



The eBay Auction Newsletter

Issue 2507 - July 31, 2008

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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



Welcome to the latest edition of the eBay Auction Newsletter.

If you're a new subscriber, a particularly warm welcome to you.

eBay recently announced their results for the second quarter, ending 30th June 2008.

This is the first full quarter since they implemented major changes, such as sellers being unable to leave negative feedback, and the ban on digital download auctions.

It looks like their revenues have somewhat stalled lately. Look at the last 5 quarter revenue figures:

£1.834 billion - June 2007

\$1.899 billion - September 2007

\$2.180 billion - December 2007

\$2.192 billion - March 2008

\$2.195 billion - June 2008

There has been hardly any revenue growth in the past six months. This is probably one of the reasons why eBay's share price has fallen to a 2 year low. However, as you will know if you are a regular reader, what I prefer to look at are the people numbers.

There were 338 million registered user accounts on eBay as at 30 June 2008. This means that, on average, every day from 1st April to 30th June 314,130 people join eBay. That's 13,089 every hour. Or 218 every minute!

This is great news for eBay sellers. Every 3 days, nearly one million new prospects are on eBay potentially looking for bargains which you and I wish to offer.

I know we can all get down about eBay occasionally - like when they tinker with their rules or systems. But the plain fact is, with all its flaws, eBay is far and away the quickest and easiest place to make money on the internet. I think I'll put a new listing on eBay now. There are tens of thousands of new potential customers who have joined since I last listed.

Take care, and good luck in your eBay business. Speak to you soon.



1. Thought for the Day

"Ideas are a dime a dozen. People who implement them are priceless."

Mary Kay Ash

2. eBay Classified Ads - A Case Study

I don't know if you've tried eBay Classified Ads, but I've been using them profitably for quite a while.

Today I'd like to share with you some of my experiences and show how you can generate easy additional income from eBay Classified Ads. I'll also reveal actual figures of how much money I've made.

About a year ago, I realised that Classified Ads could be a great way to offer affiliate products. If you're not familiar with affiliate marketing, it simply means promoting a product on behalf of its owner, in return for a commission on each sale achieved.

I decided that promoting an ebook as an affiliate would fit neatly into the eBay Classified Ad model. After all, eBay has the traffic, all I had to do was drive sufficient of it to see my eBay Classified Ad page.

I selected the ebook to promote from what is probably the largest affiliate program management provider - ClickBank.

If you go onto <http://www.clickbank.com>, search its Marketplace of 10,000 ebooks, you can select any of these to promote.

For any sale you make of the ebook selected, you receive a commission which is expressed as a percentage of the sale value of the ebook. Commission rates can be up to 75%, depending on how generous the ebook's author wishes to be to his or her affiliates.

The title I selected to promote via eBay's Classified Ads paid me 53% commission. This translated into around \$22 (£11) per sale.

Having decided on the product (the ebook) I wished to promote, I then had to create my Classified Ad.

I did my normal research into generating a title which I thought would get plenty of search returns. I always add a sub-title on my Classified Ads as I believe this helps in persuading searchers to visit my Classified Ad "sales page".

In terms of the Classified Ad description page itself, I brazenly copy from the sales page of the ebook's author. This is allowable. After all, the ebook author naturally wants their affiliates to succeed, as it makes more money for them with zero effort.

I do have the advantage of knowing how to code in HTML, so I changed the page to reflect the fact that the visitor has to go to another site to actually buy the ebook. This is because on eBay Classified Ads you cannot sell anything directly. There is no bid or buy button. You have to take your visitor to some other place to buy from you.

In this case, I simply enabled my page visitors to click over to the ebook author's sales page, being careful to use my affiliate link as the clickable link to take them there.

I submit the Classified Ad, and it appears for 30 days on eBay.

Here is the process in a nutshell:

1. Register with ClickBank as an affiliate. It costs you nothing.

http://www.clickbank.com/promote_products.html

2. Go into ClickBank's Marketplace and search for a product which you feel meets a demand, and which you want to promote.

3. When you have found such a product, get your ClickBank affiliate link.

4. Now, on eBay, generate a compelling title with a view to getting your Classified Ad listing returned frequently in eBay searches.

5. Add a sub-title designed to entice the searcher to click through to your Classified Ad page.

6. Create your Classified Ad by "copying" the sales page of your product's owner into the eBay description box.

7. Modify your Classified Ad sales page so that your page visitors are taken via your affiliate link to the ebook owner's sales page.

(If you prefer, you can design your own Classified Ad description page for the product. This might be, for example, a subset of the product's sales page.)

8. Submit your Classified Ad to eBay.

9. Throughout the month that your Classified Ad runs, check you're getting a reasonable number of visitors. If you aren't, it's likely that you need to refine your listing title. To give you an idea, my Classified Ad - which is in a narrow niche market - is averaging around 70 visitors per month.

Now, the bit you've been waiting for.

The results from promoting the ebook via eBay Classified Ads as an affiliate...

Period covered: 26 May 2007 to 31 May 2008

Sales made: 37

Commission earned: \$784.85 (£394.40)

eBay Fees: \$296.05 (£149.49)

Net Profit: \$488.80 (£244.91)

Now I know we can't retire on these kind of figures, but consider this.

Once you're making money with one product, you can create another Classified Ad for a different product. And then another.

Do you think I only promote ONE affiliate product via eBay Classified Ads?

I'll let you work out the answer to that one for yourself!

All I do is spend about an hour in total in deciding which product to promote, creating my title and generating my Classified Ad page.

After the Classified Ad starts running, providing it's making money I simply renew it when eBay told me the 30 days period was up. Time taken per month, per product, about a couple of seconds.

And that's it!

As an affiliate you play no part in the delivery of the ebook. This is handled by the ebook's author.

Also, you receive your commission payments every two weeks directly from ClickBank.

Do you think you could do this?

I KNOW you can.

Now, a couple of tips before I close this. First, unless you have a specific reason not to do so, create your Classified Ad on <http://www.ebay.com>. Even though you might be registered with eBay on their UK eBay, you can log into ebay.com with your eBay ID and password, and create auctions on ebay.com as normal.

Why would I suggest you place your Classified Ad on ebay.com? There are a few reasons.

First, the vast majority of ebooks on ClickBank are targeted at the American market. You'll see the sales pages of these ebooks reflect this fact, so it makes sense that you place your Classified Ads on the eBay country site at which your affiliate product is targeted.

Plus, the fees for Classified Ads on ebay.com are generally lower than on UK eBay. Also, on ebay.com your ad appears for 30 days, whereas on UK eBay you only get 28 days for your fee.

3. The 15 Weirdest Things Ever Sold on eBay

Here is an entertaining list compiled by Orion Kester, who runs the website <http://www.weird-auction.com/>

Position 15

Woman Sells Right to Name Her Baby

When Melissa Heuschkel couldn't decide what to name her fourth child, she turned to the auction site eBay. Golden Palace casino won the bid for \$15,500. The baby was named Golden Palace Benedetto. Early 2005.

Position 14

Man Tries to Sell His Liver on eBay

A man from Florida put his liver up for sale on eBay. The bid went as high as \$5.7 million before eBay pulled it from its site, stating it's illegal to sell body parts on eBay.

Position 13

JFK Shooter's Window

Up for auction for the first time, the actual window and frame from the shooter's nest on the 6th floor of the Dallas Texas School Book Depository where Lee Harvey Oswald fired off those fatal shots that took the life of our 35th President of the United States - John F. Kennedy. After 188 bids, the winning bid was \$3,001,501.00.

Position 12

Pretend Monster in a Child's Closet

A pretend monster that was in someone's child's closet. This was so that little one would be able to sleep at night.

Position 11

Ghost in a Jar

Yes, a ghost - in a jar. Well, why not? The ghost was apparently terrorising the man who owned it, and so he decided to capture it and sell it on eBay to someone who might be able to give it a better home.

Position 10

Doritos Cheese Pope Hat

Golden Palace casino was at it again when they won this auction for a Dorito in the shape of the Pope's hat. The Golden Palace won from 33 other bidders with a bid \$1,209.

Position 9
Britney Spears Chewed Gum

Someone picked up Britney Spears chewed gum at a London hotel and decided it would be a great thing to sell on eBay. Oddly enough, they were right - they got \$263 for it. A Britney fan probably has it framed in their house right now.

Position 8
Jesus Toast

This seller accidentally burnt a piece of toast. Before he could throw it away, he noticed what he thought could be the face of Jesus on the toast. With a starting bid of \$.99 and a Buy it Now price at \$200, unfortunately no one bid on this item.

Position 7
Britney Spears Half Eaten Sandwich

Golden Palace Casino has purchased many weird things, like this egg salad sandwich half eaten by Britney which they purchased for \$500, For an additional \$20 they also purchased a nibbled on corn dog by Spears' ex husband Kevin Federline.

Position 6
Virgin Mary Grilled Cheese Sandwich

A seller offered a grilled cheese sandwich upon which the Virgin Mary had appeared to her. The strange thing is, she genuinely seemed to believe it. This item sold for \$28,000. Some people just have too much money to waste, don't they?

Position 5
The Internet

If people can sell plots of land on the moon, then why not try and sell the Internet? Someone did just that, for the bargain asking price of \$1 million. Of course, it was all just a gag and it's unlikely that this Pay Pal transaction ever went through. But still, it would have been the deal of the century. And the seller was even throwing in free Internet access!

Position 4
18 Year Old British Girl's Virginity

An 18-year-old British girl sold her virginity on eBay. It was bought by a businessman who kindly agreed to give her the money without actually taking the service.

Position 3
Wedding Dress

Nothing strange about selling a wedding dress, you might think, but this was the guy's ex-wife's wedding dress. The difference here is that he modelled it. Photos of him in the wedding dress adorned the auction, and he wrote a long screed about his ex-wife. The dress sold for \$3,850.

Position 2
U.S. Navy F/A-18

A Hornet state brokerage in Virginia sold a U.S. Navy F/A-18A Hornet jet fighter on eBay for just over a million dollars. It was, unfortunately, in pieces and so unusable. However, they offered to put it back together and make it ready to fly for the low, low price of just another \$9 million.

Position 1
Broken Laser Pointer

The beginning of eBay, the first auction ever. Pierre Omidyar wrote the code that evolved into what we know today as eBay. Originally called AuctionWeb and hosted on the same server as Pierre's page about the Ebola virus, the site began with the listing of a single broken laser pointer around September 1995. Though Pierre had intended the listing to be a test more than a serious offer to sell at auction, he was shocked when the item sold for \$14.83. And the rest, as they say, is history!

4. Tips and Tricks for Using eBay Search

This is a useful piece by Clint Herman, author of "[How to Get Started Selling on eBay](#)".

If you know what you're doing, you can quickly find what you're looking for on eBay. Here are a few golden rules.

Be specific: If you're searching for the first edition of the original Harry Potter book, you'll get further searching for 'harry potter rowling philosopher's stone first edition' than you will searching for 'harry potter'. You'll get fewer results, but the ones you do get will be far more relevant.

Spell wrongly: It's a sad fact that many of the sellers on eBay just can't spell. Whatever you're looking for, try thinking of a few common misspellings - the chances are that fewer people will find these items, and so they will be cheaper.

Get a thesaurus: You should try to search for all the different words that someone might use to describe your item, for example searching for both 'TV' and 'television', or for 'phone', 'mobile' and 'cellphone'. Where you can, though, leave off the type of item altogether and search by things like brand and model.

Use the categories: Whenever you search, you'll notice a list of categories at the side of your search results. If you just searched for the name of a CD because you want to buy that CD, you should click the 'CDs' category to just look at results in that category. Why bother looking through a load of results that you don't care about?

Don't be afraid to browse: Once you've found the category that items you like seem to be in, why not click 'Browse' and take a look through the whole category? You might be surprised by what you find.

Few people realise just how powerful eBay's search engine is - a few symbols here and there and it'll work wonders for you.

Wildcard searches: You can put an asterisk (*) into a search phrase when you want to say 'anything can go here'. For example, if you wanted to search for a 1950s car, you could search for 'car 195*'. 195* will show results from any year in the 1950s.

In this order: If you put words in quotes ("") then the only results shown will be ones that have all of the words between the quote marks. For example, searching for "Lord of the Rings" won't give you any results that say, for example "Lord Robert Rings".

Exclude words: Put a minus, and then put any words in brackets that you don't want to appear in your search results. For example: "Pulp Fiction" -(poster,photo) will find items related to Pulp Fiction but not posters or photos.

Either/or: If you want to search for lots of words at once, just put them in brackets: the TV example from earlier could become '(TV,television)', which would find items with either word.

So once you've found your bargain item, bid for it and won it, what if it all goes wrong? Don't worry - eBay has a thorough dispute resolution procedure.

5. A Gift From Me to You

If you've read the item about my Classified Ad Case Study, this month's gift will really help you.

It's an ebook called "Kick eBay's Butt!".

You'd probably never guess from it's rather provocative title, but the ebook is all about creating successful Classified Ads on eBay.

You can download it from here:

<http://www.workwinners.com/classifieds/>

6. News & Views

Built-in Risk Alert Search

Here is an excellent and easy to use search tool which you can use on selected eBay country sites.

You can select from useful search parameters such as "No Accessories", "New Items Only", "Free Shipping" etc.

One unique feature is a risk level indicator. The search displays one of four symbols if it determines that a particular item/seller may constitute some risk to you if you bid.

You can see what I mean by testing out this no cost service here:

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

No Frills Tool - But Very Effective

I mentioned this tool a couple of years ago, but it's now updated to include eBay's latest policies on feedback.

If you've ever wanted to check up on a seller, this will quickly show you some of the key elements of that individual.

You can see, for example, all their negative and neutral feedbacks, also their last 30 days of negatives.

If you want to know instantly if you've sold to a particular bidder before, you can check this out with the new Mutual feedback search.

You can get this zero cost tool here:

<http://toolhaus.org/>

Talking of eBay Tools...

I don't know if you're like me, but I've often wondered how much people are making on eBay.

I know in eBay's Advanced Search, you can see the completed listings of an individual seller. This will show you the outcome of the seller's last 60 days of listings, and you can see what each item has sold for, and also which items haven't sold.

But what if you're just plain nosey, and you simply want to know the total amount of sales someone has made on eBay in the last 30, 60 or 90 days?

Digressing for a moment, John Thornhill is an eBay seller I've followed for some time. John was probably the most successful UK based seller of ebooks on eBay, and he was quite happy to share his eBay ID so you could check up on the claims he made about his business. When eBay changed the rules so that digitally downloaded products like ebooks could no longer be listed, I wondered what was going to happen to John's eBay ebook selling empire. I know he has been converting all of his ebooks to be CD based, so that he can now sell these on eBay as physically shipped products, and so not break eBay's rules about digital products.

Now I know how much John is currently making. You can too, just put his eBay ID of planetsms into this tool:

http://www.goofbay.com/ebay_seller_history_tool.html

Depending on who you're checking out, you may need to be patient for the results to come back to you. There could be a lot of data to gather.

It's an interesting exercise to put your own ID into the tool, and get a summary of your own sales too!

By the way, this isn't the only tool which Goofbay provides...

http://www.goofbay.com/ebay_tools.html

It's probably worth a few minutes of your time to check out Goofbay.

eBay v Craigslist

I was wondering the other day if the difficult economic circumstances might prove to be a benefit for eBay?

It's easy to see that people might like to make more money quickly, and that they would revert to selling unwanted items on the undoubted giant of online auction sites.

But it's difficult to get hold of auction numbers from eBay. What we do know is that their revenues only grew from \$2.19 billion in quarter 1 this year, to \$2.20 billion in the quarter to the end of June 2008.

On the other hand, eBay's "competitor" Craigslist is enjoying boom times!

On USA Craigslist, there was a total of 888,729 "For Sale" posts in June of 2007. One year later, in June 2008, there were 17,795,940 "For Sale" posts on Craigslist. Just a small matter of 2,002% year-on-year growth.

What are people selling? The top five items for sale on Craigslist are:

1. Cars/trucks
2. Furniture
3. Electronics
4. Baby/kid stuff
5. Motorcycles

As Craigslist costs nothing to use, I guess more and more people will try that route to earn that extra cash.

Craigslist started in March 1995 and, in case you didn't know, there has been a UK Craigslist site since April 2001.

<http://www.craigslist.org/about/sites.html>

By the way, given that eBay owns 25% of Craigslist, you could say eBay isn't losing out after all! Although eBay and Craigslist are currently in the middle of a court case where they are suing each other.

But that's a different story ...

Meanwhile, Over At Amazon

Amazon.com has quietly launched "Checkout by Amazon," an e-commerce checkout service for online merchants.

The new service allows Amazon.com customers to use their stored payment and shipping information on participating merchant sites. He notes that the service provides businesses a way to manage shipping charges, sales tax and promotions, as well as post-sales activities including refunds, cancellations and chargebacks.

The move puts Amazon in competition not only with eBay but also with Google Checkout. Although it is not expected that Amazon's move will have a near-term impact on eBay, the competition can only be healthy.

<https://payments.amazon.com/sdui/sdui/index.htm>

Is This The World's Hardest Game?

Devote a few minutes to this. I think you'll like it.

But don't do like I did - I thought my mouse had broken. Just take note that once you click to start the game, you then have to use your arrow keys to play it.

I got to level 2 - out of 30. I know, I know it's pathetic. Just wait until you try it yourself!

<http://www.addictinggames.com/theworldshardestgame.html>

7. Someone's Auctioning What???

Nothing surprises me when it comes to internet auctions. Amuse yourself with some of these beauties in our regular trawl through eBay's auctions.

Here are some auctions I've spotted as I trawled eBay recently:-

[I guess this will always find it's way home!](#)

[Are you a "Back To The Future" or Michael J. Fox fan? This is for you...](#)

[The ultimate gift if there's a birthday or anniversary in your family soon.](#)

[All this, and watch Team GB win Olympic golds live!](#)

[This is one way to make sure you win!](#)

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



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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.