

77 Tips and Tools for Selling on The New eBay

By Skip McGrath

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Free eBay tips and eBay tools and services to help eBay sellers build a profitable eBay business

Whether you just want to have some fun, use eBay to clear out your attic, make a few extra bucks, or even start an eBay business, you will have to master the "basics" to sell successfully on eBay. The following tips are a good start -but you will need to keep learning to master the techniques of eBay success. Here is a collection of eBay selling tips, basic techniques and several free eBay tools and services to help you make more money on eBay.

1. Buy on eBay before you start trying to sell

I get email from people all the time wanting to know how to make money selling on eBay. The first question I ask them is if they have bought anything on eBay. Amazingly a lot of them say no. You really need to buy on eBay first to understand how the platform works and what eBay looks like from the buyer's point of view. You will never be successful selling on eBay until you learn to buy.

2. Learn to sell on eBay by selling on eBay

The best way to start selling on eBay is to start selling on eBay. Yes, there are some things to learn, but take your time, look at the eBay help files (and these tips) and just start selling. You will make some mistakes -we all do. But don't get frustrated or give up. You will get better with experience.

Also, selling will make you a better buyer. You will understand things from the seller's point of view and learn other ways to spot bargains.

3. The best types of products to sell on eBay

Everyone wants to sell the latest consumer product -but the truth is there is a lot of competition from established sellers and even big online companies that have discovered eBay. The best item to sell on eBay is something used or a very specialized (niche) product that few others are selling.

You can buy virtually anything used: clothing, books, computers, DVD's, Stereo equipment, and so on. If you are going to sell new goods, make sure you can buy them cheaply enough to sell and make a profit. One source is the closeout and liquidation companies that sell overstocks and seasonal items returned by department stores. Here is a link to a [Free Wholesale Search Engine](#). I also offer an inexpensive product called [My Top 20 Wholesale Sources for eBay Sellers](#). This is a great place to find good wholesale sources that will work with eBay sellers. These are not perfect or complete resources they are just a place to start. Be a little careful with the Wholesale Search Engine. It is a search engine and I can't control what shows up there. So just because a company comes up in a search that doesn't mean I endorse it.

Another great item is consumables. The idea here is to get repeat business via your web site from customers who buy from you on eBay. One of the best selling products from The Auction Seller's Resource is the [Wholesale Buying System](#) (WBS). This tells you how, what and where to buy products to sell on eBay. The WBS comes with access to a members-only web site where you can access thousands of wholesale companies directly. The web site is updated monthly to add new sources.

4. Search Listings on eBay to see what is selling

Go to: <http://listings.eBay.com> to see what is being listed and sold on eBay. The number in parentheses after the category title is the number of auctions for a given item. In general, the higher the number the more action and sales.

5. Master niche marketing and specialize for success

This is home plate for your success strategy. Find your own niche. Define your market. Then you can know the type of person you're going to be selling to and the types of product you want to sell. You will also have less competition.

Forget trying to sell computers, digital cameras, iPods and plasma TVs. There is no way you can compete with the big guys unless you have tons of money. And those drop ship web sites and programs that claim to have those products are mostly scams. Find a small niche --or several small niches that you can dominate.

Along with being in a superior position to take advantage of repeat business, the benefits from becoming specialized are endless. If you know more about your product area, you will be able to buy at better prices and people who sense you specialize in something will be more comfortable buying from you.

6. Become an expert in your field

Become an authority on what you do in your online auction business. If you sell printer ink cartridges, you want to be thought of before anyone else.

When you become an authority in your field, a whole new universe of business and opportunity is opened up to you. I buy certain types of things on eBay from the same sellers over and over. I wouldn't dare do business with anyone else, not when they have proven themselves and their product.

You want to earn that same type of position in the minds of eBayers for your niche. Also continue your auction education. Read books and training manuals, visit the chat and message boards, attend an eBay University when it comes to your town, go to *eBay Live*, and keep learning all the time.

7. Increase sales by putting audio in your auctions

I began using audio (voice) in my auctions in May of 2004. I saw an immediate increase in sales. For example, I sell expensive fire pit barbeques (\$200+). Before using audio, I was selling one or two a week. Once I put audio in my auctions I started selling almost one a day. The same thing happened with my [EZ Cube Photo Studios](#). I was selling about two a week on eBay. When I added audio to my auctions with [Seller's Voice](#), my sales more than doubled. Now I sell at least four and sometimes five or six units a week.

We also sell Starbucks collectibles. I ran a test of identical auctions with and without audio. Every auction with audio got more bidders and sold for a higher price --in some cases as much as 22% higher!

I use a company called [Seller's Voice](#) for my audio. It is so easy. I just dial an 800 number, record my message and then go to their web site and copy a short line of code that I paste into my auction. If you launch your auction first, you can also record the message and just type the auction number into the phone and they will paste it in for you.

8. Get a sales tax number

Contact the sales tax authority in your county or state offices to get a sales tax number. This will allow you to buy from many wholesale companies that would not deal with you otherwise.

If you are not sure who to contact in your state, just call your local chamber of commerce and they will advise you or give you the phone number or web site address to register. If you go to the FREE Articles page on our web site there is an article on [state sales taxes](#) with a link to all of the state web sites where you can apply on line.

9. Automate your auctions

Automate your auctions with an auction management service. I have tried several companies and have finally settled on [Vendio](#). They provide auction templates where you type in your headlines and text, insert your images, set your price, terms, length of auction and upload your auctions at any time or day you specify.

These services also track your inventory and sales, send automated emails to customers, provide a PayPal or credit card gateway and automatically post feedback once payment is received. People are often hesitant to pay a monthly fee to an auction management company, but believe me --over time they really save you money and they are far better than eBay's tools such as Turbo Lister and Selling Manager.

You should also invest in software to print labels. www.edicia.com is a good resource. You can get a great deal on label printers and scales that integrate right into your computer.

10. Build credibility

Be trustworthy. Remove every doubt about your credibility. You can do this through presenting yourself positively through your feedback, being passionately devoted to your business and by being an expert. See the section above on creating an *About Me Page*. A photo of yourself will humanize the online experience can bring amazing results. One with your dog or cat in the picture is even better.

11. Your auction headline and item description is where it all begins.

Your headline is your advertising and your item description is your salesperson. On the web, how you're potential buyer perceives you and your product is everything.

Be sure to use power words in your auction title (headline). Rare, Unique, Powerful, New, Unusual, Stunning, Top Notch, First Class, etc. Just be sure not to exaggerate. Don't call something "rare" if it is not.

Copy writing is the art of showing you and what you sell to your buyer in the best possible light. It's the most important thing you have going for you. A carefully crafted sales letter (item description) can increase you results exponentially without having to spend an extra penny.

12. Use keywords in your auction headline (title) and description

Remember that 75% of eBay bidders find what they are looking for by using the search function. Be sure to use carefully chosen and accurate key words in your title and description. eBay gives you 55 characters in your headline. Be sure to use all of them. This will help you get hits. Important keywords include the brand, color, size, and model number.

13. Stand behind your product and service

We offer an unconditional money-back guarantee on everything we sell. This has been our practice since our first day on eBay. Now if you are selling cars or houses or "as-is" used goods that may not be a good idea - but the simple offer of a satisfaction guarantee will dramatically increase your sales.

Even unhappy people rarely go to the trouble of sending something back. The cost of providing the few refunds will be far out weighted by the increased volume of your sales. At the very least offer a guarantee that your items are exactly as described and you will give a full refund if they are not. If you have a return policy (and you should) be sure and spell it out clearly at the end of your auction description or in the form eBay gives you to do this.

14. Set up an eBay Store

eBay Store listing fees are very low (much lower than auctions). This is a great place to park merchandise between auctions, to clear out slow moving merchandise, and a place you can promote in your emails, and with various web site promotion techniques. Place a clickable link in your auction item descriptions that invite people to view your store.

I often run promotions where I tell people if they visit my store and buy two items I will give them free shipping. Also, eBay indexes your store listings to search engines such as Froogle. If someone comes to your store from off of eBay (such as from a Google search) and buys something from you, then eBay credits you 75% of the final value fee.

15. Launch more but shorter auctions

eBay places auctions ending soonest higher in the search results. If you have identical merchandise, run shorter auctions more often. This way you will show up in the Time Ending Soonest and Best Match search results more often. You will pay a little more in listing fees, but you should make this up by selling more items.

16. Set up a PayPal Shop

PayPal offers a service to all of their users called PayPal Shops. A PayPal shop is nothing more than a link to your eBay store or your web site.

PayPal offers users a search engine where they can search PayPal shops for goods offered by merchants who accept PayPal. Occasionally PayPal may feature your shop on their checkout page. If this happens your shop will get thousands of hits a day as long as it is featured.

17. Use an email signature

One great free way to promote your auction business is by using a signature. Signatures are six to eight line inserts at the end of your email messages. All email programs support them. Your signature should include a description of what you sell and a hyper-link to your eBay store or your about me page.

18. Automate your shipping and save time at the post office

If you don't have much time to spend at the post office, and I'm sure you don't, prepare in advance. You can have all of your mailing supplies sent to you by the USPS and UPS.

Visit <http://www.usps.gov> and <http://ups.com> for more details. eBay and PayPal now have an automated shipping system integrated with UPS and USPS right on their site.

If you ship via USPS Priority Mail (a favorite option for eBay sellers) you can use delivery confirmation to track your packages. It is free if you do it on line at <http://www.usps.com> or it costs 45 cents to do it at the post office window.

PayPal now also offers the ability to do your shipping online.

19. Building a High Feedback Rating Quickly

Here is a quick way to build good feedback: Sell something at a very low price, such as an inexpensive baseball card for a dollar. Put up a Dutch auction for 50 of the item you are selling. Don't worry about making money; just try to break even. Mail the cards out quickly, post great feedback for each buyer and send each buyer an email politely asking each of them to return the favor. Be sure to include the hyperlink to the feedback post in your email.

20. Where to get free shipping supplies?

If you send your items via USPS priority mail the post office will give you free envelopes, tape, and boxes. Think this through. If you pay the priority mail fee, and get free boxes, that is often close to what UPS charges when you add in the cost of a box.

Another source for free shipping supplies is your local gift shop or kitchen shop. These merchants receive merchandise in good boxes everyday with plenty of bubble-pak and Styrofoam peanuts that they simply throw away or pay to have recycled. Get friendly with your local gift shop and you can have access to tons of free shipping suppliers.

21. Sign Up for BuySafe if you sell expensive products

If you sell expensive goods, BuySAFE is a company that provides fraud insurance to your buyers. It cost a little to sign up, but BuySAFE has plenty of evidence that shows that using BuySAFE in your auctions will increase your bids and final values much more than the cost of their service. Sign up at www.buysafe.com.

22. Sell SquareTrade Warranties.

If you sell electronics or cameras, SquareTrade you can make extra money by offering a warranty on your products through SquareTrade at www.squaretrade.com

23. How to keep your customers happy and generate lots of positive feedback

Customers want three things: instant gratification, clear, fast communications and to get what they were promised.

- Use PayPal to get payment quickly and then ship quickly.
- Answer emails immediately
- Reveal any flaws or shortcomings your item has
- Never over-promise or over describe an item
- Package your items carefully and professionally
- If you can, toss in something for free (I recently bought a collectible beer mug and the seller included a few free beer coasters.)

24. Get your news from AuctionBytes.com

www.AuctionBytes.com is a great site with lots of free resources for auction sellers. They have an online auction calendar that lists best times to start and end an auction, a free online tutorial on how to take good photos, a daily and a weekly free newsletter and plenty of additional free resources. Best of all they have a daily news feed of news about eBay and online auctions.

25. Learn how to write great headlines and auction item descriptions

Our premier book, [The Complete eBay Marketing System](#) has two chapters on writing auction titles (headlines) and item descriptions designed to help you increase hits and bids. Poor titles and descriptions are one of the largest reasons eBay sellers get poor auction results.

26. Use Google AdWords to drive hits to your auctions, eBay Store or your web site.

Google AdWords can get expensive, but if you look for the obscure keywords no one else is bidding on your can really drive hits from out of eBay to your auctions or eBay Store. If you send someone from outside of eBay directly to your store and they buy, eBay credits you 75% of the store fee. If you join eBay's affiliate program and this person was a first-time buyer, then eBay will pay you a commission on top of that. There is a service called Wordtracker that is free to try out and very inexpensive to subscribe to. It will help you find those obscure key words that you can buy very cheaply. [Here is a link to an article](#) that explains how to get your store referral credit.

Another place to buy inexpensive pay-per-click advertising is www.miva.com.

27. Find Wholesale Products to Sell With Our Free Wholesale Search Engine

If you click on the link to Web Wholesale Search in the navigation at the top of this page it will take you to a wholesale search engine. Now, as with any search engine there are always people who can scam the results, so there are some companies that will come up who are not true wholesalers and you will get results from companies that claim to be dropshippers but are mostly phony middlemen who make their money off of fees they charge you to sign up. But keep looking as there are many true wholesale suppliers and real distributors that will come up in the results.

28. Learn simple HTML commands to spice up your auctions

eBay has an HTML editor but it is limited. Once you start selling take the time to learn a little HTML. Don't be afraid of HTML. Anyone can do it. For example, you should start all of your eBay auction item description with the command: `` This will make your type larger and easier to read. It helps to break your item description into smaller shorter paragraphs to increase readability. Just use this command to create a new paragraph `<P>`.

You can make your text bold by typing `` at the beginning of the bold text and `` where you want it to end.

Go to: <http://www.davesite.com> for a simple and free online tutorial on how to do HTML.

29. Create attractive backgrounds for your auctions

Go to: <http://www.grsites.com/textures> to get free background textures for your auction item descriptions. Over 6000 backgrounds are available at no cost.

30. If you are going to be in this business - you need to know the vocabulary.

Net Lingo at <http://www.netlingo.com> is a free site that teaches you all the terms and lingo of the world wide web and various online services.

31. Get a professional auction education

- Attend eBay Live (The next conference is in Orlando 2010).
- Attend the online eBay workshops (Look on the announcement board for the schedules)
- Use the various eBay online tutorials
- Print out the eBay help files and place them in a 3-ring notebook for easy reference.
- Print this document out (77 tips) out and put it in the same notebook.
- Buy some of the great eBay training books from [The Auction Seller's Resource Bookshop](#)

32. Incorporate to protect yourself from liability

Not many people get sued selling stuff on eBay, but it can happen. If you incorporate, the corporation can shield you from most lawsuits. In fact once a lawyer learn that you are incorporated and you don't keep assets in the corporation, a lot of times they will not bother suing because they know your assets are protected. There are also lots of tax benefits to incorporating even if your eBay income is fairly small.

I used a company called LegalZoom.com. They did an excellent job --very personal service and very quick. Best of all they did it right. Some of the online incorporating services are really shoddy and they don't tailor the corporation to what you are doing.

33. Learn how to buy at government auctions

Don't pay for this information. Here is a link to our site where everything you need to bid on government auctions is free: www.skipmcgrath.com/auction_sr/gvnmtauctions.shtml

Government auctions can be a great place to find bargains - but proceed with caution. Make sure you thoroughly inspect anything before you buy it.

34. Package your eBay shipments professionally

No one likes to receive his or her "treasure" in a battered shoe box or an old cereal box. Take the time to pack your sales carefully. Invest in bubble pak, peanuts, tissue paper and so on. Re-read tip number 45 for how to save money on these supplies.

35 Know your fees before you sell

Here is a great little free tool for eBay sellers. It is an online calculator that calculates eBay and PayPal fees to help you decide the best price and format to list an item on eBay. If you are running an eBay business this is a great little tool to help you figure out the best price to start and item and the most efficient selling format.

Here is the link: <http://www.newlifeauctions.com/calc.html>

36. Sell Liquidation Closeouts

Clothing, accessories, electronics, household goods, toys and sporting goods are some of the hottest sellers on eBay. It can be very hard to source these products new from the distributors. But many eBay sellers make excellent profits buying these products from Liquidation and Surplus Dealers. One of the largest and easiest to deal with is Liquidation.com. They use an auction format similar to eBay. One word of caution, check the shipping before bidding. [Click here to see the wholesale auctions at Liquidation.com](#)

37. Set your starting bid low to attract hits

Do you have a good item that you KNOW will sell well? Start it off at a very low price. This will get you healthy early bidding. You want a large group around the item; some will be competitive bidders - people who will pay extra just for the thrill of winning.

You'll usually get more for your item than someone who priced their item higher, because your auction has more bidders watching.

38. Write complete auction item descriptions

Make your item description as complete as possible. Include all relevant details: condition, size, weight, age, collectability, any short-comings or defects, etc.

What you think is not important - may be very important to someone else. Describe your item's condition, talk about its benefits and uses and keep writing until you run out of something to say.

39. Have a written sales, payment and delivery policy to protect yourself and avoid misunderstandings

Spell out everything you do. How much do you charge for shipping? How will you ship the item? What is your policy on insurance? Do you use escrow for expensive items? When do you post feedback? Do you hold checks until they clear?

The more information you give a buyer the better the buying and selling experience will be for both parties -but don't forget to make it sound friendly. You don't want your auctions to sound like a bunch of rules written by a junior high school principal.

40. Don't get greedy and overcharge for shipping

Overcharging for shipping is one of the leading causes of *negative feedback*, and low DSR scores. You should only charge what it normally costs you to pack and ship. Buyers are sensitive in this area. They know when you are making a profit on shipping. You can charge a small premium to cover your cost of handling and shipping materials, but it should be reasonable. Always offer to combine shipping costs if a person buys more than one item. Explain your shipping policy in the item description.

There is a game some sellers play whereby they list a \$5 item for 99-cents but the shipping is \$7.99 when it only cost a dollar to ship. eBay will cancel your auction if they catch you doing this as it constitutes fee avoidance.

41. Always include the auction number in your emails

Always include the auction number with the end of auction notice and any request for payment. Place the number in the subject line so you can easily track emails. People often bid on several items and can get confused.

42. Start and end your auctions at the best times

Do you always start and end your auctions at the best times? Start and end your auctions at peak traffic periods when traffic is the heaviest.

I like my auctions to end on Sunday or Monday evenings between 5 and 7 PM (Pacific Time). Saturday and Sunday mornings are also good times. Believe it or not, Mondays during the lunch hour are very good also. Remember there can sometimes be a posting delay of up to two hours on eBay during the busy times. Also --don't forget that eBay uses Pacific Time.

This is one of the best reasons to use an auction management service such as [Inkfrog](#). You can create your auction and schedule it to launch at a specific time or day. eBay also has a scheduling utility but they charge you 10¢ every time you use it. Ten cents sounds like a small amount of money but it can add up over time.

43. What to do when you make a mistake in an auction?

If an auction has not received any bids you can revise it. Click on the link "revise auction" right below your username. If the auction has received bids, you can first cancel the bids and then cancel the auction.

If you go to *My Account* on your *My eBay Page* there is a link where you can email eBay and ask them to credit the listing fee. Just explain that you cancelled the auction, fixed the mistake and relisted it. Give them the old and the new item number and they will usually -but not always credit you the fee.

44. Why does eBay end auctions?

eBay will only end your auction if you violate the listing guidelines. First of all print out the guidelines and read them carefully. They are written to give eBay wide latitude. eBay rarely discovers a listing violation. They rely mostly on the community to report violations. (Yes, there are a lot of busybodies with too much time on their hands).

The most common violations are listing in the wrong category, key word spamming, putting a link to an outside web site in your auction description and featuring items that are not qualified for featuring, i.e. information products.

One way to get your auctions examined is to make a complaint about someone else's auction. Whenever you make a complaint, eBay also examines all the ongoing auctions of the complainer. So unless your auctions are squeaky clean, think again about reporting someone else.

45. What to do when eBay ends an auction?

If you are guilty as sin - just forget it and get on with your life. It's not the end of the world. If you feel you are wronged, then answer the "auction ended" email with a **polite** request for an explanation and/or tell your side of the story.

Please understand the eBay enforcement employees receive hundreds of angry emails a day. It is very easy for them to get "pissy" (excuse my language). A polite and sincere inquiry will often uncover valuable information. Your violation may have been a minor technicality, which can be easily corrected. They will rarely tell you this if you send them an angry or rude email.

46. Set up a web site and use eBay to drive business to it.

Every eBay seller should have a web site. Remember sales you make from your web site do not incur eBay fees. eBay has cracked down on sellers using auctions to drive hits to their web sites, but there are still some loopholes and techniques you can use without running afoul of eBay. These are explained in detail in [The Complete eBay Marketing System](#). (I can't give all my techniques away here!)

47. Learn how to promote your web site and/or eBay store

This tip is really an advertisement, but one that I think you can benefit from as I did.

Simply the best training course on the web is from [The Internet Marketing Center](#) published by Derek Ghel. I have been so happy with Derek's material that last year I drove up to Vancouver, Canada to meet him. He was smart, witty and charming and everything he claimed to be

In this 1000+ page Internet marketing bible, you learn every single strategy and technique that you must know if you want to start, build, and grow a successful business on the Internet, from the ground up, including...

- Web page promotion and design
- Getting ranked at the top of search engines
- Turning leads into lifetime customers with e-mail marketing
- How to get White-listed with major email services such as Yahoo, AOL and MSN so all your email gets thru.
- Building a responsive opt-in e-mail list -- FAST
- Exploiting AOL and other online services
- Free and low-cost online classified ads that produce sales
- Dominating your market with affiliate/reseller/ associate programs
- Newsgroup promotions
- Snowballing your profits with Auto-responders
- How and when to promote yourself on bulletin boards
- Getting links from high traffic sites
- Sales strategies
- Writing killer ad copy
- Banner ads (tips and tricks)
- Profiting with discussion lists and newsletters
- Completely automating your business
- Getting your own Visa/MasterCard/AmEx account with ZERO COSTS

... and this is just the tip of the iceberg! Even if you are a complete newbie or a seasoned Internet marketer, I guarantee you will benefit from the unconventional tips and tricks that Derek will show you. Strategies like...

This stuff is good and it really works. I have used Derek's techniques to make money year after year from my four web sites. There is also lots of stuff you can apply to eBay.

How to locate thousands of people who are interested in your products, capture their e-mail addresses, and generate repeat sales from them -- all within 48 hours (without ever spamming).

... and this is only a small sampling of the strategies they teach to help 1000's of people start extremely successful businesses on the Internet from scratch!

I personally used the information in Derek's course to increase traffic and sales from my web site by over 400% in less than three months. **There are plenty of techniques you can apply to your**

eBay business and you will learn ways to develop synergy between your eBay business and a web site.

So if you are interested in starting a business or just increasing your profits from an existing business, visit [The Internet Marketing Center](#) where I have arranged a special offer just for my readers.

48. Brand your business

If you go on the eBay search engine and type in eBay store design, you will find a number of eBay sellers who will design an eBay store for you with branding and matching auction templates. This will give all of your listings a similar look and feel and help brand your business so people can find you again. If you want a professional company to do this for you, check out www.frooition.com.

49. Over-communicate with your buyers

When an auction ends, send your buyers an immediate email congratulating them and providing clear payment instructions. Send them another email when you ship the item (this really impresses buyers). Send them a follow-up email to see if everything went okay. This email should include the link where they can post feedback.

50. Be careful using the Reserve Price Auction (RPA)

No one likes a reserve. Most people understand the necessity for it, but there are a large percentage of users who will simply not bid on RPA. If you know something will sell, then price it slightly lower than the minimum you will take.

If you are selling a very expensive item, certainly place a reserve on it, but let the potential bidders know what the reserve is. It doesn't have to be a secret. The point of a reserve is to protect you against something selling too cheaply. Being open about your reserve can actually help you get bids.

51. Increase bids by making your auctions readable

Use a short opening paragraph that promises something - and then deliver on the promise. Describe the product - but also write about its benefits and/or how it is used. If you have personally used the product, describe your experience.

Short sentences are more readable than long ones. If you write a long sentence, follow it with a short one. Keep your paragraphs to less than 3 or 4 lines. Boldface important words or phrases. Include attention-getters: questions, news items, a guarantee or a promise. Ask for the bid at the end of the description. Use active verbs and enthusiastic language.

52. Use Bold, and Highlight to increase visibility

These features cost a little so they are not appropriate for low cost items unless you are using a Dutch auction - but it has been proved that they increase both hits and bids.

53. Use a hit counter to track your auction

The most important thing to know about an item that did not sell is: Did it not get hits, or did it get hits and did not get bids? If you are getting hits and not bids, then you know there is demand and interest in the item, but there is something wrong with your price or your description. If you are not getting hits, then there is either no demand or interest in the item or your headline stinks.

eBay offers a hit counter option when you list your auction. You should always use it. If you use an auction management service like [Vendio](#) or Auctiva, they also offer a free hit counter.

54. Always use a regional listing

There are some people who only/prefer to buy from their local regions. When you pick a region, it doesn't limit your auction to a region, it just tells sellers from that area that you are nearby. There is no charge to use a regional listing.

55. Use Second Chance Offers

eBay has a feature called Second Chance Offer where you can offer your product to the second best bidder if their bid was high enough to you to make money. This can be very profitable to those who are selling multiple items of identical merchandise.

56. Build a mailing list of your customers

If you followed my advice to specialize, then you will be building a base of customers who buy your type or category of product. Once someone bids on your auction, or sends you an email with a question, then you - not eBay, own that email address and you can communicate with that person in the future.

Whenever you are launching an auction, send your existing customers an email letting them know. (Not every little auction - but for special hard to find items). Because someone actually purchased something from you, you now own that customer so it is not against eBay's regulations to market to them directly through email or from your web site.

57. Re-listing Strategies

Did your auction fail? No bids, no hits? You can still re-list for free. Before you hit the re-list button let's look at what happened.

Was the item over-priced? Was it in the correct category? Do you need a better headline or description? Is there any demand for the product you are selling?

You can relist one time for free if an item doesn't sell. If you keep relisting and the item doesn't sell, you are burning up eBay fees. If others are selling your same item, and you are not -go back and reexamine what you are doing.

I use [InkFrog](#) to manage my auctions and they have an automatic relisting service.

58. Experiment for success

Don't be afraid to try something new. Just be careful, you don't throw a lot of money into something that isn't yet proven. Try new products, new categories, new sources, new headlines, and so on. eBay is no where near being a mature marketplace. It is still growing and evolving. The rules change weekly. Don't be afraid to be a pioneer -just use a little caution when it comes to spending large amounts of money.

59. Choosing a category

Ok, you have put a lot of thought into your product and completed the introspective phase of getting started. You are excited about your merchandise and ready to start selling it. The next step is to find your niche market; as applies to online auctions, this refers to the category you will list your item(s) in. Considering eBay has over 7,500 categories to choose from, this should be a relatively easy process. But there is one important strategic trick you should know.

Before listing your item in any category, follow these simple steps: First, browse through the eBay categories and write down the ones you feel are relevant to your product. You should be able to find at least 3-5 possible choices. Next, write down the number of auctions currently online in each of those categories (it will appear next to the category name). An average category has about 4,000, so if there are more than that you may conclude that the category is *active*, If there are less than 2000 you may consider it *inactive*. I consider categories with over 5,000 auctions to be *popular* and those with over 10,000 are **most popular**. Some categories have over 50,000 auctions going at any one time. Using this ranking system, rate the categories that you have chosen for your product.

I recommend listing in the most active categories only because they get the most traffic. If you put your product in an inactive section of eBay, you may get little or no bids, even if you feature it. *Avoid categories with less than 1,000 auctions online unless your product is highly specialized to that category!*

60. List in two categories

eBay has a new feature that allows you to list in two categories. There is a small extra fee - but any feature, highlight or bold fees are doubled. Here is an example: If you were selling a collectible, most collectible buyers also buy books and price guides to their collectibles. So list your collectible in the appropriate category and also list it in the Books>Non-fiction>collectibles and Price guides category.

61. Use good photos and images in your auctions

Digital cameras and scanners have become very cheap. My neighbor recently purchased a child's digital camera at Toys-R-Us for under \$50. It takes amazing photos and comes with basic image management software that lets you crop and rotate images, and performs some simple enhancements. If you are going to take a lot of photos, probably the best, all around auction camera is the Nikon 2100 or 3100. As Nikon has come out with newer models, these two models can be bought very inexpensively and they contain all the features an auction seller needs.

Keep your photos small - in a digital sense. Large image files take forever to load and your buyer will click off to another auction instead of getting a cup of coffee while your 300 K file downloads.

62. Take the time to take good photos

Here are some simple tips to take good digital photos:

- Clean up the area around the subject or use a backdrop
- Always use a tripod to make your photos sharp
- Avoid clutter in the photo
- Shoot outdoors on a cloudy day or in open shade. Don't shoot in direct sunlight, as the contrast is too high
- Indirect window light is also excellent. I often shoot objects on a table next to a window with a white or gray sheet for a backdrop
- Get reasonably close to the object
- Show a close-up of any repairs or defects
- If relevant, show the product being used.
- If size is an issue, show something such as a coin or a ruler to indicate dimensions.

63. Learn the right way to drop ship

Let's face it --many of the drop shipping companies who advertise on the web are scams --or if not scams they often don't work. In my opinion it is somewhere between difficult and impossible to make money from these membership sites. You can spend a fortune in eBay listing fees trying to sell products that are priced too high to sell on eBay.

The best way to drop ship profitably is to work with a direct source such as a manufacturer or master distributor. Most general drop shipping companies are just middlemen who buy from distributors, mark up the product and sell it to you. The markup they are getting is the markup you need to make a profit.

Chris Malta, is the product sourcing editor for eBay Radio. He runs a program called the [WorldWide Brands](#). The key word there is source. His directory is a web site list of **actual manufacturers** that have all been contacted by his staff and they have agreed to drop ship for eBay sellers.

You could probably find all of these same companies by going through the Thomas Directory -- but that would take days and weeks. Chris has already done the work for you. I have used his

directory to find several drop ship manufacturers that I now work profitably with. This is currently the only wholesale sourcing program I recommend other than my own that comes with my Wholesale Buying System.

64. Use Fixed price Listings to increase your profits

If you are a Low Volume Seller, or if you sell products with a low dollar margin, you may need to run multiple Fixed price Listings (FPL) to make a good living on eBay.

A FPL is used when you have several identical items for sale. You set the minimum price you are willing to sell for, and specify the quantity for sale. eBay only charges one low listing fee no matter how many items you list. When someone buys an item, it sells right away and the balance of the items remain listed until they are all gone or until the listing ends. You can set your listings to run for 30-days with a Good Til Cancelled feature so they automatically renew. FPLs are similar to eBay Store listings, except FPL listings are found in eBay search results, whereas store listings are generally not.

65. Learn to sell information products on eBay

People will pay good money for information they can use. If you can write reasonably well, and you have a topic you have some expertise in, you can probably write a reference guide or "how-to" manual and sell it on eBay and even on the web.

I recently saw one called How to Make \$30 Hour Sharpening Knives. Another lady wrote a short e-book explaining how she sells children's clothing on eBay.

You can create an e-book (or a printed book) on almost any topic: Pets, Finance, Bible Studies, Poetry, children's stories, software, computer tips, making money with XYZ and so on. You can also compile information on antiques, collectibles, computer images, recipes, genealogy, etc. Search the non-fiction books category and the information products category on eBay to see what is selling then try to identify a unique niche for a new product or category.

In 2007 I came out with a new book called: [How To Create and Sell Information Products on eBay](#). It is a printed manual with three bonus CDs and takes you through all of the steps to create and sell information products on eBay -and the internet. Don't confuse this strategy with those people selling 99-cent eBooks on eBay -That is NOT what I am talking about. [Click here](#) to learn how you can make money on eBay with this strategy.

66. Buying at Costco, Sam's Club and Outlet Malls to sell on eBay

Don't laugh. A lot of eBay sellers make money this way. I recently went to Costco to buy a calling card (640 minutes for \$19.95) and a pair of Avia running shoes, also for \$19.95. These shoes normally retail for around \$60.

When I got home I decided to go on eBay to see what the calling cards were selling for. I found the same MCI 640 minute calling cards selling on eBay for 24.95 + \$3.50 shipping. (You can

ship the cards for 52 cents in an oversized envelope). That is a total profit of \$8.50 per card, or \$850 per week if you sell a hundred cards (less eBay and PayPal fees of course).

I next decided to check out the shoes I bought. Sure enough, there were several pairs selling at prices between \$29 and \$39 pair on eBay, and yes, they had bids.

Just before Christmas, my wife spotted a Fitz & Floyd Santa cookie jar selling at Costco for 39.95. She had seen the same cookie jar in a high-end mail order catalog for over \$100. We bought 10 of them and sold them on eBay for \$69.00 each right before Christmas.

We have a friend who does flea markets and sidewalk shows. The day before a weekend market he always drops into the local Sam's Club and buys anything he sees that might sell at a profit and buys them. A week before Easter he scored 20 beautiful Easter Baskets full of goodies for 19.95 that he got \$35 each for at a street fair.

Tools are another good bargain. Costco and Sam's Club always have great values on sets of tools, fire extinguishers, fire detectors and other like products. Last year Costco was selling a set of Hoffritz Bar-B-Q tools for \$17.95. We have sold them repeatedly on eBay in Dutch auctions where they went for over \$30 a set.

Another source of goods to sell is Wal-Mart. Watch for their sales where you can often get goods at excellent prices. My wife and I are doing the Atkins Diet program. The Atkins diet bars sell in the supermarket for \$2.29 each, but we watch for the sales at Wal-Mart and buy several boxes at a time for about \$15 for a box of twelve (\$1.25 each). I have also seen people selling these on eBay for as much as \$25 box.

If you live near an outlet mall, you should also check there for sales. I was in Jones New York looking for a gift for my mother when they were having a big sale. A Chinese lady from Vancouver, Canada came in and bought over \$10,000 worth of clothes. I heard the clerk ask her what she was doing. She said she sells them on eBay and sells them to her friends in Canada. She was buying high-end blue blazers for \$40 that retail in Jones New York stores for over \$150.

67. Where to get help with your auction questions

Forums and message posts are one of the quickest and easiest ways to get help answering almost any question that might come up about selling on eBay and other auction sites.

The best - and most used forums on eBay are of course at eBay's Community section. You can find the discussion boards broken down by subject at: <http://pages.eBay.com/community/boards/index.html> and there are several category-specific chat rooms at:

<http://pages.eBay.com/community/chat/index.html>

Another excellent link on eBay is The Answer Center at: <http://pages.eBay.com/community/answercenter/index.html>

There is an excellent independent forum on Auctionbytes.com at <http://www.auctionbytes.com/forum/phpBB/index.php>

These forums are moderated by David and Ina Steiner and other experts they recruit. The posts are broken down by subject areas, including an excellent one on fraud.

<http://www.AuctionClan.com> is a fairly new membership site that offers forums for sellers and also does very low cost image hosting.

68. Bookmark these eBay links to save time

Set up a favorites folder marked eBay and place these links in it for easy and quick reference.

- Advanced Search page http://pages.eBay.com/search/items/search_adv.html
- Search eBay stores http://pages.eBay.com/search/items/search_stores.html
- Announcements and news: http://pages.eBay.com/search/items/search_stores.html
- Discussion Boards <http://pages.eBay.com/community/boards/index.html>
- Leave Feedback
<http://pages.ebay.com/services/forum/feedback.html>
- Rules and policies <http://pages.eBay.com/services/tsindex.html>
- End my listing
<http://offer.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?EndingMyAuction&EndingMyAuction=&guest=1>
- eBay Fees
<http://pages.ebay.com/help/sell/fees.html>

69. What to do when someone doesn't pay?

eBay has a defined procedure for bidders that don't pay. Here are the steps:

First send an email requesting payment and warning the buyer you will file a non-payment complaint to eBay if they don't pay within a specified time. If they still don't pay, go to your My eBay Page and find the link to the dispute resolution center.

Follow the instructions there to make a claim and file a final value fee credit (to refund your fees)

eBay will contact the buyer and give them a warning (this often gets the buyer to pay) Any bidder that receives a third warning will be indefinitely suspended from eBay.

70. Make money selling things for others.

There are several Power Sellers that specialize in consignment sales. Simply put, you find people who have something to sell - but do not have the time or knowledge to sell on eBay. You sell it for them and take a commission. Typically you can earn 15-20% on expensive items and up to 40% on lower cost items.

eBay has a program called Trading Assistant where you register to help other eBayers sell their goods. You can register [HERE](#). My bestselling book, [How To Start & Run an eBay Consignment Business](#) contains all of the contracts, forms and ads you need to become a successful trading assistant.

71. Turn your inventory over often

How many times you can turn your inventory over is the key to making high profits. Too many sellers get stuck with something that won't sell at a profit and they keep re-listing and re-listing until some day it eventually sells. In the meantime, they could have sold the dog at cost, and put the money into something that will turn over rapidly. Rapid turnover and re-investing your money back into more products is one of the long-term keys to success on eBay.

72. How to get something for free on eBay

Check out the wholesale lots section on eBay. Often the same people who are selling individual items at auction are selling the same things in wholesale lots for a lot less money each, but you may have to buy 10 items to get the wholesale price. I recently saw an auction for home theater audio systems at \$250 each wholesale in lots of 5. The same seller was selling them individually at \$375. You could buy a lot of 5, keep one for yourself and sell the rest at \$325 and make a small profit.

73. How to buy large wholesale lots with very little money

I often see goods going for incredible low wholesale prices, but you have to buy a very large quantity to get the great price. Here is where you need friends. Get a group of people together to share the cost of a wholesale lot. Once you get the items, put them up in smaller wholesale lots in Dutch auction. Here is an example: Last year the mini RC cars were hot sellers. Today they are all over eBay at \$9.95 each. Most wholesale sites will sell you the cars for \$4.25 in case lots of 24. But you can go to the importer and buy them for \$2.50 each if you buy 10 cases. If you go in with a few friends, you could each buy two or three cases and sell the cars retail at a good markup or at a low wholesale price and turn them over very quickly.

Buying at wholesale and finding wholesalers is very difficult. I know. I had to learn the hard way. Two years ago I wrote a 100 page (printed) book called [The Wholesale Buying System](#) that covers almost everything you need to know about how, what and where to buy wholesale to sell on eBay or your web site. The instruction manual comes with password access to a web site that lists hundreds of wholesale sources for eBay sellers and special search engines to help you locate thousands of wholesale products. We have sold over 5,000 copies of the manual to date.

74. Know - and understand, your costs

It is very easy to sell a lot of goods at auction and not have any money left at the end of the month. If you are going to be successful, it is critical that you track and have good visibility into your cost structure.

Here are some of the costs you should be tracking:

- Product cost (including inbound shipping).
- Listing and reserve fees
- Feature fees
- Final Value fee (if the item sells).
- Auction Management Service (if you use one).
- Credit card or PayPal service fees
- Internet service or DSL fees
- Shipping costs and materials

Quicken is a very good program for tracking costs and has a sub-set for running a business in the home. As you get more sophisticated, upgrade to Quick Books. The low-cost basic version is fine for most eBay sellers.

75. More on what to sell and finding a niche market on eBay

In the early days, you could sell just about anything on eBay and make money. Today, major corporations such as J. C. Penny, Bloomingdales, and Disney have moved onto eBay in a big way. It is still possible for small sellers to make big profits. The key is to specialize, seek out the offbeat and to find used items that are in demand.

While researching another article on eBay, I came across several unusual items for sale. Upon checking, I discovered many of these sellers were power sellers and some were shooting stars (feedback over 5,000).

Here are just a few of the unique items I came across: Used radio tubes, used (vintage) hi-fi equipment and parts, juggling supplies, used music and game CD's, old board games (Monopoly, Scrabble, etc.), clown equipment and supplies, used tools, old garden tools and decorative items, used college textbooks, small appliances (blenders, pasta machines, irons, etc.) personalized children's books, collectible fountain pens, new & used magic tricks and magic supplies, used bubble-pak and Styrofoam peanuts - the list goes on.

The point is you don't have to sell the latest digital camera, Gucci shoes, or expensive diamond jewelry to make money on eBay. Most of the seller's items listed above buy their goods from garage sales, thrift stores, flea markets, and closeout dealers.

76. More on writing power auction titles (headlines)

This subject, and the next item, is so important, I wanted to give you some further tips and strategies to work with. The auction title is your headline. Newspapers and magazines use headlines to attract readers to the story. Advertisers use headlines to pull readers into the sales copy. Remember your headline and your auction description is your front-line salesperson.

Sixty-five percent of eBay bidders find an item by searching. Make sure the item you are selling is described in the headline using a term someone would search for. Be sure to spell the name correctly.

- Use "Power Words" in your head line (see the article below)
- Use all capital letters in your headline to make it stand out
- Use the Bold Face and Highlight option if your price-point can afford the extra fee
- Use tildes "~ " to set off your headline. (Caution: Make sure there is space between your tilde ~ and any searchable word or eBay's search engine may not recognize it)
- Avoid goofy characters such as "L@@K," "MUST C" and SAVE \$\$\$\$\$\$
- If you are not using a reserve price, say so with "No Reserve" or "NR"

Most of all, be sure your headline is credible and accurately describes what you are offering.

77. Last, but not least -have fun!!!

I think eBay is just the coolest thing to come along since the Wright Brothers proved powered flight was possible. eBay demonstrates just how powerful the internet can be in bringing people together, finding common interests and yes - you can make a little money.

Dive into the whole eBay experience. Buy, sell, chat, post on the message boards, go to live events, and buy an eBay T-shirt or hat. Most of all, when the bidding gets hot and furious, remember it's just a piece of merchandise you are bidding on - it's not the end of the world if someone beats you out.