



The eBay Auction Newsletter

Issue 9206 - June 28, 2006

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Proudly published for over 4 years by Brian McGregor

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<http://www.auctioninnercircle.com>

Welcome from Brian McGregor

Hello and welcome.

A particularly warm welcome to you if you're a new subscriber. It's good to have you as part of the family taking my eBay auction newsletter.

Recently, I've been spending a great amount of time creating my eBay training course. If you've seen my emails, I've launched an e-class based upon 'The eBay Formula'.

As I've researched to make sure the training is as up to date as possible, I realise just how much for granted I've been taking eBay.

Whenever I take a fresh in-depth look at the nuts and bolts of eBay, I'm amazed by the developments those people have implemented.

For example, on eBay have you ever checked out Want it Now, or eBay Pulse, or eBay Anywhere?

These eBay people just keep on motoring adding creative angles and ideas for their site.

I believe there are a couple of lessons here for all of us.

First of all, eBay are out of sight of their competitors. I'm pretty sure this is because they keep developing, changing and adding facilities. I know not everyone will use every new feature of eBay, but some people will use some of the features. And hence eBay stay ahead of the online auction pack.

A second lesson is that we all slip into taking the status quo for granted in terms of our eBay and internet businesses. We find something that works, like a repeated auction, and just keep re-listing. With eBay's philosophy, what we should be doing is constantly reviewing our working auctions to see if they could be improved!

So, my message for today is to recommend we all take a step back and see if we can improve on what we currently have. It doesn't mean a re-write, we're talking about tweaking the auction to get even better results.

For example, have you become accredited by the [Fair Trade Authority](#) and now display their logo on your auction pages? If not, why not? Displaying this kind of logo is reckoned to increase auction returns, and web site returns, by up to 40%. And it's free to use.

A small enhancement, for potentially great reward.

And that's just one small idea.

See what I mean?

I look forward to speaking with you again.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian McKeegan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

1. Inspirational Quote of the Day

"I am not discouraged, because every wrong attempt discarded is another step forward."

Thomas A. Edison

2. News and Views

1. They'd Better Get These Things Sorted Out

One of the benefits of selling on eBay is that you can make your item available to eBay's international market. When you create your auction, your listing fee gives you the right to select continents and countries in which you would like eBay to include your auction.

That works fine as long as every user's auction is treated the same.

For example, on eBay Canada, the auctions of Canadian based sellers are given preference in search results over auctions listed by those based outside of Canada. They say it's because Canadian eBayers prefer the convenience of faster shipping when buying from Canadian sellers.

And here's another angle. Chinese based eBayers pay zero listing fees, yet they can make their auctions appear internationally. Some eBay members in the UK feel this is unfair, and are complaining about it to eBay.

It's great that eBay is an international company offering an international service. Whilst it is understandable that different countries are allowed to charge eBay fees which reflect the individual country's market conditions, eBay needs to ensure a level of fairness pertains which is acceptable to their members.

Watch this space.....

2. Make Your Auctions Stand Out

If you've always wanted to make your auctions look more attractive, but don't the time or inclination to learn HTML coding, here is something which you might find helpful

Sebastian Fernando is offering free as well as premium eBay auction templates from his brand new website launched this month.

The site provides auction templates, and is also an eBay forum. If you register for the forum, you then get access to the free templates.

You can find out more from <http://www.auctionstyles.com>

3. How About This For A New Product To Sell?

Did you ever think of looking to the heavens for eBay inspiration?

It's not as daft as you might think!

Meteorites have been falling to earth for millions of years. Now, thanks to the internet and eBay, meteorite hunting and selling is big business.

You'd be amazed at the prices paid for the right rock. For example, \$1,000 a gram for moon rock, and \$2,000 a gram for Mars rock — which is around 100 times the price of gold.

Some rare moon meteorites command a price of \$25,000 a gram.

You'd better get that metal detector out this weekend!

What happens if you don't have a metal detector?

That's simple. Try a magnet. Most meteorites contain enough metal to attract a magnet.

Good hunting!

4. Getting Over the Loneliness of the PC User

I will admit it can sometimes get lonely pounding that keyboard.

So I was grateful to see that eBay have set up a Groups facility in their Community section.

You can join eBay Groups whose members have common interests as yours, or who live near you, or who want to talk with fellow sellers etc.

These pages explain all....

In the UK

<http://groups.ebay.co.uk/index.jspa?categoryID=1&redirected=1>

In the USA

<http://groups.ebay.com/index.jspa?categoryID=1&redirected=1>

5. A Brown Paper Bag

A brown paper bag was feeling unwell, so he took himself off to the doctors.

"Doctor, I don't feel too good," said the brown paper bag.

"Hmm, you look OK to me," said the Doctor, "but I'll do a blood test and see what that shows, come back and see me in a couple of days."

The brown paper bag felt no better when he got back for the results.

"What's wrong with me?" asked the brown paper bag.

"I'm afraid you are HIV positive!" said the doctor.

"No, I can't be - I'm just a brown paper bag!" said the brown paper bag.

"Have you been having unprotected sex?" asked the doctor.

"NO, I can't do things like that - I'm just a brown paper bag!"

"Well, have you been sharing needles with other intravenous drug users?" asked the doctor.

"NO, I can't do things like that - I'm just a brown paper bag!"

"Perhaps you've been abroad recently and required a jab or a blood transfusion?" queried the doctor.

"NO, I don't have a passport - I'm just a brown paper bag!"

"Then there can be only one explanation." said the doctor,

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"Your mother must have been a carrier"

6. Blogging Your Way Ahead

Do you blog?

Many people do, and most use blogger.com or Wordpress - the two most popular systems.

Enter eBay Blogs!

Yes, you can now create a blog under the eBay banner.

Get everything off your chest today. Start your eBay blog, and let your creative juices flow!

Here is where you go to set up your eBay blog in the UK. (Note - it IS coming for the UK, but may not be open for business yet.)

<http://blogs.ebay.co.uk/>

Here is where you go to set up your eBay blog in the USA. (Note - this IS open for business.)

<http://blogs.ebay.com/>

3. Are You Sure About Your Buyer?

There's nothing worse than your auction ending, and then your winning bidder proving hard to pin down for payment.

Even if the buyer has paid by PayPal, they could always reverse the PayPal transaction after you've dispatched the item leaving you with nothing.

So, if there are occasions when you are slightly unsure about your buyer, particularly if this is a high value item, you might want to do some research before you despatch anything. How do you do this?

Well, you could start by checking out their feedback. Go to their feedback page and take a look at the feedback they've left for others. If they've an above average tendency to leave negative feedback for their sellers, this might signal that this member may be more trouble than they're worth.

Also, take a peek at the feedback left for your buyer by other sellers. Again, if the person has an unusually high numbers of negatives, this could cause your red light to flash. Likewise, if this person has an unusual number of bid retractions, be careful.

You could also check out their buying pattern. If this person has gone from buying £1 items to something costing several hundreds, this could be cause for suspicion. In addition, you could look and see what they're bidding on now. If their bid for your item is out of pattern, for example they've never bought from your category before, but now they're bidding on lots of similar items, there could be cause for concern.

Another danger signal would be if this person seems to be bidding on lots of high value auctions all at once. Again, if this is out of character, beware.

You could also turn your attention to their eBay ID history. There can be legitimate reasons why people change their ID, but sometimes it is because they're hoping to get away from someone who's trying to find them. Be especially wary if your buyer is someone who has changed their ID very recently.

On the subject of new buyers, you may find it pays to be treat them well. People intent on committing fraud will rarely try to do so with an ID that has zero or a very small feedback rating. To the fraudster that would be far too obvious.

Another way to validate your buyer is to get to know them via email. Tell them about the item, what you liked about it, and ask them what their plans are for it. Ask if you can supply anything further about the item. By engaging in this kind of communication you will be able to assess if the person is truly interested in your item, or is maybe a fraudster for whom the item is just another article from which to make money. Put another way, very few fraudsters are likely to want to pass the time of day in email

conversation with you about your item!

If you're still having doubts, you can try and get their phone number from eBay. You can only use this option if you're involved in a transaction with the other party i.e. they've recently bought from you or you from them, or they've bid on your auction or you've bid on theirs. To do this, click the 'Advanced Search' link located under the Search button in the top right corner of most eBay pages. Then, under the Members section on the left side of the page, click the 'Find Contact Information' link and follow the instructions. You will get an email from eBay with the contact information they hold about that member, which should include their telephone number.

In summary, the vast majority of eBay members are honest and decent folk, but you owe it to yourself to exercise caution when selling - and when buying. But that's another article!

4. Seven Things You Can Learn From Competing eBay Auctions

Guest Article by Dave Lovelace

<http://www.auctionplatinum.com>

If you haven't discovered the benefits of legitimately "spying" on your competition, then it's time to start looking at your competitors' auctions, starting today. Why?

As the old gold-rush miners use to say, "thar's gold in them thar hills".

Translation? There's golden nuggets of information to be found from your competitors that can turn your losing listings into profitable auctions.

But you might not realize how much you can learn until you know what you're looking for.

To begin with, don't bother looking at listings that haven't ended yet, you don't know what's going to happen with them. Instead, use the advanced search page to search for listings that sold. Just go to the advanced search page, type in the keywords that you know will find your competitors' items, tick 'Completed listings only' and set the minimum number of bids to 1. Set it to sort by 'Price: highest first'.

This will show you auctions competing with yours that have recently finished, starting with the ones that sold for the most (ignore any with prices in red.. they didn't sell). Go through and take a look, paying special attention to the following 7 points:

1. Titles.

What information do the top sellers of your item put in their titles, and what do they leave out? If your titles are very different to theirs, it might be time for a rethink.

2. Descriptions.

You'll probably notice that the highest sellers haven't just copied text from the company's website or an Amazon.com review. They've gone to the trouble of writing a little about the item, and about themselves. Learn from their example.

3. Pictures.

I can almost guarantee you that the listing will have very nice pictures, not catalogue quality, but good enough to see what you're getting. With items of any significant cost, you'll probably find more than one photo from different angles.

4. Style.

Is it written conversationally, or in terse businesslike language? The way you should write entirely depends on what the market seems to like, and the market seems to like what the top sellers wrote.

5. Time.

It's pretty easy to ignore this as a factor without meaning to, but pay attention to when the top selling items' auctions began and ended. This might give you a few clues about the best to catch buyers who will bid highly on your item, and then you can schedule your items accordingly.

6. Price.

If your competitors are selling using Buy it Now, you can see what the maximum is that they've managed to sell for recently, and set your own Buy it Now price slightly below that.

7. Shipping.

Look around to see the sweet spot for shipping. If you can figure out a way to get your shipping costs lower than the highest sellers, then this is a great opportunity to differentiate yourself in the market.

TIP - If you're in the USA, you can cut shipping costs immediately by taking advantage of eBay's partnership with the U.S. Postal Service. Now, you can get free co-branded shipping boxes for Priority Mail® and Priority Mail Flat Rate Service. These boxes will be delivered directly to your home at no cost to you. Get details here:

<http://ebaysupplies.usps.com/>

By doing a little "spying" on your competition, you'll begin to see what's already working. Then you can start to emulate your competitors.

Of course you don't want to copy them completely, but you can structure your auction similarly based on the info your competitors are using in the 7 categories listed in this tutorial.

Ready to start "spying"?

Visit <http://search.ebay.com/> , then scroll down to select "advanced search".

You'll be on your way to discovering profitable short cuts for your next listing.

Dave Lovelace is the author of [e-Bay Platinum Profits](http://www.auctionplatinum.com/ebay-course.html), a step by step beginner's guide to making money on e-Bay "the right way the first time". Subscribe to Dave's FREE 9-day mini-course, "e-Bay Success Tips: Quick-Start Guide To Winning The Auction Game (for Newbies)" and discover everything you need to know to get started right away! Get lesson 1 in the next 2 minutes when you signup now. Go to =>
<http://www.auctionplatinum.com/ebay-course.html>

5. Why Not Try A Dutch Auction?

Have you ever thought how many PowerSellers make their money? Well, you'll notice that some of them regularly conduct Dutch Auctions.

What are Dutch Auctions?

This is an auction where the seller places more than one identical item for sale on the same auction.

Let's imagine you've acquired a job lot of 20 Accurist watches of the same design which you wish to sell on eBay. You could place 20 individual auctions, one for each watch. That's one approach.

Another approach could be to run a Dutch Auction. In your Dutch Auction you set up a single auction with a quantity of 20.

There is one other decision to make for your Dutch Auction. Do you want the auction to be on a fixed price basis (Buy it Now), or a normal bidding based auction? Your decision here impacts on how the auction progresses and concludes.

If you opt for the fixed price basis, your Dutch Auction will be present on eBay until all the items have been sold, or until the auction duration reaches the end.

Note that buyers aren't limited to taking one item at a time. They can specify how many of your fixed price items they wish to purchase. They then click Buy it Now and, providing there are sufficient unsold to meet the request, they will get the number they requested.

In terms of your Accurist watches, if you ran a fixed price Dutch Auction, one buyer could buy all 20 if they wanted to, if there were 20 available to buy at the time of their purchase. Or they could buy one, and the balance of items shown on your Dutch Auction would reduce to 19. Or they could buy any number between 1 and 20.

If we now turn to Dutch Auctions of the normal bidding based type of auction, it is a little more complicated.

If you placed your 20 Accurist watches on a bidding based auction, buyers are required to bid a price and then to say how many items they want. At the end of the auction duration, every successful buyer pays the lowest price which was bid by one of the winning bidders.

Let me explain this with our 20 watches as the example.

John bids \$6 each and wants 10 watches

Jean bids \$5 each and wants 6 watches

Steve bids \$4 each and wants 6 watches

Mary bids \$3 each and wants 5 watches

At the end of the auction, this is the process eBay goes through:

1. The total number of watches wanted is $10 + 6 + 6 + 5$, i.e. 27. This more than we have to sell!

2. The 20 watches are allocated starting with the highest bidder and working down the bidders list e.g.

John gets 10 watches, which leaves 10 to allocate...

Jean gets 6 watches, which leaves 4 to allocate...

Steve gets 4 watches, even though he really wanted 6...

and Mary gets no watches.

3. John, Jean and Steve pay \$4 per watch. This is because the \$4 bid by Steve is the lowest successful bid.

So, in this Dutch Auction you've sold your 20 watches at \$4 each.

If you're finding this difficult to understand, you're not alone.

This is probably why the vast majority of Dutch Auctions are conducted on a fixed price basis!

The methodology certainly works and, if you're prepared to deal in volume stocks of identical items, it can generate significant eBay income quickly.

6. A Gift from Me to You

Are you concerned about spoof emails?

Do you worry that a fraudster might get hold of your eBay or PayPal login details?

I am too....

Which is why this superb ebook from Tim Miller is life-saver.

Called 'Spoof Email - Don't Get Taken To The Cleaners!', Tim gives many live examples of spoof emails.

Like me, you will definitely recognise some of these!!

He also shows how you can determine if a suspect email is a spoof.

In my opinion, this is an essential read for every eBay member.

Download your copy from [here](#).

At the end of his ebook, Tim lists some relevant software resources. This is a highly useful list.

For your information, the best spyware removal product that I'm aware of is [Spyzooka](#). You can try Spyzooka for free [here](#).

7. Someone's auctioning what? Unusual items currently available

Nothing surprises me when it comes to internet auctions. Amuse yourself with some of these beauties.

Thanks to Iz for this one:

[You haven't a prayer with this!](#)

And a few more I've come across:

[I've often thought about a boat. Wonder if this will do?](#)

[Feel like giving yourself a lift? No, really?](#)

[Do you love animals? This might be for you.](#)

[I misunderstood. I thought, Kennedy, White House etc. What a disappointment!](#)

Disclaimer - I have no association with any of the sellers of the above items.



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<http://www.auctioninnercircle.com>

NOTE: Depending on when you view this newsletter, you may find some links to third party sites no longer work. I know how frustrating this can be. But please don't shoot the messenger! The internet is a fast moving environment and, as the newsletters age, it is to be expected that some links may become obsolete over time.

The moral of the story?

If the newsletter sends you to a site that interests you, and you think you might want to refer to it later, make sure you store the site address in YOUR favorites.