of go on for somebody and they really take their business up to that next level. And we're not talking about something that will take months to set up.

Learning to use autoresponders and managing a mailing list is something that I could teach anyone in about a half an hour. This isn't complex stuff. It's just a matter of going that extra little step, doing that little extra piece of code in each auction, that little piece of code that you just paste in there. And all of sudden, you're growing a customer list. And you can look back on it a month from now and see it grow.

I remember when my list hit 10,000. I was ecstatic. Can you believe I can press a button and email 10,000 people right now, and it's not spam? They all want to hear from me. They all signed up for my newsletter. Isn't that astounding?

And then 50,000, I was just, "Time to party, time to celebrate." I know very few people that have a list that big.

And then 80,000.

And here I am, on my way to 100,000. And it all goes back to thinking creatively and using eBay as a tool.

Terry: Speaking about the newsletter, when I started my toy train website, and it wasn't through an autoresponder, it was through something called List Serve, that was part of the hosting package, and it was the ability to send an email to an address and it would send that email to everyday else who had agreed to get the emails. Kind of like the Yahoo groups is.

I remember on that, this was like 1999, there were maybe 200 subscribers or 300 subscribers. I didn't really promote it. I just invited my friends that were interested in trains to sign up for this thing.

I remember one day reading about affiliate sales, and I played with these for a while. I played with Amazon, which is almost a waste because they pay like 5% on a \$10 book. You end up getting 20¢ or something.

So one day, I remembered seeing something about one of the big dot-com toy stores selling trains for below wholesale. And I mean these are trains that stores were selling for \$600 and the wholesale price was like \$550, \$450, something like that.

And this dot-com was selling these trains for like \$300. And I said, "Well, I should tell everybody about this." And then I thought to myself, "Hey, do they have an affiliate program?" And I went and looked, and they did. So I created an affiliate link, put that in an email, sent that simple notice out to my subscribers or to everybody else in the group saying, "Hey, this Toys.com, or whatever it is, is selling these trains for below wholesale. And if you're interested, go check this out."

And I sent that out, forgot all about it. And then I got a check in the mail for \$800 like 60, 90 days later. That was, for me, just like that first realization when I was first starting to sell on eBay, that all of the stuff at the shows I was doing, I couldn't sell. I'd throw it in a box, and anything in the box is \$1, and let people pick through it.

But I put it on eBay and the toy train guy in Minnesota, that doesn't have a store, would say, "I need one of those," and pay \$10 for it, or "I need one of those," and pay \$20 for it.

So that was my, "Wow, eBay's fantastic! I can reach all of these people." And then within a year or 2 later, I did the Toys.com. I'm not sure that was the name of the company, but I did that with the affiliate, and that was that same, "Aha, there's power in this."

One other thing that I want to talk about. . . looking for emotional niches. One of the things, an example in there, is that you shouldn't sell posters, instead you should sell collectible movie memorabilia.

Now, we're talking about the mindset for success and escaping the volume trap here, and I think this is a really important point is how we think about what we sell.

Jim: You need to put a little thought into it. There's some value in just going out and finding dirt-cheap items and turning around and making a profit. That's a beautiful thing.

But when we're talking about creating lifetime customers, lifetime relationships, people that will trust and buy from you even if eBay goes under, people that will stay on your mailing list for years for years and years.

I have people who have been on my mailing list for 4+, 5 years now. They read every word I send out. They've bought several products from me. They know my integrity. They know I recommend products that I trust and use, so they're hanging in there with me.

You want those kinds of customers, those kind of lifetime relationships.

So when you start selling items on eBay, you've got to put some thought into what creates the kind of emotion and passion more people will be interested potentially for a lifetime. Things like hobbies and pets, things that you can tie an emotion to.

I think the example I was making in the book there, too, was the way you phrase what you're selling. If you're passionate and excited about it, customers will recognize that. It's not just a movie poster, this is a piece of movie memorabilia for the true movie fan.

Think about it as someone who's totally geeking out about your product. How would they describe it? That's how you should describe it.

But the other point I was making, too, was I can give you an example like with watches. Let's say you sell watches. You've got watches with dogs on it, you've got watches with golf clubs on it, you've got watches with any number of little emblems on them. That's great, but you're probably going to sell one to one customer, and then he's going to go away and never buy another watch from you.

But say you specialize in dogs. You've got a dog watch, that's one of your products. You've got dog posters. You've got dog mugs. You've got a dog niche. You've got dog lovers out there that come back to you over and over again. And you're teaching them, every month in your free newsletter, how to spoil your dog. That's an emotional niche, versus watches. Who gets emotional over a bunch of different watches? You may find a few people out there, "I want to buy a different watch from you every month." You're not going to find very many people who think that way, though.

Your typical retail marketing thinking doesn't translate well online. You want to jump into an emotional niche, where people are going to come back and buy again from you. They trust you, they've done business with you. You've either got a consumable product that they're going to read over and over again, or read and throw away, like a newsletter, or you've got a niche market that people get excited about and they come back to you because they want to spoil their kids or they want new games and new ideas for their kids, or vacation ideas or relationships or moneymaking opportunities, or dating and relationships. But things that people can come back to over and over again.

Dieting is a great one. There's several of them out there. But I think people get the idea from that.

Don't get yourself trapped into selling an item that people aren't going to get emotional about and not come back and want another one or a related item later. Because then you're selling one off at a time.

Terry: That was the big problem with some of my consignment stuff, was that it was just stuff coming through, mostly with the thrift stores. The thrift stores would just throw everything that they had. I would go to a thrift store, and they would have 3 boxes of silver plate stuff, and I would sell all of that. And then I wouldn't sell anymore silver plate until the thrift store gave me 3 more boxes of it.

So there was no continuity there. Whereas with the trains, I have 2 distinct markets: the people that are playing with the trains and the collectors. I tend to cater to both, because a lot of the stuff that I get in isn't collector quality. So to me, that's just churning it. And those people, they're interested in additional things and additional information on how to build up their train layout or improve their hobby and have more fun with it. But the collectors are the ones who go crazy and spend all the money.

They have an attachment to me. And I talked earlier about the 100% money-back guarantee, including shipping both ways. I had a guy, just a month ago, bought something from me. He paid \$153 plus shipping on it. The second bidder bid \$150, I think. And then the third bidder bid \$4.

Now, the guy that paid \$153, he bought something off me 2 years ago, got it, and it was not as I described it. It was an error on my part, and I sent him back his money.

Now, if he had not bid on the item a couple weeks ago, I would have sold it for \$5. But because I made him happy back then, and he spends about \$2,000 or \$3,000 a year with me buying just fantastic stuff, he came back in because he knew he could trust me.

That's building that relationship. It's looking at it as I'm not selling toys. I am. But what I'm selling is something that people can be proud of. I'm selling nostalgia, I'm selling collectibles. And my motto – and this is why I have the 100% guarantee – is that with my collection, I don't want things in my collection that, when I look at them, I don't feel good about owning them.

That means that if I buy something from somebody and the guy treats me poorly, and I look at it, and instead of saying, "Oh, this is a neat item, I'm really happy to have it," I look at it and say, "That guy took advantage of me." I don't want

pieces like that in my collection and I don't want anybody that buys stuff from me to be like that.

To me, that's the whole mindset, that I'm not really chasing dollars. I'm providing a service and getting paid for it.

Once I made that distinction, and Jim talked about having 50,000 newsletter subscribers or 80,000 and coming up on 100,000, that's a different matrix than dollars that he's judging his success. I call that his reach, his ability to reach out and contact people.

By looking at reach rather than dollars, it changes the whole thing. It's how many people can I reach out to? How many people can I help, can I influence? Once I lock myself into that, it changes the whole equation. People are more than happy to pay for, whether it's information like this interview or my e-books or Jim's e-books or even the products, they're more likely to pay for that when you build a relationship.

Jim: That's very true. People can smell someone who just wants to sell them something. It reminds me of you don't see these websites so much anymore, but you used to come across them all the time, you'd pop up a website and it was 15 banners; 15 banners, "Please click on any of these banners. I don't care which one you click on, just please click on one of them." The website's just screaming, "Let me sell you something and then leave, and I never want to see you again."

And if that's your mentality going into eBay or trying to succeed online or trying to succeed in any business, for that matter, you're not going to last. You've got to go in there thinking, "I'm going to treat my customers in such a way that they're going to tell others about me, they're going to come back and do business with me again later, they're still going to be happy about this transaction a year from now. I want to do everything I can to keep them happy. And if they want a refund and want to go away, I'm going to give it to them and they can go away. That's fine."

Don't get into arguing matches with customers. You have to think big. You have to dream big. And some people aren't capable of that, I've learned. They get stuck up in the petty \$1, \$2, they're chasing nickels and dimes. They don't spend their life thinking big. They don't want to spend any money on tools to improve themselves. Really, I can't help those kinds of people.

People who aren't afraid to dream big and think big and then do what it takes to make it happen, the opportunity has never been more clearly laid out in front of you to grab in the history of mankind. I really believe eBay is the greatest opportunity that was ever presented to mankind, if they want to make it on their own. There are just literally thousands, if not millions of different ways it can be

done. And the customers are all there, credit cards in hand, online, ready to spend money, ready to find someone they can trust.

That's one of the biggest issues on the internet, Terry. That's the reason I think eBay got so huge, so fast, and they still continue to grow, is because they have figured out a way to overcome that trust barrier.

You've got a mom in Minnesota doing business with a mom in Chicago and they, "Yeah, I can trust this person. Sure, she's a mom too. She's just selling something on eBay. She's got 100 feedback, she's never burned anybody before. I'll trust her. I'll buy something from her."

Never, in the history of mankind, has such an opportunity been right there in front of you to just grab. You can be doing business with people all over the world in a few days. And it just astounds me that some people let the smallest things slow them down. Even things like, "I don't want to put my credit card out there online. That just scares me." I'm like, "Come on, get a temporary credit card number, one that can't be used for anything else except eBay. If anyone else tries to charge it, it won't go through." Overcome these little obstacles. Figure out a way around it. It's just sitting out there, waiting.

Terry: That's about risk. And my eBay Buyer's Guide addresses all that. Actually, I should have mentioned this earlier. My eBay Buyer's Guide was actually designed to give away in my auctions as a way to build newsletter subscribers. And that came about years ago. It think it was George Chapin did some kind of book. You were in there, Jim, and I wrote an article for him.

Jim: Yeah, I remember that.

Terry: And I was giving that away on my Me Page, in order to build subscribers. I had written an article that was a little long, about avoiding eBay problems and eBay fraud, and I decided, "Hey, I should package that into it, instead of using George's report," and it worked so much better.

That's available. Anybody can use that with affiliate links in their auctions.

[Create your own eBay Buyer's Guide for your eBay Me Page Here.](#)

We're running out of time, and I had one last thing that I wanted to talk about. And this is an important question. Where do you find the excitement about what you're doing? You've told us that eBay has been the genesis for this new lifestyle, this fantastic income opportunity for you, that you believe anybody can do that. Where do you find the motivation? What motivates you and how do you keep going?

I know a lot of people who get started and they go along, and then they kind of fumble and fade away. How do you avoid that, because that's something we all have to work through?

Jim: You've got to set larger goals. You've got to know where you're heading.

I spent some time a few years ago, Terry, this has probably been 6, 7 years ago, and I heard about people who did this exercise and it really struck me as kind of corny, maybe a waste of time, but I actually sat down and said, "Here's 25 things that I want."

Now, some people's lists may be very materialistic. I want a boat. I want a new convertible. And I had a few of those kinds of things on there.

But I had things like, "I want to have time to play golf two days a week, without sacrificing family time." Now, how am I going to do that?

So I set my brain to the task unconsciously, of figuring out a way to make that happen. I wrote down several of those things. "I want to spend a day or 2 a week with my family, and not on a weekend." I'm not talking a Saturday/Sunday, where you've got to run around with the rest of the world, going crazy, trying to fit in all of your errands and your fun time in 2 days. That would kill me to have to do that now.

"I want to work a maximum of 20 hours a week." That's something I want. That's a tangible thing. I want to just look at my week and look back on it and say, "Yeah, I worked 20 hours, that's it." That's all I want to work.

I wrote down, "I want these things."

Now, it didn't happen for me overnight. But over the course of the next several months, I started seeing these things happen. And that was exciting for me, because I didn't stop when I had success level A. I didn't stop, because that wasn't good enough. I didn't have everything that I said I wanted yet, so I moved on to success level B. I didn't have everything I wanted yet, so I moved on to success level C.

It's just been one leap after another. And each one has been progressively so much larger than the previous step, it astounds me. And the opportunities. And I literally now am at the point where I can sit down in the morning, work for an hour or 2, and know the effort and time spent is going to bring me thousands of dollars. And I can do that pretty much anytime I want.

Some people, that would turn them into a workaholic. And if I was working 60 hours a week, I'd be making a killing. I'd be making a ton of money.

But that's not what motivates me. You asked what motivates me. I get to spend time with my family. I've been able to adopt internationally, a couple children, along with my wife and I have 2 what we call homemade babies. I've got 4 boys. I spend time with them. We're able to home-school them and spend time, quality time with them every day.

So I'm able to spend time with my kids, that I wouldn't be able to do. And that's what motivates me. And the thought of having to go back to a 9 to 5 job ever, that motivates me.

So it's not just a money thing. I set serious life goals, and I set about figuring out a way to accomplish those. And I ignored all the rules. The rules that you learn growing up are you're going to have to work 40 hours a week and, if you're serious, you're going to work 50 and you're going to have to climb the ladder of management and pay your dues.

I'm all for hard work, but if there's a smarter way to do it and the internet provides tools where anyone who's willing to sit down and learn them can do these things, that's been my motivation.

Terry: That's fantastic stuff. It's backwards from what most people think of. Most people think you work 40 hours a week and you build a life or you build... The standard model has been you work 40, 50 hours a week for 40 years, then you retire and your life begins.

What you're saying is you want this life, so let's design the business to fit that.

Jim: Absolutely. Let's find the business, let's find an income. And it's not about working harder. And anytime it starts to be about working harder, I step back and I say, "What tools or resources are available to automate this step?" Or, "Who can I hire to pay 30% of the profits to make sure I don't have to worry about this step anymore."

And email is a good example. I was spending a lot of time answering emails, and I was starting to work 25, 30 hours a week because I'm answering all of these emails. A lot of the same questions, over and over again.

Well, I went out and found tools to help me automate that piece. There's technology out there that automated it. And the part that needed the human touch, I hired a secretary. I pay her \$50 a week and she answers a lot of emails. She's learned a lot about the business and only sends me the ones that still baffle or confuse her, which is not very many these days. I've had her for a couple of years, and she does a great job.

This is someone I've never met. I found her through eLance. I said, "Hey, I need someone to answer my emails. I'll train you and you just answer emails." She answers a ton of emails. And I still have great customer support, but I'm not keeping my thumb on every email that comes through now. She answers a lot of them. She does a lot of that work for me.

So I found ways to stick to "I only want to work 20 hours a week." If I find myself doing more than that, something needs to change. I'll make as much money as I can, but I'm only going to work 20 hours a week. That was my cutoff.

Terry: I find myself, because I grew up with this "you've got to work 40 hours a week," and I have a degree in economics and work for myself. I'm like a bum is what people see me as. Actually, I'm a bum that has nice things.

Jim: I'm around my house all day, and I know the construction houses going up around us have to be thinking, "What does that guy do? Does he do anything?" They see me sitting on my back porch this afternoon, talking on the phone for a couple of hours. "What does that guy do for a living? Certainly, he's not getting paid to sit and talk on the phone."

Well, I kind of am. Terry, you're not going to send me a check, but enough people will be interested in my concepts maybe they'll go out and buy my book or join my newsletter. That's one income stream that I've got going on.

I tell people all the time, "I've got about 25 income streams." I'm not just doing eBay. I've got some real estate things going on and I have time to learn new businesses.

But the one thing that all of these businesses have in common is I set them in motion, I shove the little ship out to sail, and it keeps floating after I let go.

Those are the kind of businesses that I involve myself in. And there's only a handful of them that work that way, but the internet is one, real estate's another.

I know people having success in network marketing, and I'm diving into that a little bit. But again, I'm not going to spend 60 hours a week doing any of this. It's going to be 20 hours a week or it doesn't fit into my schedule.

Terry: I'm at the point right now where when I start my day, I spend an hour going in and actually working on my skills.

Right now, I'm into this Google AdSense, that you mentioned earlier. I'm looking at I have a website that I built to do that, and I have been doubling that income stream through Google for the past 6 weeks. Every week, I'm doubling it.

Jim: You have time to do things like that. The beauty of that is once you've got it figured out, you automate it, you step away from it, and the income continues. And those are the only kinds of tasks that I'll take on.

Terry: I think this has been great. I've really enjoyed talking with you on this. Obviously, Jim knows what he's talking about. I hope that you listeners have enjoyed this.

So Jim, how do people contact you?

Jim: Visit MySilentSalesMachine.com website.

I encourage people, don't buy anything from me at all. Just join my newsletter, read a few issues, read the testimonials. If this is really something you want to do, it's going to be the best \$25 you ever spent.

I like keeping my products very low price-point, so people can't use the price excuse. I've been told many times, "You need to be charging a lot more money." And I probably could and probably should, but I don't want price to be a barrier to entry on this.

So I've kept all of my stuff very reasonably price and 100% refund. You don't like it, 90 days later you say, "You know what? Didn't like it. Give me my money." We'll give you a refund. That's the way we do things.

It's no risk to check it out.

Terry: I'd advise any of you that haven't already read Jim's book to get a copy of it. I know that when you buy *The Silent Sales Machine*, it will offer you a special deal on the *Auction Traffic Cash* book. If you don't know about autoresponders, you should get the *Auction Traffic Cash* book also, because it goes step by step in how to set one up.

There's additional resources on the IWantCollectibles site, in the news section, and you can check those out.

Thank you for listening. And thank you for participating in this, Jim.

Jim: Yeah. See you guys on eBay. Email me. Let me know your thoughts. I'd love to meet the listeners that have heard this today. Thanks a lot, Terry.

Terry: Thanks, Jim.

Three related reports are available:

[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.

[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.

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