



The eBay Auction Newsletter

Issue 3101 - January 31, 2009

- Welcome from Brian McGregor
 - 1. Thought for the Day
- 2. What Can You Do With a Problem Customer?
- 3. How to Make Your Auction a Video Star
 - 4. Tales From the Recession
 - 5. A Gift From Me to You
 - 6. News & Views:
 - eBay January Update
 - A New Way To Promote Your Listings
 - Have You Suffered Spyware Problems Yet?
 - Printing Money on eBay
 - What Are the Most Watched Items on eBay?
 - So, Has eBay Any Real Competition?
- 7. Someone's Auctioning What???

Proudly published for over 4 years by Brian McGregor

Do your friends, family and colleagues a favour, and share this eBay Auction Newsletter with them. Why not email them a copy NOW?

Or tell them to grab their own copy free from:

<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.

Well, it looks like batter eBay season is continuing. The figures are in for quarter ended 31st December, 2008, and eBay's numbers are disappointing.

Does that mean eBay is finished? Or that we should all de-camp to Amazon immediately? Or maybe we should look for more eBay alternatives?

Well, eBay may be dying in the eyes of some sellers. However, if you're interested in getting access to buyers, check out Alexa's list of the top traffic received by websites world-wide. (Alexa is probably the most respected internet information gathering company)

Who do you think gets more traffic; eBay, Amazon or Craigslist?

You'll find the answer here:

http://www.alexa.com/site/ds/top_sites?ts_mode=global&lang=none

Take care, and good luck in your eBay business.

Speak to your soon.



1. Thought for the Day

"Don't get discouraged; it's usually the last key in the bunch that opens the lock."

Unknown Author

2. What Can You Do With a Problem Customer?

Occasionally, we all encounter what I call problem customers. It could be the person is someone who has been a nightmare to deal with in the past. Or maybe there's something in their feedback record that raises a red flag.

What can you do if an unwelcome customer bids on your auction? Well, if this happens, you do have some options. (At the end of this article, you'll find links to the pages where you can undertake the actions discussed.)

1. Cancel Individual Bids

First of all you can cancel the bid from a specific member, although in general eBay warn against it. They say that cancelling a bid can create buyer ill will and may set you up for a negative experience with that customer in the future.

However, there are legitimate reasons for cancelling a bid, and these include:

1. If you suspect the bidder as being a potential problem, you can try verifying their Users ID. If you are unable to contact the person using the information on file with eBay, they might be a deadbeat or a fraudster, so you can cancel their bid.
2. If the User ID has excessive negatives in the last 30 days or has an overall negative feedback score, you could choose to cancel their bid. Of course, it may be that the bidder has had a run of bad luck. However, they could truly be the customer from hell. Read their feedback history for clues and, if you're uneasy, remove their bid.
3. The bidder can ask to back out. You're not obligated to let them off the hook, but there's little point in pressing ahead with their purchase if they've indicated they wish to withdraw their bid. You could make them honour the contract, but you may then find yourself with a non-paying buyer on your hands. In that case, you can file an Unpaid Item Dispute and get your listing fees credited, but why not save yourself the time and trouble?

If you do cancel a bid it's good form to email the bidder and explain why. Be courteous and professional. They might still be annoyed with you, but at least you tried to keep the peace.

Once a bid has been cancelled, it can't be reinstated. So make sure it's what you really want to do before you hit the button. Cancelled bids also become a permanent part of the auction's bid history, so any comments you leave should be clear, to the point and unemotional. This isn't the place to air your grievances.

Getting the timing of a cancellation right takes some strategic planning. Chances are, if you allow an unwanted bid to stand, someone else will come along and outbid them. Delete the bid too early and you might end up with a lower final price than you would have otherwise received. Wait too long and you risk keeping the price artificially high, potentially discouraging last minute bidders.

A general rule of thumb is to hold off cancelling a bid until the last 24 hours of the listing. By that time, the interloper may no longer be the high bidder anyway.

Once you cancel a bid, it's a good idea to block the user from bidding on any more of your auctions - which we cover in detail later. Scorned users have been known to come back and make trouble for hapless sellers by placing high bids and then refusing to pay. Sometimes they will complete the transaction, but then leave you a negative feedback.

Given that sellers now don't have the ability to leave negative or neutral feedback for buyers, if you have reason to be suspicious of a bidder, head them off first.

2. Block Bidding or Buying from Individual User IDs

Your next option is that eBay allows sellers to block individual eBay IDs from participating in future auctions or sales. So if a particular buyer has been a problem in the past, you can at least prevent them from bidding or buying on your listings in the future.

Of course, there is a possibility that the bad bidder will create a new eBay User ID and continue to make your life miserable. But you can block up to 1,000 individual User IDs, so you can hopefully make it awkward for them to transact with you to such an extent that they move on.

3. Prevent Users from Bidding Based on your Preset Criteria

Another approach is to erect an electronic "no trespassing" sign to deter those unwelcome bidders from joining your party in the first place. You can do this by stipulating certain criteria about your listing and about who is allowed to bid or buy.

For example, you may not want to sell internationally, or to accept bids from members with Unpaid Item strikes or who have a negative feedback score. Note that you can't block bids from users solely based on a zero feedback score. Everyone has to start somewhere. But if you really don't want to be bothered with new members who don't yet understand that a bid is binding, state it (politely) in your seller's terms.

You'll need to log in to eBay to get to these pages.

On ebay.co.uk -

To cancel a bid

<http://offer.ebay.co.uk/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?CancelBidShow>

To block bidders

<http://offer.ebay.co.uk/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?BidderBlockLogin>

To set buyer preferences for your bidders

<http://offer.ebay.co.uk/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?BuyerBlockPreferences>

On ebay.com -

To cancel a bid

<http://offer.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?CancelBidShow>

To block bidders

<http://offer.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?BidderBlockLogin&guest=1>

To set buyer preferences for your bidders

<http://offer.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?BuyerBlockPreferences>

Finally, having the option to cancel and block problem customers can be a useful facility, but you should exercise these rights with care. Practice good customer service, be proactive, responsive and professional and, with any luck, you won't find yourself involved with problem customers.

3. How to Make Your Auction a Video Star

Did you read my welcome notes at the start of this newsletter? In there, I mentioned the Alexa list of world-wide internet traffic. Well, number three on that list is YouTube.

I'm sure you're aware of YouTube. Indeed, you can hardly move around anywhere on the internet anymore without being enticed by a video play box with the YouTube logo in the corner.

If YouTube is new to you, check it out at <http://www.youtube.com> .

You might be asking, what exactly does YouTube have to do with eBay?

There are a growing number of sellers using YouTube to provide potential customers with video descriptions of their products. One of the reasons why YouTube is so popular with marketers, and let's face it eBay sellers are marketers too, is that you can have a link from a YouTube video across to your eBay listing or eBay Shop/Store.

Capturing video and putting it on the internet was once the domain of those with special expertise. Today's innovative cameras and video-sharing sites have made the process accessible to most of us. Putting your video online is just about as easy as adding photos to your eBay listing. And, placing a video on YouTube is free.

Let me show you some examples of where eBay sellers are using eBay to drive prospective purchasers to their eBay listings.

Andy Mowery of Debnroo sells the Drinkwell Pet Water Fountain. In his video, Andy simply presents the fountain with all of its features. He explains why the model he's showcasing is better than others and demonstrates how easy it is to use and clean.

At the end of the video, you can find the URL for his web site next to the view box. Now you'll know exactly how to find him if you decide your pets could benefit from this free-flowing fresh water device. He could have shown his eBay Store link too, if he had wished.

"Videos are great for getting search rankings" Mowery says, "With YouTube it's possible to give bidders a good preview of the article they want to buy"

You can see Andy Mowery's video here:

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=Pe6Vauuz2zE>

Another example is Steve the Austrian Barber, known on eBay as austrianbarber. He not only sells the equipment to cut your family's hair yourself, but also the DVD lessons to help you ensure a tidy result.

"With YouTube it's possible to give bidders a good preview of the item they want to buy," Steve says. "Without YouTube, you can only show pictures. I sold in pre-YouTube times, too, but now it's easier. I get more page impressions than before, and sometimes more money, too."

Thanks to his YouTube presence, he finds that potential customers contact him through his YouTube account to get information about selling his items directly without having to go through eBay.

Here's an example of Steve's YouTube videos:

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=einsyk40FUo>

Now, you may well be interested in giving this a go for yourself, but you've never created such a video, edited one or uploaded to a video sharing site such as YouTube. So, where do you start?

Well, with the meteoric popularity of web-based video, good quality, simple-to-use cameras are available at affordable prices. You can get a simple, lightweight camera which is ready to use as soon as you open the box.

Once you've captured your video image, you'll may be want to edit it so it appears exactly the way you want it to appear. Fortunately, there's plenty of free video editing software available. Indeed, you may get editing software with your camera. If you run Windows XP or Vista, you already have MovieMaker, which is a perfectly adequate video editing tool. Once you get over the brief learning curve, you'll find yourself putting your videos together in no time.

The next step is to upload your video to YouTube, which is literally a matter of a few keystrokes and creating title, keywords and description for your video. Don't forget to include the link to your eBay listing or Store, and/or to your website, in the first line of your description. (If you're familiar with HTML, you can make such links to be live and clickable)

The additional benefit of creating a video for YouTube is that you can embed your video right in your eBay description page. The instructions for embedding video are given on YouTube. Simply copy and paste the HTML code into the description section of your template or Sell Your Item form, preview it and you're all set.

You may not win an Oscar for your video effort, but extra traffic to your eBay listing may be all the reward you need!

4. Tales From the Recession

Guest Article By Bill Briggs
msnbc.com contributor

With three kids, four months of unpaid bills and a home teetering on foreclosure, Jenny hopes salvation lies in a precious slice of bubblegum-scented cardboard.

She's praying to be rescued by a baseball card.

Specifically a 1975 Nolan Ryan card formerly cherished by her late father but now dangling on eBay, priced at \$2,500 and punctuated by Jenny's tale of woe.

"It's a long shot, but it's all I've got," says Jenny, who lives near Greenville, S.C., and asked that her last name be withheld to protect her daughters who are 6, 9 and 11. The single mother is employed but fell behind, she said, during an eight-month medical leave. She had no health benefits at the time.

"My dad's ball cards are probably the only thing I have that's worth anything. It is very hard for me to let go of them. My dad loved baseball. I love to look at them and just remember," Jenny says. "I think my dad would want me to sell them. He loved his girls, all four of us. I am doing this for my children."

Jenny has reluctantly waded into a surging undercurrent of the rough, financial ocean. Call it "the recession market." Found primarily at online sales and auction sites like eBay and Craigslist, it is an economy of the grim and also the quirky, blending desperation, dark humor and - depending on your perception - savvy marketing or cold opportunism.

Simply plug the word "recession" into the eBay or Craigslist search boxes and you'll instantly be browsing used iPods, children's violins, even snapshots of family puppies that are offered up explicitly to "pay the rent" or "save our home."

In Santa Rosa, Calif., Stephen is selling on Craigslist a heart-shaped diamond engagement ring that he originally bought 10 years ago for his then-girlfriend. His price: \$500. "Even though I no longer need it, I don't want to sell it," he wrote in his ad. "But I need to ... darn recession."

Health and dental care are even morphing into bad-times bargaining chips. In Miami, a 33-year-old masseuse has offered on Craigslist to swap hours of body rubs to any "compassionate" dentist who can provide her with two porcelain veneers and a crown. She's offering the same deal for any plastic surgeon who can supply free liposuction.

Memorabilia marking the economic crisis - especially any trinket that comes with its own punch line - is emerging as a hot commodity, too. For sale on the Internet: Lehman Bros. ball caps (\$70), "lucky recession horseshoes" (\$20), and "Brother Can You Spare a Dime" T-shirts (\$15.99).

And of course, there are some apocalyptic goods strewn across eBay and Craigslist: water purification kits, survival guides, military radios and, for \$49.98, maps to help "beat the recession with gold prospecting locations in 26 states."

"Even though some people might be out of a job, they're still buying this item," says Ryan Smith, of Cranberry Township, Pa., who sold 700 gold maps on eBay in 2008.

But the recession market's sad face continues to be people like Jenny who share their stories of financial misery as they simultaneously peddle their treasures.

"Is there anyone so kind that they would help a stranger in need?" Jenny wrote in her eBay listing. "You will not only be buying a card, but a second chance for me and my kids."

"I am not happy with my situation," Jenny acknowledged in an e-mail interview. "I hate asking anyone for help. But I have no other choice. Times are hard and a little bit scary for all."

Business author Jay Conrad Levinson says he's never detected such a lofty level of fear in the marketplace - and he's been studying seller and buyer behavior since the early 1970s when he wrote his first book, "Earning Money without a Job."

"I didn't see as much frantic and desperate activity then as I do now," said Levinson, author of the best-selling "Guerrilla Marketing" series. "This is stretching people to the utmost."

And that has convinced many sellers to strip away their pride and privacy by divulging their personal troubles to the entire online marketplace, Levinson said. On the other hand, it's not a half-bad marketing tactic.

"That puts a lot of people on (the seller's) wavelength because a lot of people have their own tales of woe right now," Levinson said. "They want to be able to reach somebody they can relate to" and who can, in turn, understand their suffering. Hints of that same consumer psychology can also be found in everything from retailers' "going out of business" sales to the hand-written pleas held up by homeless people on city corners. Sympathy sells.

"It takes this kind of desperate economy," Levinson said, "to create that kind of desperate creativity."

Likewise, many entrepreneurs who smell blood in the financial waters are seeking to scoop up anxious consumers craving extra income. This explains the last layer of the "recession market" - scattered throughout eBay and Craigslist are hundreds of offers to help you launch your own "recession-proof business." With just a phone call and a small investment, these entrepreneurs claim, you could be turning a profit by hawking foreign cars, preparing tax returns, towing stranded motorists or placing ads on Google. For \$29,995, says one Craigslister, you can even start a lucrative "entertainment" enterprise that includes a Web site, software and DVDs. The business? Pornography.

Perhaps because the market is so flooded by these offers, however, just one person has responded to retiree John Holmes' pitch to place people in a "recession-proof business" for only \$5. The former owner of a car-detailing operation, Holmes pledges to teach clients how to make \$10 to \$20 an hour by running their own waterless car wash with very little overhead.

"It's really a going business, but it surprises me that people aren't even willing to at least investigate, to give a call and say, 'Hey what have you got?' It's a mystery to me," says Holmes, who lives in the Atlanta area. He speculates that while many people are hurting, much of this generation is too lazy to grind out a few hours of extra work to pay the bills.

"What I see a lot of is: 'Will you give me a ride to the unemployment office?' " Holmes says. "I get the sense they want to take the path of least resistance."

"That's sort of a cynical view," responds Stephen Hoch, a professor of marketing at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He contends more folks aren't flocking to the start-your-own-company offers in part because many consumers don't believe they're in any real financial trouble.

"A lot of people are still fooling themselves in thinking they're immune somehow (from the crisis)," Hoch says. "Also, I think people are more skeptical about things (on the Internet).

"Then again, when it comes to skepticism vs. desperation, it's not clear who wins there."

If you ask Jenny, desperation wins.

Although she has agreed to include six Pete Rose baseball cards with her beloved Nolan Ryan, only one offer has come along so far, for \$50. She declined. But she thinks the Hall-of-Fame right-hander can still deliver for her family.

"If I could sell the cards for at least \$2,000, I could breathe easy for a while." Jenny says. "We are riding on a wing and a prayer."

5. A Gift From Me to You

Steve Lindhorst is an interesting character. He was one of the first eBay sellers who discovered the potential of listing his items on Amazon.

He has written a new ebook for 2009, designed to give eBay sellers some ideas for improving their sales.

It's called "10 Small Things a Seller Can do to Get Their Mojo Back".

You can download it from:

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

6. News & Views

eBay January Update

eBay UK has just published what they call the Business Centre Update.

There's some useful information in there, particularly about the Best Match calculation.

<http://pages.ebay.co.uk/businesscentre/newsletter/>

A New Way To Promote Your Listings

Here's an interesting way of promoting your eBay auctions outside of eBay.

If you go onto the example page, you can plug your own eBay ID and see what the "bay ad" for your auctions will look like.

<http://mybayads.com/>

Have You Suffered Spyware Problems Yet?

It's very uncomfortable when you realise your PC has been infested by spyware, or you suspect someone has accessed your private data.

Here are some excellent video tutorials which take you through step-by-step how to weed out these nasty problems, and protect yourself into the future.

http://www.auctioninnercircle.com/spyware_removal_videos/

Incidentally, if you're involved in internet marketing, or sell on eBay, you can get these video tutorials with Resale Rights.

Printing Money on eBay

Stuart Turnbull has found a clever way to make money through eBay.

It's not quite like printing money, but prints are involved.

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

What Are the Most Watched Items on eBay?

One of the sure-fire ways to determine which items are popular on eBay, and therefore likely to sell well, is to find out which listings have the most numbers of Watchers.

There's a new service where you can find out this information instantly.

Take a look at:

<http://www.watchcount.com>

So, Has eBay Any Real Competition?

Like me you may have heard of a growing number of alternative auction sites which have set up in competition with eBay.

Would you like to know how the top 20 or so of these sites compare to eBay?

You can find out here:

<http://www.powersellersunite.com/auctionsitewatch.php>

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:-

[Are you a chocoholic?](#)

[The bad news is that I won't be using this service.](#)

[My advice here is don't bother!](#)

[I hope this isn't a load of Chief Sitting Bull!](#)

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



The eBay Auction Newsletter is copyright © Brian McGregor

You can distribute this newsletter, providing the contents are left unchanged.

Do your friends, family and colleagues a favour, and share this eBay Auction Newsletter with them. Why not email them a copy NOW?

Or tell them to grab their own copy free from:

<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 favorite