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# Mastering eBay For Profit

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# Sell with Success

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Founded in September 1995, eBay is the leading online marketplace for the sale of goods and services by a diverse community of individuals and businesses. Today, the eBay community includes 29.7 million registered users, and is the most popular shopping site on the Internet when measured by total user minutes according to Media Matrix.

***MARKET***

eBay enables trade on a local, national and international basis. It features a variety of international sites, specialty sites, categories and services that aim to provide users with the necessary tools for efficient online trading in the auction-style and fixed price formats.

In 2000, the eBay community transacted more than \$5 billion in annualized gross merchandise sales (value of goods traded on the eBay site).

On any given day, there are millions of items listed on eBay across thousands of categories. People come to eBay to buy and sell all kinds of practical, unique, and interesting items, such as automobiles, jewelry, musical instruments, cameras, computers, furniture, sporting goods, tickets, and boats.

Major services and features available on eBay include:

***Billpoint***

Billpoint is eBay's preferred online bill payment service that facilitates credit card payment between buyers and sellers. With Wells Fargo Bank, Billpoint offers expedient and secure completion of each transaction. By giving sellers the convenience of credit card acceptance, and providing buyers the ease to pay more quickly than writing a check or filling out a money order, Billpoint is the best choice for a hassle-free and reliable online payment solution on eBay.

***Half.com***

The eBay community benefits from a marketplace combining traditional auction-style trading and Half.com's fixed-price trading. Half.com offers an organized online marketplace to buy and sell high quality, previously owned mass-market goods. Unlike auctions, where the selling price is based on bidding, the seller sets a fixed price for items at Half.com at the time an item is listed.

***eBay International***

Users on eBay represent countries all over the world. With eBay's vision and global business strategy, the company continues to expand its service and brand abroad. It is not uncommon to hear about eBay users in Japan buying items from users in the U.S., or users in Australia buying from others in France. Currently,

eBay has country specific sites in Austria, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Switzerland and the UK.

### ***eBay Motors***

eBay Motors is the Internet's largest auction-style marketplace for buying and selling all things automotive. At any given time, eBay Motors has a wide variety of vehicles listed for sale, from Acura's to Volvos and all makes and models in-between. The site also features collector cars, motorcycles, as well as auto parts. eBay Motors provides end-to-end online services such as financing, inspections, escrow, auto insurance, vehicle shipping, title & registration, and a lemon check.

### ***eBay Stores***

eBay Stores expands the marketplace for sellers by allowing them to create customized shopping destinations to merchandise their items on eBay. For buyers, eBay Stores represents a convenient way to access sellers' goods and services. Buyers who shop at eBay Stores are able to make immediate and multiple-item purchases for fixed-price and auction-style items.

### ***Buy It Now***

Buy It Now is an exciting optional enhancement for item listings. It allows buyers to buy an item at a specified price without having to wait for an end of an auction. It gives sellers an easy and convenient method to sell items fast at a specific price. Listings with Buy It Now also run as an auction, however, once an auction bid is placed, the opportunity to *buy it now* ends.

### ***eBay Professional Services***

Professional Services on eBay services the fast growing and fragmented small business marketplace by providing a destination on eBay to find professionals and freelancers for all kinds of business needs such as web design, accounting, writing, technical support, among others.

### ***eBay Local Trading***

eBay has local sites in 60 markets in the U.S. These localized eBay sites allow users to easily find items located near them and browse through items of local interest. eBay's local sites deliver a distinctive regional flavor, while giving users the convenience to shop for more difficult-to-ship items such as automobiles, furniture or appliances.

### ***eBay Premier***

eBay Premier is a specialty site on eBay, which showcases fine art, antiques, fine wines and rare collectibles from leading auction houses and dealers from around the world. Through its "Premier Guarantee" program, all sellers on eBay Premier stand behind and guarantee the authenticity of their items.

### ***eBay Live Auctions***

Live Auctions provides live, real-time online bidding on items being sold on the sales floor of the world's leading auction houses. A proprietary technology developed by eBay, Live Auctions empowers traditional auctioneers to extend their sales beyond the auction house floor and reach millions of potential buyers online. Buyers gain easy access to exclusive, high-end property with the convenience and comfort of bidding from their home or office.

# eBay Community

The eBay community is made up of individual buyers and sellers who come to the site to do more than just buy or sell—they have fun, shop around, and get to know each other, for example, by chatting at the eBay Cafe.

Through the bulletin boards, users meet and get to know each other, discuss topics of mutual interest, and petition one another for information. These bulletin boards are public forums that encourage open communication between users.

eBay becomes a part of users' lifestyles. Many users have created second businesses, or quit day jobs altogether, by selling items on eBay. For hundreds of thousands of others, eBay is the place to share a passion for items that are special.

The community is also self-policing, and users frequently form "neighborhood watch" groups to help guard against misuse or violations of site etiquette.

eBay also encourages open and honest communication between the community and the company. Frequently, members of the community organize grassroots movements to improve the environment in which they work and play.

The sense of community is alive and well offline too. In the past few months, eBay users have planned vacations together, chipped in and bought a special item for another user, and have even spent vacation time doing home repairs for a fellow eBay user. We even heard about a group of eBay users in Ohio who are getting together for a Labor Day picnic.

eBay, simply, is the home of a unique online community.

# What makes ebay so successful

## The Power of Online Auctions

Why do online auctions work so well? What explains the fact that everyday people are making enough money selling goods on eBay to quit their day jobs? What explains one of today's most-exciting money generators?

Communication.

You now have the power to communicate your message to the entire world. The entire world from Alabama to Zambia. The entire world of people who want to buy your product. Plus, the buyer now has the ability to communicate to you the price they are willing to pay for your product.

### **A new era has dawned**

Taking advantage of all the Internet has to offer; ebay breaks down traditional barriers between bidders and seller - people who might otherwise never meet because they live in different states, time zones, or Continents. Ebay has actually created a cybermarket where millions of people buy and sell 24 hours a day, prices are set through competition, and there are no middlemen. This enhanced ability of collectors to locate new acquisitions they can't find anywhere else and for sellers to tap into broad markets has forever altered the face of commerce. .

# Auctions Types

## Auction Types and Terms

Dynamic commerce, or d-commerce, on the Internet is a new and rapidly growing arena. The terminology used by vendors and auction sites is often inconsistent. In our consulting practice, we have found the following helpful in sorting out some of the confusion.

**English Auction:** This is an open, ascending auction where each winner pays his/her bid. When people speak of auctions, they usually mean this one. Sotheby's and Christie's use this method for auctioning fine art. At most Internet auction sites, if there is no indication otherwise, this is the method used. The method works with both **Single Unit** and **Multiple Unit** auctions.

A **Single Unit** example: A seller is auctioning a coffee mug. The auction has no **Reserve Price** or **Minimum Bid**. No more bids will be accepted after noon. The following bids are submitted

Bid	Bidder	Time
\$1.75	Mr. X	8:00 am
\$1.76	Ms. Y	8:20 am
\$2.00	Mr. Z	9:05 am
\$2.01	Ms. Y	9:15 am
\$2.10	Mr. Z	10:20 am
\$2.50	Mr. X	11:00 am
\$2.51	Ms. Y	11:10 am
\$2.90	Mr. Z	11:20 am
\$2.91	Ms. Y	11:25 am
\$3.00	Mr. X	11:50 am
\$3.50	Mr. Z	11:55 am
\$3.51	Ms. Y	11:59 am

The winner is Ms. Y with a bid of \$3.51. The English auction is called open because every bidder knows all of the other bids and ascending because each bid must be higher than the one before.

A **Multiple Unit** example: A seller is auctioning five identical coffee mugs. The auction has no **Reserve Price** or **Minimum Bid**. No more bids will be accepted after noon. The following bids are submitted:

Qty	Bid	Bidder	Time
2	\$1.75	Mr. X	8:00 am
1	\$1.76	Ms. Y	8:20 am

2	\$2.00	Mr. Z	9:05 am
1	\$2.01	Ms. Y	9:15 am
2	\$2.10	Mr. Z	10:20 am
2	\$2.50	Mr. X	11:00 am
1	\$2.51	Ms. Y	11:10 am
2	\$2.90	Mr. Z	11:20 am
1	\$2.91	Ms. Y	11:25 am
1	\$2.95	Ms. W	11:30 am
2	\$3.00	Mr. X	11:50 am
2	\$3.50	Mr. Z	11:55 am
1	\$3.51	Ms. Y	11:59 am

The winners are: Ms. Y who bid \$3.51 for 1 mug  
Mr. Z who bid \$3.50 for 2 mugs  
Mr. X who bid \$3.00 for 2 mugs

Ms. W, who bid \$2.95, did not win.

In this particular example, all bids are strictly ascending. Each successive bid is higher than the previous high bid. Many **Multiple Unit** English auctions on the Internet allow bids that are sufficiently ascending. Each successive bid must be high enough to be a winning bid. In the example, if the auctioneer allowed Ms. Y a final bid at 11:59 am of \$2.96 instead of \$3.51, then this would be a sufficiently ascending English auction.

**Single Unit Auction:** Only one item is offered for sale. If a case of coffee mugs is being auctioned, and bidders have to bid on the whole case, then this would be a single unit auction. If bidders can buy individual coffee mugs, then this is a **Multiple Unit** auction.

**Multiple Unit Auction:** More than one of an item is offered for sale. If a case of coffee mugs is being auctioned, and bidders have to buy the whole case, then this would be a **Single Unit** auction. If bidders can buy individual coffee mugs, then this is a multiple unit auction. In multiple unit auctions, most sites will let bidders bid on more than one item (I'd like to buy four coffee mugs.) However, in the auction theory literature, most papers are written with the assumption that each bidder can only bid on one item. If the items being auctioned are all identical, then it is a homogenous multiple unit auction. If the items are basically the same, but have slight differences (scratches, perhaps), then the auction is heterogeneous.

**Reserve Price:** The minimum price that the seller will accept. An auction is not required to have a reserve price, and theoretically, any auction can have a reserve price. If the bidders know the reserve price, it is a posted reserve price; otherwise it is a secret reserve price.

**Minimum Bid:** The lowest bid allowed. The chart below shows the relationship between **Reserve Price** and minimum bid.

Reserve Price	Minimum Bid	Situation
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None	None	All bids allowed
None	Specified	All bids above Minimum allowed
Posted	None	All bids allowed, but only bids above Reserve may win
Posted	Specified	All bids above Minimum allowed, but only bids above Reserve may win
Secret	None	All bids allowed, but only bids above Reserve may win
Secret	Specified	All bids above Minimum allowed, but only bids above Reserve may win

**Reserve Price Auction:** A term used by many Internet auction sites to refer to an **English Auction** with a **Reserve Price**.

**Proxy English Auction:** On the Internet many auction sites have an **English** auction with a "robot" or other bidding agent that automatically increases a bidder's bid up to the bidder's predetermined maximum.

**Sealed Bid Auction:** This is a closed version of the **English** auction. All bidders submit their sealed (secret) bids. When the bidding period is over, all the bids are opened. The high bidder wins and pays what he/she bid. In **Multiple Unit** sealed bid auctions, the bids are ranked from high to low, the highest bidders win and each pays what he/she bid.

**Yankee Auction:** This is what the British call a **Sealed Bid** auction.

**Classic Dutch Auction:** This is an open, descending auction. The name is derived from the old Dutch practice of auctioning flower bulbs (tulips). The auctioneer starts at a very high price and at specific time intervals drops the price by a fixed amount. The process continues until a bidder indicates a buy signal, at which time that bidder wins the lot. In **Multiple Unit** classic Dutch auctions, the price quoted by the auctioneer is the unit price. When a bidder gives a buy signal, he/she can take some or all of the lot at the current price. If not all units are taken, the auctioneer continues dropping the price on the unpurchased portion of the lot. The auction is described as descending because the bids decrease over time.

**Dutch Auction:** This refers to many different auction types. To the financial community and to many Internet auction sites, this refers to a **Vickrey** auction. To the auction theorist, this is a **Classic Dutch** auction. Some sites use this term to refer to any descending price auction, including **Reverse** Auctions. At Auctus, we use this term to refer to a **Multiple Unit Vickrey** auction where the winners all pay the lowest winning bid.

**Vickrey Auction:** In a **Multiple Unit** auction, the highest bidders all win, but they each pay the lowest winning price. The Vickrey is sometimes called a uniform auction, because

each winner pays the same as every other winner. This contrasts with the **English Multiple Unit** and **Sealed Bid Multiple Unit** auctions that are called discriminatory because each winner could pay a different price.

Using our five identical coffee mug example, the following bids are received:

Qty	Bid	Bidder
3	\$2.56	Mr. V
1	\$2.95	Ms. W
2	\$3.00	Mr. X
1	\$3.51	Ms. Y
2	\$3.50	Mr. Z

At the end of the bidding period, the bids are sorted. The table below shows winners and the amount paid by each.

Qty	Bid	Bidder	
3	\$2.56	Mr. V	
1	\$2.95	Ms. W	
2	\$3.00	Mr. X	wins, pays \$3.00 each
2	\$3.50	Mr. Z	wins, pays \$3.00 each
1	\$3.51	Ms. Y	wins, pays \$3.00

In the auction theory literature, the winners all pay the highest losing bid, rather than the lowest winning, so in the example, all winners would pay \$2.95 (the highest losing bid).

In a **Single Unit** Vickrey auction, the highest bidder is the winner, but he/she pays the next highest price (the highest losing bid). This method is seldom seen outside of auction theory literature. A Vickrey auction is sometimes referred to as a second price auction, because the winner pays the second highest price bid, rather than the highest.

Vickrey auctions on the Internet are usually conducted as open auctions (all bidders can see all bids). In auction theory, the Vickrey method is always closed.

A **Japanese** auction is a special form of **English** auction where once bidding starts, no new bidders are allowed to participate and when the price rises each bidder must either drop out or indicate that they are continuing to bid. Japanese auctions are usually seen in auction theory. Although poker is not a Japanese auction, it functions similarly: once

everybody antes, no new players may jump in; when somebody raises, everybody must either fold (drop out) or match the raise.

**Winner's Curse:** In a **Single Unit** auction, it is the difference between the amount the winner paid and the next lower bid. In **Multiple Unit** auctions, it can be the difference between a winning bid and the lowest winning bid or a winning bid and the highest losing bid. The meaning is usually clear from the context.

**Pay-Your-Bid Auctions:** An auction where the winning bidders pay the amount they bid. The **English, Sealed Bid** and **Classic Dutch** are all pay-your-bid auctions. The **Vickrey** is not.

**Reverse Auction:** This term is used inconsistently. In most cases and in auction theory, this refers to a one-buyer, many-seller auction (as opposed to the traditional one-seller, many-buyer auction). Some sites use this term to refer to any descending price auction, including the **Classic Dutch**.

**Aggregate Demand Auction:** This is not a true auction, but does fit in the overall category of dynamic pricing. (This is the Mercata model.)

- ∅ The seller posts an item for sale and a price.
- ∅ Buyers indicate their willingness to buy at that price.
- ∅ When enough items are sold (as defined by the seller beforehand) at the initial posted price, the price drops a specified amount.
- ∅ Buyers willing to purchase at this new, lower price now do so.
- ∅ When enough items are sold, the price drops again.
- ∅ This process continues until the buying period is over.

**Negotiated Price Auction:** This is not a true auction, but appears in dynamic commerce situations. (This is the Priceline model.)

- ∅ A seller posts an item for sale
- ∅ A prospective buyer makes an offer
- ∅ If the seller accepts, then a trade is done
- ∅ If the seller chooses not to accept, he/she can make a counter-offer or not
- ∅ This process goes back and forth until a trade is consummated or one party chooses not to counter-offer.

**Exchange:** This is a many-buyer, many-seller auction. Some examples are NASDAQ, the New York Stock Exchange and the Chicago Board of Trade.

## Terminology Translation

An **English** auction on the Internet is called:

- Absolute Auction
- Ascending Price Auction
- English Auction
- Forward Auction
- Reserve Price Auction
- Standard Auction
- Straight Auction
- Straight Bidding
- Traditional Auction
- Yankee Auction

A **Classic Dutch** on the Internet is called:

- Automarkdown
- Bidder's Choice
- Declining Dutch Auction
- Dutch Auction
- Reverse Auction

A **Sealed Bid** auction on the Internet is called:

Private Auction

- Sealed Bid Auction
- Yankee Auction

A **Dutch - Vickrey** auction on the Internet is called:

- Dutch Auction
- Second or Lowest Price Option
- Vickrey Option

**Proxy Bidding Agents** on the Internet are called:

- Auto-Bidding
- Automatic Bidding
- Bid Buddy
- Bid Butler
- Bid-Click
- Maximum Bid
- Proxy

Proxy Auction  
Proxy Bid  
Robo Bid

### **Dangerous Terminology**

When an auction site refers to a **Dutch** auction, they are referring to either a Classic Dutch or a Dutch - Vickrey. They are quite different and your optimal bidding and selling strategies are quite different as well. If the price declines at regular intervals until a bidder accepts, it is a Classic Dutch. If there are multiple units being sold and all winning bidders pay the same price, the lowest winning bid, then it is a Dutch - Vickrey.

When an auction site refers to a **Yankee** auction, they are referring to either an English or a Sealed Bid. They are quite different and your optimal bidding and selling strategies are quite different as well. If you can see the current high bid it is English, otherwise it is Sealed Bid.

When an auction site refers to a **Reverse** auction, they are referring to either a Classic Dutch or a Reverse English. If one or more items are being sold and the price declines at regular intervals until a bidder accepts, it is a Classic Dutch. If items are being purchased, that is to say, if bidders are offering to sell goods, then it is a Reverse English.

# Basic Selling Strategy

## Basic Selling Strategy

From a seller's perspective, auctions are good for three things: gathering information about bidders, price discovery and selling things.

An example of gathering information about bidders: A golf merchandise site posts a set of autographed (by Tiger Woods, perhaps) golf clubs for auction. In order to bid, bidders are required to fill out a short form with information about their interests, demographics, contact information and, finally, their bid. The merchant site could easily get a list of 100,000 people with interest in golf. The value of this list in subsequent marketing efforts far surpasses the value of the golf clubs being auctioned.

An example of price discovery: A professional trader of collectibles, say Coca-Cola memorabilia, is interested in getting a handle on the strength of the market and appropriate pricing for a 1953 Atlanta bottle in good condition. The trader posts the bottle for auction and uses the submitted bids to identify possible prices for buying and selling. Sharper Image uses this method to determine prices for items that do not have natural price points.

Selling strategies for these two examples is beyond the scope of this brief summary. This document is focused on strategies for single unit selling.

The seller must determine the extent to which a sale is required. One extreme is when the seller decides that the item will be sold, best offer taken. Some examples are the IRS auctioning a delinquent taxpayer's belongings and a new bride auctioning her husband's bachelor furniture. The other extreme is when a seller is only reluctantly interested in selling, but would sell if the price were right.

The seller must determine the characteristics of typical bidders. Will the bidders be driven by private values or common values? (See the Bidding Strategy section for a discussion of private and common values.)

For required sales, the major auction methods (English, Classic Dutch and Sealed) are effective. The seller should take care that there is no reserve price. This is true whether bidders are driven by private values or common values.

For optional sales with private value bidders, the major auction methods (English, Classic Dutch and Sealed) are effective. The reserve price may be posted or secret.

For optional sales with common value bidders, the major auction methods (English, Classic Dutch and Sealed) are effective. If there is a reserve price, it must be secret.

In most cases, the more bidders, the better. The rare cases when this is not true occur when there are common value bidders that are all known to each other. In all other cases, the seller should seek as many bidders as possible. Because of the common awareness of, and bidder familiarity with the English, this is the method of choice to get the maximum number of bidders. Bidders will hesitate to bid aggressively in auctions using unfamiliar methods.

The selection of the auction site to use is another important factor. However, since most sites offer the English method and allow reserve prices, if desired, the method offering is typically not the determinant of auction site. Rather, the number of relevant bidders should be the determinant in auction site selection.

Shill bidding by sellers is unnecessary. It is usually not allowed and possibly is even illegal. Selection of an appropriate reserve price in optional sales should be sufficient to satisfy any minimum price requirement.

The preceding overview assumes "rational" bidders, that is, bidders that are knowledgeable about their situation and their corresponding optimal bidding strategies. When bidders are naïve about their situation and optimal strategies or are emotionally driven, the seller usually benefits. In single unit auctions, the English is most susceptible to emotional bidding behaviors and is used to extract "emotional" valuations.

# Selling Tips

## Seller's Tips

- Ø You can get free Priority Mail shipping supplies from USPS delivered free to your door. visit <http://supplies.usps.gov> details.
- Ø Accept personal checks. Don't wait for them to clear and state shipping charges in the description.
- Ø Always give the buyer lots of bidding room. It is better to have a low starting price with a reserve than to just start your auction at your minimum price. You often get no bids or very few as it seems more like a purchase than an auction. Remember, the bidding is most of the fun and is what keeps people coming back
- Ø Make your auctions descriptions as complete as possible: colors, sizes, shapes, materials, markings, manufacturers, dates, etc. to help buyers find your auction with search terms.
- Ø Don't inflate shipping costs.
- Ø Don't just put up one photo of the item. If the item has a label attached, put up a photo of it also. If the item has a flaw, put up a close up photo showing the flaw.
- Ø The more complete you are with photos, the more bids you'll get.
- Ø Enclose a slip of paper (a receipt if you will) with your shipment with your User Name and Email so buyer can contact you if there is any problem Also use it as a reminder for them to drop you some feedback!
- Ø Check with UPS for easier shipping - they come to your home daily for about \$6/week, they give you easy software and a printer to easily write shipping labels, and they will also email your customer with the exact delivery date. A substantial savings over USPS..
- Ø Remember you are dealing with a live human being on the other end of the transaction. Treat them like one!
- Ø Communication, communication, communication

- Ø If sending by USPS, send each package with a delivery confirmation attached. It only costs \$.35, and you have no discrepancies whether or not the customer received their package. This is extremely helpful and it gives you peace of mind!
- Ø Send an email to the high bidder with the number at the delivery confirmation slip and a link to the USPS tracking website.
- Ø Include item number with your winning bid notice. Customers often print your notice and send it in with the payment which has their email address, item #, and description.
- Ø Ask your high bidders to email their shipping address ahead of time, so you can package the item and have it ready for immediate shipment.
- Ø The minute you get your first bid (or when the item hits reserve), pack your item and pencil in what it is on the box. That way, it is less likely that it will get broken/lost/disappear into the ozone layer prior to shipping.
- Ø Keep original envelopes from buyers filed in a shoe box. These sometimes prove to yield invaluable information such as date postmarked, alternative addresses, etc.
- Ø A quick and free shipping box can be made by slitting the side of a USPS Priority Mail box, turning it inside out and taping the side back together.
- Ø Buyers don't like to wait for pictures to pop up & will move to the next auction if it's taking too long. Follow the guidelines given in the auction help area so your pictures show up in an instant.
- Ø If you want your new listings to show up in prime time remember there is a two to three hour delay in updates during the day and evening so do your listing in late afternoon in the east and even earlier on the west coast. Same holds true if you want to hit the breakfast crowd. The early lister catches the bidder.
- Ø Printing receipts 2 to a page is a godsend! You get to keep one for your records the buyer gets one for theirs!
- Ø Provide buyers with all the status you can, including an email as soon after the auction closes as possible with your address info and repeating terms and bid amount + shipping (and requesting their address info too), email them when payment arrives and advising when item will be sent (especially if you are holding it for a check to clear), email when item is shipped (request them to email you when it arrives) and a follow-up email if you don't hear back. Status, status, status!

- Ø As a seller, take the time to educate yourself about unfamiliar items you want to sell, even if you have only one and don't expect to sell such a thing again. Do a search, or even email a fellow ebayer whose buying or selling patterns suggest she's knowledgeable. You'll write a better description and have a much better idea of what you can expect to get for your item.
- Ø Sellers, leave feedback for buyers as soon after receipt of payment as possible. They have done all that is required from you to complete the transaction by sending in their payment and should not have to wait for you to complete your part. NEVER ask a buyer to submit feedback for you if you haven't already left feedback for them.
- Ø Get organized from the start as far as record keeping goes. Don't throw everything into a pile telling yourself you'll get it organized later. Later never seems to come until April 14th.
- Ø Use the ebay "end or auction" email to send the notification of winning bid notice to the high bidder. Delete the return address for ebay and insert the high bidders email address instead. This form contains all or the pertinent information you need except for winners address.
- Ø Sellers - if you make a mistake, admit it and find out what you need to do to make the sale a good one for the buyer.
- Ø If you use lengthy descriptions, write them up first in a word processing program (with spellchecker). You can do this offline and then just cut and paste when you're ready to list. This also saves you from getting to the very end of your listing and click review and find that ebay is down and for whatever reason, your back button isn't working either...
- Ø Have some else proofread your auction description 'whenever possible.
- Ø Sellers: Always accompany your honest complete description with one or more photos, be sure photos are cropped and sized for quick loading and describe item(s) as if there were NO photo!
- Ø HONESTY is the best policy whether you are a buyer or seller. If you mess up, admit it and fix it. No one is perfect and reasonable people will appreciate your forthrightness.
- Ø I'm starting to get repeat business due to personal touches. If the item is a gift, I might enclose a gift card. If the customer is a repeat, especially several auctions, I will include a thank you gift along the same lines. It doesn't have to be expensive, I keep a box of "freebies" on hand for just these situations. I keep notes on all my

auctions and any special requests the customer has, and do my best to help them, They always notice these things and always appreciate them.

- Ø If you register on ebay in order to sell, it's a good idea to participate as a bidder in a few auctions first. Experiencing the process as a buyer will give you a different perspective AND it will provide the opportunity to rack up some positive feedback points.
- Ø Don't let any package enter the mail stream without someone paying for insurance on it unless you can afford to "eat" any damage or loss.
- Ø An inexpensive scale is a great investment for any seller It will save you trips to the Post Office as well as money.
- Ø Don't be afraid to sell to "foreign" buyers. It's not that big a deal to fill out a customs form.
- Ø Create your own About Me page. Its fun and reminds your trading partners that you're a real live person - not just a faceless entity at the other end of their computer.
- Ø If your items aren't selling, don't assume it's the "summer doldrums". Are your prices too high? Are your items readily available locally to bidders for less or the same money? Are your descriptions boring or incomplete? Fix it and relist and see what happens.
- Ø Try using one of the free hidden counters available to track interest in items-- especially if you're branching out into new areas. It "will help you determine when you're getting the most lookers or show you that you're not.
- Ø Use MyEbay to keep track of your monthly activity. - the last day of every month, print out a history Of that month, and ebay gives you totals on everything.
- Ø Don't be afraid to change categories during an auction. But do remember that there's a time lapse for reindexing.
- Ø Create an HTML document with your selling philosophy, procedures and stipulations spelled out.
- Ø Re-draft it until you have it to a manageable size (something that is short enough so that folks will actually read it).
- Ø Ask folks on eBay Q% A to critique your terms and conditions.
- Ø Post your terms and conditions on every listing you create.

- Ø When you get an email inquiry regarding general auction questions you can refer the person to your statement in any of your auctions (or on your AboutMe page) and save a tot Or time for yourself short term as well as long term.
- Ø If you put a fixed shipping price and shipped the item for less, put the extra money in an envelop and return it back by registered mail...
- Ø Try and avoid grading terms like mint, near mint etc.. These terms mean all sorts of different things to different people in different fields. If the item is used but still looks nice, just say that. The truth shall set you free, The picture may be worth a thousand words but it never tells the story'. If you are too busy or lazy to describe an item, you are to busy to sell at an online auction site.
- Ø The wrapping tape also ensures that me return address and the mailing address are not obliterated during handling. Never write a address on tape when shipping if it gets wet the ink will wipe off
- Ø Be accurate in the description and the email replies,...just say what you are 100% sure about...and put as many pictures as you can....
- Ø End your auction in prime time when most or all interested bidders can participate. It increases the number of last minute participants and drives the price upward.
- Ø For a waterproof covering for your addresses on envelopes or packages, rub across the written area with the end of a white candle. Kind of like a waxed coating that repels moisture.
- Ø Write your return address on more than one spot on the package incase the spot where the address is written is damaged.
- Ø Check into your bank's internet banking features. It's possible that you can use this feature to send payments and these checks are just as good as money orders because the funds are taken from your account when you request the check, not when it comes back for clearance. All for one flat monthly fee.
- Ø Include a premium in your package to a buyer. It costs you very little, but creates a lasting positive impression on the buyer.
- Ø When sending heavy items, make sure the box you am sending it in is rated for that weight You can typically find the weight limit in a circle printed on the bottom of the box. If it is a used box, subtract 10lbs from the number to account for wear and tear from its previous use.

- Ø Don't use all caps in your description. Its harder to read and some equate it to yelling at them. A lot of buyers won't bother reading through very much of it.
- Ø Learn some basic html - like how to break into a new paragraph or insert bullets to itemize a list of things. This also makes for easier reading and looks like you know what you're doing.
- Ø Put the buyers name and address INSIDE the package incase the outside label gets messed up.
- Ø Try to use clear English and a void using slang Statements when writing to international customers. English might not he their native language...and they might have difficulties understanding what you are saying...

## Power-Packed Words to Punch Up Your Auction Headline

The first step at getting a person to bid on your auction item is getting that person to read your listing. Your headline should tell the buyer why your listing is worth looking at. Of course you'll need the facts, ie: "**1971 TV Guide.**" Now punch it up to make it worth my time looking at it. "**Unique 1971 TV Guide \*\* Outstanding!**" Use them to spice up your copy. But remember, not too much pepper please.

- |               |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Ø Amazing     | Ø Improved    | Ø Scarce      |
| Ø Authentic   | Ø Informative | Ø Sensational |
| Ø Bargain     | Ø Instructive | Ø Special     |
| Ø Beautiful   | Ø Latest      | Ø Startling   |
| Ø Colorful    | Ø Limited     | Ø Sturdy      |
| Ø Complete    | Ø Magic       | Ø Superior    |
| Ø Excellent   | Ø Outstanding | Ø Terrific    |
| Ø Exciting    | Ø Powerful    | Ø Tremendous  |
| Ø Exclusive   | Ø Profitable  | Ø Unique      |
| Ø Fascinating | Ø Proven      | Ø Unusual     |
| Ø Genuine     | Ø Rare        | Ø Valuable    |
| Ø Greatest    | Ø Remarkable  | Ø Weird       |
| Ø Huge        | Ø Revealing   | Ø Wonderful   |

## **Linking on eBay**

eBay offers you a wonderful opportunity to put links in your portion of your auction web page.

The possibilities are limitless, but you need to limit them to what's relevant to your auction. The purpose of an ad is not "show and tell" It's to sell the item being auctioned.

### **Your Website**

You should include a link to your website in every ad. It's your chance to market your other merchandise A person may not bid on your item being auctioned but nonetheless may buy something at your website.

### **Manufacturer's Web site**

If you do not have (or do not want to type) the manufacturer's information on the product being auctioned, it might be posted on the manufacturer's website. If so, you can create a link from your ad to the place in the manufacture's website where the information and specifications are posted. This relieves you of a lot of work in processing information for many products. But, in any event, you still need to put a short paragraph about the product in your ad.

### **Review Website**

If a Web magazine or other entity has favorably reviewed the product being sold, put in a link to the review

### **Auction List**

You can put in a link to a list of your current auctions on eBay. This is a convenience to potential bidders, particularly if the other items you auction on eBay are similar to the item featured in your auction ad.

# Auction Management Software

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## [Auctiva Pro,](#)

[http://www.auctiva.com/products/prod\\_pricing.asp](http://www.auctiva.com/products/prod_pricing.asp)

Web and PC-based auction management with image hosting and gallery/showcase. Multi-site management functionality. Pricing is by monthly subscription, with no listing or final value fees; additional charges apply for premium image hosting plans. See site for details. 30-day free trial is standard.

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## [AuctionTamer,](#)

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

- Ø PC-based auction management software. Some multi-site functionality. One time purchase, with upgrades included. 14-day free trial is standard.
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## [Auction Trakker,](#)

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

- Ø PC-based auction management software for eBay, with tracking functionality (only) for Yahoo. One time purchase, with upgrades included. 30-day free trial .
-

**[Auctionworks,](#)**

**<http://www.auctionworks.com/default.asp>**

- Ø Web-based auction management for eBay, including image hosting, optional web-based checkout, and storefront with shopping cart. There is no listing fee for auctions or storefront. Seller pays 2% of final value for auctions and storefront, with a monthly minimum of \$14.95. See site for other plans. 14-day free trial is standard.
- 

**[ChannelFusion Pro,](#)**

**<http://channelfusion.goto.com/solutions/smallBusiness/productFeatures.asp>**

ChannelFusion Pro (Formerly GoTo Auction Manager) provides web-based auction management, including unlimited image hosting, optional web-based checkout, and auction storefront. Multi-site functionality. Pricing is by monthly subscription, with no listing or final value fees. 14-day free trial is standard. To take advantage of this offer:

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Ø **[Shooting Star,](#)**

**<http://foodogsoftware.com/>**

PC-based auction management software for eBay. One time purchase. 30-day free trial is standard.

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**[Easy Auction Pro,](#)**

**<http://auctiontools.net/index.html>**

PC-based auction management software for eBay. One time purchase. 30-day free trial is standard. \$39.99 purchase price To take advantage of this offer:

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# Software and Tools for Buyers

## Software and tools for buyers:

- Ø [Auction Station](http://www.auctionstation2000.com/) : Sniper / Web Browser lets you easily navigate auction sites and automatically bid  
<http://www.auctionstation2000.com/>
  
- Ø [AuctionStealer](http://www.auctionstealer.com/) : an online auction sniping program that places your bid at the exact time you specify automatically and unattended, it also tracks an unlimited number of auctions  
<http://www.auctionstealer.com/>
  
- Ø [AuctionPAL](http://www.grol.com/ebaypal/) : (formerly EbayPAL) auction closing alerts, place a bid one click, snipe bidding, built-in browser, create and save custom searches, auction archive tracking, leave feedback with two clicks, auto adult area logon  
<http://www.grol.com/ebaypal/>
  
- Ø [AuctionTamer](http://www.auctiontamer.com/) : Personalized Internet browser with multi-auction site features for buyers and sellers.  
<http://www.auctiontamer.com/>
  
- Ø [HammerTap](http://www.hammertap.com/) : free tools for eBay users: use BayMail to email users without using the eBay contact tool, create and share a blocked bidder list with BidderBlock, investigate a user feedback with BayCheck  
<http://www.hammertap.com/>
  
- Ø [Bay-Town BidMaster](#) : auction tracking, last minute bidding software, item searching
  
- Ø [Amherst Robots \(vrane.com\)](http://www.vrane.com/) : BidSniper can snipe ebay auctions for you  
<http://www.vrane.com/>

- Ø [Cricket, Jr.](http://www.worldint.com/journeys/eccles/cricketjr/support.html) : last minute bidding software  
<http://www.worldint.com/journeys/eccles/cricketjr/support.html>
- Ø [eAuction Watcher](http://defoort.free.fr//ewatcher/) : retrieve current auction item information, search for items, alarms alert you to auctions that are about to end or when the high bidder changes, keep record of old auctions, works with many sites  
<http://defoort.free.fr//ewatcher/>
- Ø [The eBay Assistant](http://defoort.free.fr//ewatcher/) : allows you to track auction items on ebaY, built-in browser, real-time clock countdown, reporting, automated unattended bidding (aka sniping), automatic ISP dialer  
<http://defoort.free.fr//ewatcher/>
- Ø [eSnipe](http://esnipe.com/) : Auto bidding, from the ebay auction page  
<http://esnipe.com/>
- Ø [iSnipeIt](http://www.isnipeit.com/) : automatically places bids at the last moment, schedule bids  
<http://www.isnipeit.com/>
- Ø [Honesty Multi-Bid\(tm\)](http://honesty.com/listing/) : track eBay items, make last minute bids  
<http://honesty.com/listing/>
- Ø [WinningBid Pro](http://www.umklaydet.com/) : tools to monitor, bid, and track auctions, automated bid submission, management of completed auctions and seller/bidder related information, eBay, Amazon and Yahoo  
<http://www.umklaydet.com/>

#### **Auction site searching, cross-site listings and item tracking:**

- Ø [AntiqueCast](http://www.antiquecast.com/) : search for the item you want on multiple auction sites  
<http://www.antiquecast.com/>
- Ø [AuctionBeagle](http://www.auctionbeagle.com/) : search many auction sites using your search terms  
<http://www.auctionbeagle.com/>

- Ø [Auction Patrol Myrna](http://www.auctionpatrol.com/patrol.php?id=search.alot)  
<http://www.auctionpatrol.com/patrol.php?id=search.alot>
  
- Ø [AuctionPrime](http://www.auctionprime.com/) : automatic bidding, alarm for auctions being watched, auction tracking, saved searches track of an item from start to finish, more  
<http://www.auctionprime.com/>
  
- [Auctiva SmartBid](http://www.ebudsoftware.com/ebuyer/)  
<http://www.ebudsoftware.com/ebuyer/>
  
- Ø [AuctionWatch.com](http://www.auctionwatch.com/buyerseller/buyer.html)  
<http://www.auctionwatch.com/buyerseller/buyer.html>
  
- Ø [BidFind](http://www.bidfind.com/) : searches hundreds of popular online dynamic pricing sites, also includes a categorized browsing feature, and a items wanted listing  
<http://www.bidfind.com/>
  
- Ø [GoTo Auctions](http://merchant.channeladvisor.com/default.asp?) (formerly AuctionRover)  
<http://merchant.channeladvisor.com/default.asp?>

# Links

- Ø [AuctionCalculator.com](http://www.auctioncalc.com/) - This calculator is FREE, and use it all you want. Great while you're submitting a bid, as a reference  
<http://www.auctioncalc.com/>
- Ø [AuctionGator](http://www.auctiongator.com/)  
**AuctionGator.com is a free web-based service created exclusively for eBay (TM) buyers, sellers and collectors that provides sophisticated auction notification and search capabilities. With AuctionGator.com, you are able to closely monitor auctions, create search agents, track activity, etc.**  
<http://www.auctiongator.com/>
- Ø [AuctionsReviewed.com](http://www.auctionsreviewed.com/). There goal is to guide you through the best Online Auction sites on earth.  
<http://www.auctionsreviewed.com/>
- Ø [AuctionStealer.com](http://www.auctionstealer.com/) is an Auction Sniper  
By automatically placing your bids at the last possible moments, AuctionStealer.com allows you to rest easy knowing that your competitors will have literally no time to react to your bid. Schedule your bid at your convenience and AuctionStealer.com places it with seconds to go, leaving you free to go about your business without worrying about when to bid next.  
<http://www.auctionstealer.com/>

## Auction Management Software

- Ø [Auction Watch](http://www.auctionwatch.com/) Auction Management Software  
<http://www.auctionwatch.com/>
- Ø [ManageAuction.com](http://auction1.inetu.net/cgi-bin/show_page?p=index)  
[http://auction1.inetu.net/cgi-bin/show\\_page?p=index](http://auction1.inetu.net/cgi-bin/show_page?p=index)

## New Business Concept

- Ø [Take to Auction](http://www.taketoauction.com/default.asp)  
<http://www.taketoauction.com/default.asp>  
Take items to auction without paying for them and without any of the headaches in

dealing with the bidders, payment processing, or shipment of the products.

- Ø **TTA** is a membership based Internet community where our members sell items at online auction sites. You pay a membership fee, select items for auction, and collect the profits! If the item doesn't sell after the auction period, the item automatically returns to our virtual warehouse, at no expense to you.
- Ø That annual fee becomes an account of credits. The minimum is \$500 for 500 credits. You can purchase up to \$10,000 for 10,000 credits. You use your credits to take items to auction. Each auction takes one week. After it's over your credit investment returns to your account. **Whether or not your item was sold!** You can use those credits again and again until your membership expires.
- Ø The Warehouse Wizard will serve up three items. You pick the one you think is best to "take to auction." If you don't like any items, choose "next" for more, and the Wizard will serve up three more. You can continue to have items served up until you choose an item.  
Once you select an item, decide which auction site will sell it. Take to Auction does the rest - even collecting money from the buyer and shipping the merchandise.
- Ø For example, the baby-G watch is valued at 32 credits (and you have a 500-credit membership). If you take it to auction, you'll invest 32 credits and still have 468 credits left in your account. At the auction site, this item's minimum bid would be \$32.
- Ø After an auction, you get your credits back to reuse in another auction. But the best part is, you also get the profit from the sale. All of it! So if your Baby-G watch sold for \$52, you'd get your 32 credits back plus \$20 **clear profit**.
- Ø After taking one item to auction, you can then go back and select additional items to utilize your remaining available credits. At any time, you can track your auctioned items by viewing a real-time bid status. That annual fee is **all you ever pay**. You **never** pay auction house listing fees or success fees. You **never** take possession of an item, even if it doesn't sell.
- Ø Your initial investment of credits always return to you until your membership expires. Your profit is posted to your individual account as soon as we receive payment from the buyer. Since you can reinvest your credits every week, you get 52 chances to make money before your membership expires! Once a month, you choose between taking a check for your profits or using the money to purchase more credits so that you can take items with a higher value to auction.
- Ø You manage your account while we do all the hard stuff: listing your item on the auction site, processing payment, shipping out the merchandise, and sending your monthly profits. We even provide customer service for your buyers.
- Ø [Andale](#)  
Andale is the leading provider of commerce management tools and services used by more than one million small businesses for automating and integrating all

aspects of online selling across multiple channels; including auctions, ecommerce stores, direct mail, and websites anywhere

Andale merchandising, inventory, finance, customer communications, and supplier sourcing management tools allow our users to manage multiple market sales from a single location, helping today's online businesses dramatically increase their overall revenue.

<http://www.andale.com/corp/index.html>

- Ø [MyItem.com](http://www.myitem.com). Inc. is an auction services company.. The company is a development of Internet think tank, [Invent.com](http://www.invent.com). MyItem.com offers free services for online auction sellers - image hosting, counters, easy HTML creation, and more!

<http://www.myitem.com/index.html>

- Ø [AuctionHelper](http://www.auctionhelper.com) is a software Company that creates auction management tools developed to automate the time-consuming components of the online auction process. The Company has created cutting edge technology that allows sellers to increase their efficiency and productivity. The tools and services allow sellers to save time during the entire auction management process.

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

- Ø [Auction Works](http://www.auctionworks.com)

Auctionworks is a web-based auction management service that enables online businesses to efficiently manage the entire online marketplace selling process.

Auctionworks has evolved into the premier provider of auction management services for eBay sellers, providing the tools that enable sellers to significantly increase their sales while streamlining the sales process and building their businesses.

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

### **Counters –**

Many sellers have used counters on their auctions ads (auction Web pages) to determine how much traffic they get. That usually entails going to a counter website and following the procedures for installing a counter. eBay now offers a convenient alternative. You can elect to have an Honesty.com counter installed automatically when you enter your auction information for your auction ad. Go Sell, Seller Services. eBay does not charge for this device.

- Ø [Honesty.Com](http://www.honesty.com)

<http://www.andale.com/corp/us/honestymembers.html>

- Ø [Ruby Lane](http://count.rubylane.com/)  
<http://count.rubylane.com/>

### **Business Services:**

- Ø [M.A.D. Collection Agency](http://www.madagency.com/) : collects for bad checks, non-paying bidders, charges a commission only if the money is collected  
<http://www.madagency.com/>
- Ø [NetLedger](http://www.netledger.com/portal/portal.nl?mode=welcome) : A full featured online accounting solution, imports QuickBooks and Peachtree data. Web Site allows you to quickly and easily set up and operate a web site that advertises your company's goods or services based on the information in NetLedger. Web Store lets you create a Web store. These and other services are available in a package or individually.  
<http://www.netledger.com/portal/portal.nl?mode=welcome>

### **Item pricing, auction sales statistics, item identification:**

- Ø [AntiqueCast Price Guide](http://www.antiquecast.com/) : search a database of past auctions to find the value of collectables  
<http://www.antiquecast.com/>
- Ø [Auction Counts](http://www.dtmagazine.com/auctioncounts.html) : Has the number of items listed on a number of auction sites. eBay and Yahoo are broken down into number of items in categories.  
<http://www.dtmagazine.com/auctioncounts.html>
- Ø [Strong Numbers](http://www.strongnumbers.com/) : price guide that provides fair market values for a wide variety of items  
<http://www.strongnumbers.com/>
- Ø [WorthGuide](#) : current and historical auction pricing information

### **Shipping and Handling**

If you simply charge for shipping, then you have to wait until after the auction to quote a charge (depending on how far away the buyer lives). The buyer remains uncertain about what the charge will be until he or she receives a quote. If you quote a shipping charge in

the auction ad and collect it, the buyer may be angry when the actual shipping charge turns out to be less.

One way to get around this frustration is to charge for shipping and handling. No one knows what handling is. It probably should be covered in your overhead, Yet, many people charge it. Quote a shipping and handling charge in the auction ad. That gives the buyer certainty. Make sure shipping and handling charge is enough to cover shipping anywhere in the US, but no more, If the actual shipping charge to a place close to where you live is less than the shipping and handling charge, the buyer has no grounds for complaint This is less trouble for both parties.

Some people make their profit on shipping and handling. They charge a lower price for the item and a high price for shipping and handling. So long as the charge is stated in the auction ad, buyers have little grounds for complaint. Still, this practice is irritating to buyers and not recommended.

- Ø [Australia Post : Rate Calculator](http://www.auspost.com.au/home.asp)  
<http://www.auspost.com.au/home.asp>
  
- Ø [BrassPack Packing Supply](http://www.brasspack.com/) : stocks a full line of packing supplies  
<http://www.brasspack.com/>
  
- Ø [Canada Post : Rate Calculators](http://www.canadapost.ca/splash.asp)  
<http://www.canadapost.ca/splash.asp>
  
- Ø [DHL Worldwide](http://www.dhl.com/)  
<http://www.dhl.com/>
  
- Ø [Discount Box and Packaging Store](http://www.movewithus.com/boxindex.shtml)  
<http://www.movewithus.com/boxindex.shtml>
  
- Ø [e-stamp](http://www.stamps.com/) : a PC/Internet postage system  
<http://www.stamps.com/>
  
- Ø [Fast-Pack](http://www.fast-pack.com/) :Wholesale Bubble Envelopes, Bubble Wrap, Rolls of Foam, and Printer Ink Cartridges  
<http://www.fast-pack.com/>

- Ø [Federal Express](http://www.federalexpress.com/)  
<http://www.federalexpress.com/>
  
- Ø [FedEx Ground](#) : (formerly RPS Inc.)
  
- Ø [Shipping Supplies Online](#) : boxes, bubble mailers, packing peanuts, bubble rolls, poly bags, tape & more... (10% discount for OAU members)  
<http://www.shippingsupply.com/>
  
- Ø [Supplies4Shipping.com](#) : a wide range of products from bubble envelopes, shipping tape, corrugated boxes, boxes for video tape mailers, compact disc mailers, book boxes, poly bags, and much much more.  
<http://www.supplies4shipping.com/>
  
- Ø [SmartShip.com](#) : SmartShip is a web-based service that allows its users to compare U.S. shipping rates, purchase shipping, schedule a package pickup, and print a shipping label for their package.  
<http://www.smartship.com/>
  
- Ø [Simply Postage](#) : a PC/Internet postage system  
<http://www.simplypostage.com/>
  
- Ø [Stamps.com](#) : a PC/Internet postage system  
<http://www.stamps.com/>
  
- Ø [UK Royal Mail](#) : [Rate Calculators](#)  
<http://www.royalmail.com/default.htm>
  
- Ø [U-PIC.com](#) : Universal Parcel Insurance Coverage, discounted package insurance for packages shipped via major carriers such as UPS, USPS, etc. [Buy Insurance from U-PIC!](#)  
<http://www.u-pic.com/>
  
- Ø [UPS Rate Calculator](#)  
<http://wwwapps.ups.com/servlet/QCCServlet>

- Ø [USPS Priority Mail Supplies](http://supplies.usps.gov/)  
<http://supplies.usps.gov/>
- Ø [USPS Rate Calculator](http://postcalc.usps.gov/)  
<http://postcalc.usps.gov/>
- Ø [USPS International Rate Calculator](http://ircalc.usps.gov/)  
<http://ircalc.usps.gov/>
- Ø [WebShipinc.com](http://www.webshipinc.com/ship/customers/): ships items too large for parcel carriers  
<http://www.webshipinc.com/ship/customers/>

## Packaging

Package well to minimize your shipping problems. Most people over pack perhaps. It's better to over pack than to have to deal with damaged goods, collect insurance, and other nasty details.

Naturally, eBay is a fertile ground for selling packaging materials. Consequently, you do not have to look beyond eBay to find materials you need to package well at good prices. Also ask your shipper what is provided free in the way of shipping materials.

- Ø Bubblefast <http://www.bubblefast.com>
- Ø Mail Boxes Etc <http://www.mbe.com>
- Ø Moving Uninvited <http://www.movewithus.com>
- Ø OfficeMax <http://www.officemax.com>
- Ø ShippingSupply.com <http://www.shippingsupply.com>
- Ø Staples <http://www.staples.com>
- Ø Uline <http://www.uline.com>

## If It Doesn't Get There

What if you send it, and it doesn't get there? Who is responsible? The buyer or seller (you)? One way is to put the responsibility on the buyer and offer the buyer the opportunity to buy insurance. But what if the buyer doesn't buy insurance and it doesn't get there? Who is responsible, the buyer or seller (you)? Clearly the buyer is responsible because that's the way you set up your sales requirements. This is terrible customer

service, however, and you had better figure out another way to handle the missing package.

One way is to self-insure. If a package isn't delivered, you simply send another at your cost. Don't worry about getting and paying for insurance. Another way is to require mandatory insurance and either pay for it or require that the buyer pay for it. A third way is to use shippers that provide a minimal level of insurance (e.g., \$100) at no extra cost. Whatever your solution, don't overlook this aspect of doing business on eBay. And don't put the buyer in a losing situation.

### HTML help:

- Ø [Baypal "Mr. Louis"](http://freehost.baypal.com/) : Mr. Louis acts like your own HTML tutor and instructor. Use his practice board to try out your HTML tricks before you actually show them off.  
<http://freehost.baypal.com/>
  
- Ø [Bare Bones Guide to HTML](http://werbach.com/barebones/)  
<http://werbach.com/barebones/>
  
- Ø [HTML Goodies](http://www.htmlgoodies.com/)  
<http://www.htmlgoodies.com/>
  
- Ø [How do they do that with HTML?](#)
  
- Ø [HTML made really easy](http://www.jmarshall.com/easy/html/)  
<http://www.jmarshall.com/easy/html/>
  
- Ø [Beginner's Guide to HTML](http://archive.ncsa.uiuc.edu/General/Internet/WWW/HTMLPrimer.html)  
<http://archive.ncsa.uiuc.edu/General/Internet/WWW/HTMLPrimer.html>
  
- Ø [Mr. Louis the HTML instructor](http://www.baypal.com/)  
<http://www.baypal.com/>
  
- Ø [Webmonkey](http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/webmonkey/html/97/05/index2a.htm)  
<http://hotwired.lycos.com/webmonkey/webmonkey/html/97/05/index2a.htm>

Ø [useit.com](http://www.useit.com/) : excellent usability information and tips for web sites and much also applies to auction listings  
<http://www.useit.com/>

Ø [Zelda's HTML Practice Board](http://www.zeldas.com/zeldaspracticeboard.htm)  
<http://www.zeldas.com/zeldaspracticeboard.htm>

### Image Hosting:

Ø [AntiqueCast](http://www.antiquecast.com/) : image hosting, web based listing creation tool, auction posting. only a monthly fee for image hosting, no per item or percentage fees  
<http://www.antiquecast.com/>

Ø [Auction Pix](http://www.auctionpix.com/)  
<http://www.auctionpix.com/>

Ø [AuctionTalk](http://www.auctiontalk.com/imagehosting.asp)  
<http://www.auctiontalk.com/imagehosting.asp>

Ø [AuctionWatch.com](http://www.auctionwatch.com/buyerseller/seller.html)  
<http://www.auctionwatch.com/buyerseller/seller.html>

Ø [BayPal](http://www.baypal.com/newbaypal/login.php)  
<http://www.baypal.com/newbaypal/login.php>

Ø [Boomspeed.Com's Image and Webpage Hosting Service](http://www.boomspeed.com/ihost/) : free 10 MB image hosting and web hosting, an inexpensive 100 MB account with more features is also offered  
<http://www.boomspeed.com/ihost/>

Ø [ePho.com](http://www.ephocom.com/)  
<http://www.ephocom.com/>

Ø [FreePicHosting](http://www.freepic hosting.com/)  
<http://www.freepic hosting.com/>

Ø [ChannelFusion](http://channeladvisor.com/am/default.asp?gnjse=2) : (formerly GoTo Auctions)  
<http://channeladvisor.com/am/default.asp?gnjse=2>

- Ø [Honesty Communications](http://honesty.com/hosting/)  
<http://honesty.com/hosting/>
- Ø [Little Treasures](http://www.auctionimages.net/index.php3)  
<http://www.auctionimages.net/index.php3>
- Ø [Picture This](http://users.javanet.com/~markr/)  
<http://users.javanet.com/~markr/>
- Ø [Pix Plus](http://www.pixplus.com/)  
<http://www.pixplus.com/>
- Ø [SSI](http://www.ssiimage.com/)  
<http://www.ssiimage.com/>
- Ø [TuPics](http://www.tupics.com/)  
<http://www.tupics.com/>

#### **Groups:**

- Ø [Club99](http://club99.otwa.com/index.shtml) : an organized group of sellers who hold events on various online auction sites  
<http://club99.otwa.com/index.shtml>
- Ø [Seller's Ring](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sellers-ring2/) : an e-mailing list of sellers  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sellers-ring2/>

#### **Alternative sales venues:**

- Ø [AuctionAnything.com](http://www.auctionanything.com/)  
<http://www.auctionanything.com/>
- Ø [Auctores](http://www.auctores.com/) : web hosting under your domain name includes an auction gallery feature allow your visitors to browse all your eBay auctions in images  
<http://www.auctores.com/>

- Ø [50xciento](http://www.50xciento.com/) : a Latin American site similar to Half.com  
<http://www.50xciento.com/>
  
- Ø [Bargain and Haggle](http://www.bargainandhaggle.com/) : A site where buyers and sellers haggle over prices -  
- finally meeting somewhere in the middle. Not quite retail, not quite an  
auction.  
<http://www.bargainandhaggle.com/>
  
- Ø [BigStep](http://www.bigstep.com) : allows vendors to create commercial websites to market a  
business online, sell products with secure ecommerce, promote events,  
display a portfolio, send email, newsletters, and more. Most services are  
free.  
<http://www.bigstep.com>
  
- Ø [Half.com](http://www.half.com) : market books, music, and games at fixed prices. Most items  
sell for half of retail list price or less.  
<http://www.half.com/>
  
- Ø [Infopia Marketplace Manager](http://www.infopia.com/) : allows sellers to merchandise, categorize  
and post products to online marketplaces and broadcast listings to sites in  
the Infopia network of marketplaces including auction sites, storefronts,  
and more. A virtual catalog displays all of your products from a specific  
marketplace. Also includes order collection and other features.  
<http://www.infopia.com/>
  
- Ø [Rubylane](http://www.rubylane.com/) : online collectibles mall. Shops pay a percentage of sales as a  
commission.  
<http://www.rubylane.com/>
  
- Ø [SmoothSale](http://www.smoothsale.com/) : Store front vendor. Instant selling tools allow businesses of  
any size to connect with buyers and sell online.  
<http://www.smoothsale.com/>
  
- Ø [Sybo](http://www.sybo.com/) : shopping cart system for your web site, real-time secure SSL  
encrypted checkout servers, and handles all billing inquiries including the  
necessary accounting and customer service.  
<http://www.sybo.com/>
  
- Ø [TIAS.com](http://www.tias.com) : online collectibles mall. Shops pay a percentage of sales as a  
commission. Make-A-Shops are built by vendors and pay 10% (minimum

of \$20 per month) commission. Custom shops are charged a startup fee and are built by TIAS and a 10% commission is charged.

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

## Technical

- Ø [Universal Currency Converter](http://www.xe.com/ucc/) - buying or selling internationally poses serious problems with money conversion. This site makes it instantaneous and easy.  
<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>
  
- Ø [Intellectual Property Network](http://www.patents.ibm.com/) - here you can search and view patent documents from the U.S. and Europe as well as patent applications published by the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO).  
<http://www.patents.ibm.com/>

## Auction news:

- Ø [AuctionBytes.com](http://www.auctionbytes.com/) : tips, articles, resources, newsletter, message boards.  
<http://www.auctionbytes.com/>
  
- Ø [Auction Power Newsletter](http://www.auction-sellers-resource.com/newsletters/index.html) : hints, tips, articles about sellers, wholesale sources, and more  
<http://www.auction-sellers-resource.com/newsletters/index.html>
  
- Ø [AuctionWatch News](http://www.auctionwatch.com/awdaily/) : auction news stories and feature articles  
<http://www.auctionwatch.com/awdaily/>
  
- Ø [TAG Notes](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TheAuctionGuildnotes/join) : a free daily newsletter featuring updates on the auction world  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TheAuctionGuildnotes/join>

# Auction Sites

## Auction Sites

There are literally hundreds of online auctions in operation. Many are commercial auctions and there's no access for the independent seller. What you're looking for are the person-to-person auctions, where anyone can list and put up items for sale. Undeniably, [eBay](#) is the king of the hill of online auction sites. It's on eBay where you'll find the most bidders and consequently the highest price for your items. Brand new, and showing great promise is [Amazon.com Auctions](#). Their system of cross-promoting auctions with book listings is very effective in driving customer to your listing.

- Ø [eBay](#) - The world's first, biggest, and best person-to-person online trading community. It's your place to find the stuff you want, to sell the stuff you have and to make a few friends while you're at it.  
<http://www.ebay.com/>
  
- Ø [Half.com](#) - The Internet's leading fixed-price, person-to-person marketplace where you can find great deals on books, music, movies, and games.  
<http://www.half.com>
  
- Ø [eWanted](#) - The leader in reverse auctions, where buyers request exactly what they want and sellers find targeted audiences for their specific products or services, across hundreds of categories. With eWanted.com, it's a win-win situation for buyers and sellers. Now it can be win-win for you and eWanted.com!  
<http://www.ewanted.com/>
  
- Ø [uBid.com](#) has brand-name merchandise, computers, electronics and travel services at reduced prices from established retailers with warranties and rebates. Bidding usually begins at just \$9.  
<http://www.ubid.com>
  
- Ø [Amazon.com Auctions](#)
  
- Ø [Up-4-Sale](#)

- Ø [AuctionUniverse](#)
  - Ø [Haggle Online](#)
  - Ø [Yahoo Auctions](#)
  - Ø [CityAuction](#)
  - Ø [Boxlot](#)
  - Ø [Keybuy-Auction-House](#)
  - Ø [AuctionAnything](#)
  - Ø [Up4Auction](#)
  - Ø [BidtoBuy](#)
  - Ø [AuctionBox](#)
  - Ø [eSwap](#)
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# Photographs

Digital photographs sell merchandise. eBay enables you to embed images in your eBay auction ad. This is a wonderful opportunity to show what you're selling. People like to see the things they contemplate buying.

Photographs may seem unimportant for some products. For instance, how do you show software or other seemingly intangible products? It's simple. You show the box. Even showing the box will help you sell. In fact, showing the box or showing manufacturers' photographs and drawings will help you sell new products and even used products. Where the merchandise is used, blemished, scratched, or otherwise damaged, a good close-up photograph of the item will provide potential bidders with the information they need to make a bidding decision. The more disclosure you make, the less trouble you will have from buyers. A photograph is often the best way to disclose exactly what you're selling.

Surprisingly often, a photograph assists a seller to make more accurate disclosure. If you advertise one model but show another in a photograph, some knowledgeable potential bidders will set you straight. It's not unusual at all for a potential bidder to be more knowledgeable than a seller in regard to an item, and you see sellers being set straight routinely. Better to learn about your mistake before the auction is finished than after.

- Ø Photograph in color; Does anyone use B&W anymore?
- Ø Use outdoor light, if practical. Even outdoors, however, you may need a flash to fill in shadows.
- Ø Use a flash indoors. Mute the flash with a translucent cover; or bounce it off the ceiling, to avoid glare.
- Ø Use a plain, dull (not shiny), one-color background. Cloth backgrounds (e.g., tablecloths) work well.
- Ø Get as close to the item as possible. Use a close-up lens, if appropriate.
- Ø Take multiple photographs with different settings.
- Ø Use a tripod and focus carefully.

## Photo Size

Don't make your photographs large. Seldom is a photograph larger than 500 x 375 pixels justified for an eBay ad. Make it smaller. Digital images larger than 400 x 300 take longer to download; making your eBay ad photographs slow to appear; perhaps even slowing the download of your entire ad. They also may interfere with your auction Web page. However; don't think by recommending 400 x 300 that you should enlarge smaller photographs to that size. If you have smaller photographs, use them in their smaller size. Digital photographs don't enlarge well.

Typically, digital cameras use at least a 640 x 480 pixel format, and you don't want to use anything smaller, this is quite large. Since digital camera formats and the Picture CD format do not provide a proper size, you will have to shrink your digital photographs. One way to do it is via the image markup, but this doesn't change the download time. Another way to do it is to reduce the size of the image with a graphics editing program.

There are a number of web services that cater to auction users. They will store your images for auction ads for free or for a fee. Go to their websites to get instructions:

- Ø Auctionimage <http://www.auctionimage.com>
- Ø The Best Shots <http://www.thebestshots.com>
- Ø Honesty <http://www.honesty.com>
- Ø Imagehost <http://www.imagehost.com>
- Ø ImageHosting <http://www.imagehosting.com>
- Ø Images R Us <http://www.imagesrus.com>
- Ø ManageAuctions <http://www.manageauctions.com>
- Ø PixHost <http://www.pixhost.com>
- Ø Pongo's <http://www.pongo.com>
- Ø Service For You <http://www.images4u.net>
- Ø Twaze <http://www.twaze.com>
- Ø WeppiHeka <http://www.weppiheka.com>

Make sure when you Sign up with one of these services that you know how to upload your photographs to the service to their website. Also make sure you know exactly what the URL of your image will be once you have uploaded the image. Many of these services also provide Scanning and other image services.

# Closeouts

Closeouts are excess inventory that someone wants to unload quickly for whatever reason. The seller might be a manufacturer, a wholesaler; a retailer; or even a high-volume user (e.g., the government). The price is often well under wholesale. Ten to twenty cents on the dollar is not uncommon. You must usually buy in high quantities to participate.

There is an entire closeout industry with closeout shows and periodicals. Get plugged in, raise some money for inventory, buy for ten cents on the dollar, auction for 35 cents on the dollar on eBay and make your fellow eBay denizens happy. A profitable deal all around. One closeout retailer that uses eBay extensively is Valueville <http://evaluateville.com> Visit the website to see what's happening.

The following are some potential sources of useful information about closeouts or closeout inventory.

- Ø CloseOutNow <http://www.closeoutnow.com>
- Ø Closeout Sources Directory  
<http://www.halcyon.com/rucas/Closeout.Souces.html>
- Ø Discount Warehouse <http://www.closeouts.digiscape.net>
- Ø iSolve <http://www.isolve.com>
- Ø Lee Howard's Business Inventory Closeout Sources Directory  
<http://www.chambec.com/closeout.html>
- Ø Liquidation <http://www.liquidation.com>
- Ø Maverick Enterprises <http://www.amaverick.com>
- Ø MUSA <http://www.merchandiseusa.com>
- Ø Rebound <http://www.rebound.com>
- Ø Redtagbiz <http://www.redtagbiz.com>
- Ø RetailExchange <http://www.retailexchange.com>

- Ø RO-EL On-Line <http://www.re-el.com>
- Ø Rothman Closeouts <http://www.rothmancloseouts.com>
- Ø Sav-On-Closeouts <http://www.sav-on-closeouts.com>
- Ø TDW Closeouts <http://www.tdwcloseouts.com>
- Ø Tradeout <http://www.tradeout.com>
- Ø uBid <http://www.ubid.com>

Closeouts sound like an easy business. However, dealing in closeouts is competitive, like any other business, which means you have to work hard to find closeouts on which you can make a reasonable profit. Remember, too, that closeouts usually include merchandise that a manufacturer or retailer could not sell in the normal course of business.