



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.

After I had an enforced break last month due to a health issue - sorry about not producing a newsletter in May - I got back into the eBay saddle and wondered how it was weathering the various storms it has been facing.

Whenever I want impartial data, I turn to a company called Nielsen Online, possibly the best marketing and media information company.

I live in the UK and am therefore interested first in how eBay are faring here. Nielsen have just conducted a study to measure the popularity of Web Brands in the UK. By popularity, they mean how much time users spend on a website. They studied more than 7,000 websites to find the top 10.

Facebook came top with 13% of user's internet time, MSN/Windows Live and Google followed with 7% and 5% respectively.

eBay UK came in fourth place, with users spending 4% of their online time on the site.

The significance to me is that eBay is the highest place ecommerce / retail online site in Nielsen's findings. Amazon, for example, didn't make the top 10 list.

I then found that in the US, eBay's popularity seems to be growing too.

A leading US based internet market research company, comScore, said that searches for eBay increased by 20% in April - the largest increase for any website that month. Web users conducted 654 million searches for eBay during April.

As they say, "One swallow doesn't make a summer", but maybe there are sunnier times ahead.

Let's hope so.

Take care, and good luck in your eBay business.

Speak to you soon.



1. Thought for the Day

"Your range of available choices - right now - is limitless." Frederick Frieseke

2. The New View Item Page - Watch Out

You may have noticed that the View Item page is changing. eBay is working on a new design and randomly you could be given the chance to see the new version. If the page you're viewing has this notice at the top, you can try out the new look:

"We're changing eBay! See how we're making a change for the better. Switch to the new version of this page"

Don't worry, if you don't like what you see, you can switch back again.

The big difference between the old and the new page is that eBay separates the information it supplies from the information the seller supplies. By doing this it could mean that the seller's information might have scroll bars. It could also mean that parts of the seller's description might need to be changed. You can read more about the requirements here.

<http://pages.ebay.com/sell/newitempage/index.html>

There are a few things to watch out for as you switch over to the new format.

The first is that the About Me link is missing!

The friendly little "me" link that invites visitors to your About Me page is gone from the new View Item page.

Considering this is the place where sellers' rely on visitors to click over to their About Me page, this omission could be a disaster. The About Me page is the place where many sellers collect opt-ins, build credibility, link to websites - in other words, help to build their business!

Incidentally, we're not the only ones to have noticed that the About Me symbol disappears on the new View Item page. You'll find on the discussion boards an eBay moderator has taken note that people were complaining about the missing "Me" and said he would suggest that it be reinstated.

Now this may be a genuine eBay error....

Or it could be a deliberate ploy to minimise the number of ways in which sellers can entice visitors away from eBay!

We'll see what happens...

3. Best Match - Some Changes You May Have Missed

When eBay introduced the Best Match criteria for search returns last year, sellers had to shift focus to pay specific attention to DSRs, shipping, competitiveness, accuracy, and buyer satisfaction. The time to listing ending was no longer the main criterion for where your listing showed in search returns.

eBay has made a couple of changes to its search algorithm, but they've been introduced with a low profile.

First, "Time Ending Soonest" is back for auctions.

Whilst your DSRs still have significance on how the listings will be displayed, all else being equal, your item is pretty much guaranteed to show near the top of the listings for at least a few minutes right near the end of your auction... just like the old days!

Note that Time Ending Soonest doesn't factor into the Fixed Price items, it's only relevant for bid based auction listings.

If you're listing Fixed Price items, "Recent Sales" is the new magic ingredient for Fixed Price listings. A good Recent Sales score is the thing that's going to enable you to creep up those search results.

Recent Sales only count from the last 30 days, so you have to consistently sell for Fixed Price listings to do well.

How can you do this? eBay suggests you do the following to improve your Recent Sales:

1. List your multi-quantity inventory in Fixed Price with 30-day duration so there's time to build up recent sales.
2. If you use the "Good 'Til Cancelled" option your listing will automatically renew (for a fee) every 30 days. Recent Sales will be carried over.
3. If your multi-quantity listing sells out or expires, don't create a new listing - just add inventory and "relist". Recent Sales will be carried over.
4. When you relist or revise a listing, don't change the title, item condition or category as any of these actions will "reset" the item's Recent Sales. You can now change the price on relisting, and it won't reduce your Recent Sales score.

This is fine, but what if you're just starting out and your Recent Sales score is zero?

Well, you could consider selling your products under an auction listing to begin with.

You'll get the sales exposure you need from being at the top of the search through Time Ending Soonest. You'll accumulate Recent Sales points for sales made. You can then relist and switch over to a Fixed Price listing. As long as you don't change the title or main content of the listing your Recent sales score will transfer with you.

To keep your auction item near the top of the searches, use 3-day auction listings until you've built up some sales, and then do the Fixed Price relist switch.

As with all things eBay, there's no magic bullet. Hopefully you will find that this information can be turned into useful ammunition.

4. How to Know What They Want to Buy

Guest article by Lisa Suttora (WhatDoISell.com)

What will your customers buy next week? Next month? Next season? These are questions on the minds of anyone who sells online.

Each year more than 30,000 new products come into the U.S. marketplace alone. Add to that the millions of existing products available to sell, and knowing what your customers want to buy becomes all the more important.

So how do you know which products to stock in your online store? And even more importantly, how do you know which ones will sell?

Fortunately, anticipating what your customers will buy next doesn't require a crystal ball or a connection to the psychic trends hotline. What it does require is tapping into the minds of today's consumers. And it all starts with understanding what drives people to make purchases.

The why of the buy

The first step in figuring out what your customers will buy is to understand why they buy. When you understand why people buy, it enables you to determine what your customers will purchase next.

People buy things for two primary reasons: to fulfill a want or to satisfy a need. Products either solve customers' problems or bring pleasure to them. Your customers buy things to relieve stress, save time, save money, have fun, provide entertainment or improve their quality of life.

For example, a customer may need a pair of shoes to do some jogging, but he or she may want a pair of ultra-lightweight Nikes with the convenience of a built in iPod docking station. A customer might need a set of plain white sheets to outfit a bed (Cost: about \$49). But he or she may want a new set of 1,500 thread count Egyptian cotton sheets in azure blue with satin piping (Cost: about \$349).

Which of these will your customer buy? Which should you source? It all depends on who your customer is.

"Unless you know who your target market is—or who you want your market to be—you'll find yourself sourcing products without a sense of direction"

Who is buying?

No matter what you sell online, you're selling to a certain type of customer. We call this your target market.

Using the example of the sheet sets above, you could sell sheets to several different target markets:

- * Entry-level market
- * Moving up market
- * Luxury market
- * College market
- * Kids' market
- * Men's market
- * Bed and breakfast owners' market
- * Eco-friendly market
- * Summer-house owners' market
- * Traditionalist-minded market
- * Fashion-minded market
- * Interior design market

I bet you didn't realize there were so many target markets out there when it came to purchasing a set of sheets. Yet each of these customer types will be interested in purchasing a different type of sheets. They'll be interested in different quality levels, price points, colors and styles. And they'll buy accordingly.

Now, that doesn't mean these groups won't cross over and make multiple kinds of purchases. Those same luxury buyers may also purchase some traditional sheets for their summer home. But the styles, sizes, colors, models, brands, etc., of any product you sell will be determined by the likes and dislikes of your potential buyer (or the one you want to attract).

Unless you know who your target market is—or who you want your market to be—you'll find yourself sourcing products without a sense of direction. You'll make guesses as to what might sell, rather than focusing on what your customers want to buy.

For example, eco-friendly buyers may be looking specifically for sheets made from 100 percent renewable bamboo fiber, in earth colors like sage green and sea-glass blue.

On the other hand, luxury buyers may be looking for the 1,500 thread count Egyptian cotton sheet in a unique Iris purple to coordinate with their newly designed bedroom. Whereas the college student (or their parents) is looking to buy a set of sheets with a funky, edgy design to spiff up that college dorm room.

"In order to find out what your customers want to buy, you must live in the world they live in"

What are they buying?

What if you could hang out with your customers? Listen to their pre-purchase conversations at dinner? Look over their shoulders when they're surfing the Internet deciding what to buy? Discuss their reasons for selecting one brand or product over another?

While you can't make friends with and pal around with all of your customers, you can do the next best thing—and that is to frequent Idea Hotspots.

Idea Hotspots is a term I coined back in 2002 when I made the move from offline retail buyer to online retail entrepreneur. I've spoken about Idea Hotspots worldwide. In fact, for four years the concepts earned rave reviews in my Product Sourcing presentations at eBay Live!

And when you see the power of Idea Hotspots you'll see why you'll never be at a loss as to what your customers will want to buy again.

Idea Hotspots are anywhere that provides an unending source of new product ideas, market trends, developing niches and customer-centric conversation or information. They can be places, publications or even people.

These are the places your customers hang out—and you need to be there, too. Here are some of the most commonly used Idea Hotspots:

- * Books
- * Magazines
- * Radio interviews
- * TV shows
- * Shopping malls
- * Stores
- * Even your local coffee shop

Why frequent these places? Because in order to find out what your customers want to buy, you must live in the world they live in. Read what they're reading. Watch what they're watching. Spend time in the places they gather online and off.

Whether it's an online discussion forum or a meeting of the local crafting association, if you want to know what your customers want and what they are buying, hang out where they do on a regular basis.

5. A Gift From Me to You

Elsewhere in this newsletter we've talked about Best Match.

Here is a great ebook from Doug Feiring - it's called "Best Match Made Easy".

This is a 123 page epic and it covers most angles about exploiting Best Match to sell more on eBay.

You can download Doug's ebook from here:

http://www.workwinners.com/best_match/

6. News & Views

Looking For Products To Sell On eBay?

This is one of the best sources out there to find products which you can sell on eBay.

Go here, enter something in the search box, and I guarantee you'll be amazed by the results. I tried - garden chairs covers.

<http://success.alibaba.com/>

UK Junk Mail

If you're fed up with junk mail, spam emails and unrequested texts, this could help:

<http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/phones/no-more-junk>

Speaking Of The UK...

This may be of use to you if you're a mobile phone user in the UK. Here's how you can call 0800 numbers on your mobile, and not get charged.

<http://www.0800buster.co.uk/>

Struggling To Get Traffic To Your Websites?

If you have a website, and you can't get enough visitors to it, here is someone who can help.

He's called Mike Knight. I've used him, and he really knows his stuff:

http://www.workwinners.com/mike_knight/

By the way, he gives you an excellent no cost ebook, "999 Killer Internet Marketing Secrets".

Get Some Cash Back via eBay

If you buy on eBay, here's a way in which you can get some cashback for any eBay purchase you make.

<http://www.quidco.com/eBay-co-uk/>

How Are Your Reflexes?

Here's a coffee time game for you....

You can wait and wait, but you'll still be too slow!

http://www.onemorelevel.com/game/ball_reflexion

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:-

[Never miss the post again. Set up your own!](#)

[Maybe this would make a nice present for a loved one?](#)

[I'm sorry, but it made me laugh!](#)

[It's the "Pick up only" that confused me!](#)

[And now, something for the ladies...](#)

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.