



The eBay Auction Newsletter

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Proudly published for over 4 years by Brian McGregor

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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.

As you'll have seen from my "Thought for the Day" section, I'm one of those who likes sayings and mottos.

One which has stuck with me over many years is never more relevant than today. I'm sure you're familiar with this. It appears in a variety of versions, but the essence is the same ...

"Grant me the courage to change the things I can change, grant me the fortitude to accept those things I can't change; and grant me the wisdom to know the difference."

In my eBay and internet activities, my interpretation of the saying is that I should spend my time doing productive things which move me towards my goals and ambitions. Anything else is fluff!

Instead of going off in a million different directions, maybe the time is right for you to concentrate your efforts on your eBay selling?

Take care, and good luck in your eBay business.

Speak to your soon.

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

1. Thought for the Day

"Things may come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustle."

Abraham Lincoln

2. Why 60% of Listings Don't Sell

One statistic reported by eBay is that 60 percent of auctions do not end in a sale.

Of course, this can be put another way. 40 percent of auctions do sell, and this sell-through rate could be considered to be commendable. However, today let's think about why the other 60 percent of auctions don't sell.

(Bear in mind, in this article we're talking about auction listings, not Fixed Price, Buy it Now listings.)

We all know that not every single item put up for auction is going to sell. But you have to have sufficient listings so that when someone wants the kind of thing you're offering, your auction exists and is there to be found!

Here are some of the reasons why an auction might not sell...

1. Unfortunate Timing

This is one of the key reasons not everything sells. I used to work for a guy who said that we have to hit the prospect on the right wet Tuesday morning. What he meant was that buyers will be interested in what we have to offer "in their own time". If you run a 7 day auction, and it doesn't sell, do you think that means your item will never sell to anybody? Do you think that you have reached every potential prospect for your product on eBay.

In reality, all it means is that your listing did not appear on that right wet Tuesday morning for enough individual eBay buyers. So, go and list it again. But only if you're happy it is an effective listing!

2. Wrong Start Price

This is the classic conundrum for eBay sellers. What Start Price should you use for your auction?

Probably the most common reason why most auctions don't sell is that many sellers set an unhelpful or unrealistic Start Price. The psychology of sellers is entirely understandable. Nobody wants to lose money on eBay.

However, there is a real dilemma here. What happens is that some sellers set a relatively high Start Price, so that at least "they get their money back". Other sellers take the view that they've a better chance of a sale if they set off their auction at the minimum of 99p or 99c.

Unfortunately there is no science that you can apply to calculate the optimum Start Price. Every seller will have their own experiences and their own thoughts. Over the years, I have tried all kinds of strategies on my own auctions. If you're interested in my recommendations, they are contained in my ebook - [The eBay Formula](#).

3. Today's Competition

It may be that one of the reasons you didn't sell, is that your competition was unusually strong at the time you listed.

For example, you might have listed an item which you regularly sell but, that week someone else also lists an identical or similar item. Now this seller may not understand the market or the product as well as you, and they're not particularly aware of what they should be making on the item. So they might set off the auction at a very low Start Price.

This brings the traffic to their auction of people looking to buy this week, which ordinarily would have found their way to your auctions!

Whilst these are a few of the reasons why your auctions do not sell, but remember not to discount the added value of an eBay auction.

What do I mean by that?

Well, any eBay listing offers you exposure. For example, you may have an eBay Shop/Store, and there is nothing stopping you from having a link to that Shop/Store from within your auction listing. If your visitor does not bid on your auction, they may click over to your Shop/Store and buy something from you there.

You might persuade your non-bidding visitors to click over to your About me page where you have a variety of ways to tempt your visitor to do business with you. You are using your About me page to the full, aren't you?

So, don't despair if your auction sell-through rate isn't as high as the average. There can be very good reasons for it - and, simply by re-listing you could well find success next time. Even if you don't sell, remember that every visitor to your auction page has a value, and you should be trying to capitalise on their visit via your Shop/Store or your About me page.

3. Buy it Now or Auction Style?

When eBay commenced business, every item for sale was the subject of an auction. The highest bidder wins was the methodology in vogue then!

In response to buyers' requests for an alternative to lengthy auction cycles, eBay introduced the Buy it Now option as a method for buyers to purchase on the spot.

Whilst the Buy it Now solution was a quick-fix for those who wanted to avoid the competition and uncertainty of the auction format, it presented sellers with a puzzle - and it still does.

Which method best serves buyers without impacting the seller's bottom line? The good news is both methods can be utilised profitably.

Here are some of the factors you should consider if you're planning to use Auction style listings:

1. If your items are selling consistently at an acceptable price, you could continue to enable bidders to enjoy the auction bidding experience.
2. If you're listing items of little or no value to you, let bidders decide whether it's trash or treasure.
3. Any items that are in high demand at a time when supply is low can produce an old-fashioned bidding war, generally bringing in a healthy final price.
4. If you're listing an item, the value of which you're uncertain, it may be advantageous to run an auction and let the market decide. The final result may be a pleasant surprise.

We know there is demand by those who aren't interested in competitive bidding and prefer a quick purchase. Here are some of the factors to consider if you're planning to use Buy it Now listings:

1. If your item is in demand and you're happy with the current market value, you can offer to let buyers purchase at that price and be done with it.
2. Likewise, if you're item is in high demand, you might attract above market value from a buyer who doesn't wish to lose out in the bidding wars of auctions.
3. Your item is of seasonal or trend demand, and a fixed-price sell ensures the buyer will get it in a timely manner.
4. You're in no particular hurry and can afford to set fixed prices to see if the market will bring a potentially higher price.

In summary, fixed price selling can offer the opportunity of profiting from a marketplace, especially when buyers want items quickly and are willing to pay a premium to make a quick sale.

Your best bet may be to give buyers' options. Whether they prefer to battle other bidders for your items or elect to buy outright, give them the opportunity to decide for themselves. You can do this by operating a dual strategy. Do it selectively and you may be pleasantly surprised at the outcome.

4. Steps to Profitable Product Sourcing

If you are an eBay seller, you probably realise that your product line is at the core of your business. Without the right products to sell, it's unlikely that you will make a consistent income from eBay.

Indeed, the issue about "what to sell" or "what else to sell" is the top question I hear from both new and experienced sellers. Fortunately, successful product sourcing is not a matter of luck or guesswork. You can undertake some very specific steps that will help you to source the products that your buyers want. You should also be looking to develop quality relationships with your suppliers.

Here are some step that will help:

1. Ensure you're knowledgeable about your market niche

It doesn't matter what you sell, it is essential that you become knowledgeable in your niche, in your category and in your product line. Without this in depth knowledge, plus an understanding of your target customers, it will be difficult to stock your online listings with in-demand products.

Although it you should be looking to provide your customers with a good selection of products, it would also be beneficial to offer your buyers products they won't find at their local store.

By becoming an expert in the products, market and prospects, you are in a stronger position to build a strong and dynamic product line.

2. Go Further in Product Sourcing

One of traps many sellers fall into is in not digging deep enough in product research. Sourcing from only the top few popular products in a niche or category is probably not the ideal approach. If you go beyond your competitors, and dig deeper into your niche, you may come up with some unique, yet in-demand products for your buyers.

Given that most surveys show that selection is one of the top reasons for shopping online, sellers who only offer the top two products, will not stock the variety of products today's online buyer demands.

Limited selection is only one of the downsides of this approach. It is also likely that such products have the most competition and carry lower profit margins. So, a little extra time spent digging deeper for products may well produce additional profits.

3. Inhabit the world of your buyers

One of the ways to find out what buyers in your niche may be looking to purchase, is to inhabit the same world as them. By this I mean, watch what they watch, read what they read, browse the online forums they use etc.

As an example, say your niche is about bathroom accessories, you'll find any number of online forums in which you can participate. Not only will you be increasing your reputation in the niche, you will also gain an insight into what fellow forum members are buying, or are looking for.

Remember, even though you will have your own ideas about what products to sell, it's always advisable to keep your antenna up and listen to what others are talking about in your niche.

4. Trends can be rewarding

Mark Twain didn't offer this advice to marketers, but it certainly applies to them, "The secret to success is to find out where everyone else is going and get there first."

This statement is also highly relevant when considering product sourcing. If you can spot a trend successfully, and know what people will want to buy in 6 or 12 months from now, you can make a killing.

Whilst it's never easy detecting trends, there are clues around. For example, trade shows, consumer magazines and industry web sites in your niche may be worth researching.

5. Test marketing

When you identify a product which you're absolutely convinced will be a rip-roaring sales success, it can be very tempting to place a bulk order. Before you commit to a large inventory commitment, it is always advisable to test market and get an initial indication as to how well the product will sell.

If your supplier's minimum order is still too large, see if you can get a product sample. Some suppliers will be willing to provide sample products to you at a slightly increased unit cost. Bear in mind that even if it costs more to get a few product samples, you'll save money in the long run compared with investing in a large quantity of products that don't sell.

Alternatively, you could see if your supplier will dropship products to your end customers during your test marketing phase.

By following these steps, you should be able to identify profitable products which will help you grow your eBay business.

5. A Gift From Me to You

Just following on from the product sourcing article, here is a thoughtful report about how to identify profitable niches.

It's only 8 pages long, but don't be fooled - it is really enlightening.

You'll have to forgive the title. The author has found his own niche in what he calls BUM marketing, which essentially means marketing for people who have little or no money - as in a hobo or bum.

You can download the report from here:

http://www.workwinners.com/identify_niches/

6. News & Views

So That's Where My Watch Went

Have you ever been through security at an airport and subsequently realised you left something at the X-ray scanner area?

You might want to get in touch with Roberta Gordon, 36, a security manager at Heathrow Airport. She has been sacked for taking lost property to sell on eBay.

Actually, I know Roberta hasn't anything of mine. She worked on the first class departures security area and rubbed shoulders with celebrities like George Clooney and Stevie Wonder!

Crash, Bang, Wallop!

Building 82 doesn't sound like a particularly attractive address.

That's just as well, because the building is a horrible looking eleven storey office block that resembles a prison!

However, for Chris Belcher of Cincinnati, Ohio, it's a beautiful building. He won an auction on eBay for the right to press the detonator to demolish Building 82.

He paid \$5,207 for the privilege, and then promptly raffled the ticket for charity. Nice one Chris.

The deadly deed was carried out on 28th March.

If you're interested in seeing what it looked like, you can see here:

<http://i151.photobucket.com/albums/s142/thorney5/UC%20Bldg82/Bldg82.jpg>

Prince of Wales's Letters

Romantic letters said to have been written by the Prince of Wales to a former lover have been sold on eBay.

An anonymous buyer paid \$30,000 (£20,800) for six letters written by the Prince to a Canadian girlfriend in the 1970s and 1980.

Welsh born Janet Jenkins, was working at the British Consulate in Montreal in 1975 when she met the Prince.

Ms Jenkins sold the letters several years ago to Alicia Carroll, a Los Angeles-based royal memorabilia collector. Ms Carroll posted them on eBay in 2005, with a starting bid of £34,000, but was unable to find a buyer. When her firm went bankrupt earlier this month she placed the letters, with numerous other items, back on the internet.

The letters are written on official stationery and come with letters of authenticity from the seller.

Most Watched Items on eBay

A new site enables you to see the most popular items on eBay USA or eBay UK.

One search really interested me. It gives you the listings that are "most watched", which is the site's basic definition of most popular.

Hover over the tab headed "Top 500 Most Popular", and select Items from the sub-menu.

By default the list shown is based on ebay.com data. If you want to see UK information, simply click against UK, and the page refreshes itself with UK data.

Apart from simply reviewing the information, I found it interesting to re-sequence the list by "Purchases" i.e. the number of sales of this item. Some people are clearly doing pretty well on eBay, even in today's difficult climate.

<http://watcheditem.com/>

New Useful Publication from eBay

eBay UK are producing a new quarterly bulletin called "Online Business Index".

It's a quarterly survey of companies selling on eBay, and has some interesting information.

You can download the first edition from here:

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

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:-

[Let's hope we don't need this again in the UK.](#)

[Isn't that cheating?](#)

[You just never know!](#)

[Typist? Are you sure? Take a look at this eBay's ID.](#)

[Can anyone give me a single reason why I would want this?](#)

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.