



The eBay Auction Newsletter

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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.

If you're in the UK, did you enjoy the summer?

I can hear you answer from here, "What summer?"

Well, believe it or not, the big PowerSellers are already beginning to think about Christmas.

Yes, you heard me right - Christmas. It's just around the corner in terms of organising supplies and starting to get those offers on eBay.

For some PowerSellers Christmas represents a huge proportion of their annual business. And no wonder - more and more people have PCs and are buying online.

You can get your share if you plan and do it properly.

Why not start with the link I give you for the Autumn Fair International 09? It's in the News & Views section.

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

"We should be too big to take offence and too noble to give it."

Abraham Lincoln

2. It Will Pay You to Listen to Your Buyers

One of the secrets that smart eBay sellers use is to listen to their buyers.

I don't mean physically telephoning and talking to them, but did you realise that some of your buyers have already provided you with potentially valuable marketing intelligence. It's sitting there right now. You can access it today. But 99% of sellers won't.

What am I talking about?

The feedback left for you by buyers.

I know, I know. That doesn't sound like much of a secret, but bear with me...

Let me ask you bluntly, have you ever really looked at your buyers' feedback comments on your feedback page?

I don't mean glanced at a couple. I mean studied them closely. You should do, because hidden amongst them you could find comments that potentially show you the way to more sales.

Let me give you a couple of examples of feedback I have received:

"Brilliant product! We can't get that here."

"Thanks for offering this, our shops don't sell this anymore."

"Been looking for these for ages. Thanks."

Are you beginning to see what I mean now?

Feedbacks such as these are one-offs. They are not the typical mass produced variations such as "fast shipping, good seller" etc. nature. These comments are from individuals who are giving you true feedback about your product and your market.

In effect, these eBay buyers are telling you what you should be selling.

When you hear from a customer that you are selling a hard to find product, you know you have hit on something worth selling. It's fair to that if one customer can't find the product where they live, others may be having the same problem.

Your customers are giving you all kinds of helpful information absolutely free. Big retailers spend huge amounts of money in market research attempting to elicit this type of information from consumers. As eBay sellers, we have this information available at the click of a mouse, and using a little of our time.

Go and have a look at your feedback page. You never know what you might find!

3. Use This Fundamental Marketing Principle in Your eBay Business

There is a well known fact about marketing that you can use to help you in your eBay business. The fundamental fact about marketing I'm talking about is that it is easier and cheaper to sell your products to your existing customers who have bought from you before.

If you think about it, eBay is actually designed to enable you to sell products to people haven't bought from you before. eBay has put very little effort into encouraging buyers to buy from the same sellers over and over again. They do provide a favourite sellers list, but that's about it.

In the retail world, people tend to go back to where they bought before, provided that they had a good experience. Think about your own buying habits. Do you tend to buy your groceries from the same supermarket each week? Do you tend to go to the same hairdresser/barber each time you need a haircut? How about restaurants or take-aways, do you find yourself going back to the same ones?

We are creatures of habit. We find familiarity comforting. Unless we experience particularly bad service or poor value for money, whenever we want to buy we tend to give repeat business to the suppliers we've used before.

So, if on eBay you give your customers exceptional value for money and excellent service, the next time they need a product that you sell, they will have no reason to go to someone else. They know what to expect from you, but they don't know what to expect from someone else. They will feel more comfortable buying from you than from someone that they have no experience of. And if you have given good service and value for money, they will want to reward you by giving you more of their custom.

Indeed, once they have bought something from you, and they are satisfied with you and your product, they will have the confidence to spend MORE money with you on your other, more expensive, products.

So the "secret", if you can call it that, is that you should build a list of your happy eBay customers. This is effectively a database of people who have already bought from you and who will be happy to buy from you again because you provide exceptional value for money and excellent service.

Internet marketers use this principle all the time. They sell a cheap (even free) but GOOD QUALITY front-end product first to get as many people on to their list as possible. They then sell higher and higher priced back-end products to these same people.

The trick is that ideally these back-end products must be related to the front-end product, so that they will be of interest to those existing customers.

There is good profit in the idea of marketing back-end products for two reasons. Firstly, you can market these products direct to your existing customers (because you now have their contact details) without having to pay eBay's listing and final valuation fees, so your costs are lower. And secondly, these back-end products can be higher priced and so have higher profits.

For this system to work best, you will need a line of connected products of increasing value. Your growing list of happy customers provides you with your very own market making your business more viable and increasing your financial security.

Using this system means that you aren't completely reliant on selling only to new customers on eBay.

By adding this second string to your marketing bow, you should be able to make additional profits from your eBay investment.

4. Five Sneaky Photo Tricks (Guest Article)

Guest article by Sue Bailey

www.tamebay.com

Lots of online sellers put huge amounts of time, effort and money into getting perfect product shots. But photographs can do so much more than show off your product; they can be an integral part of your SEO and branding strategies too. Here are a few of my top tips for making your pictures work twice as hard online.

1. Make your first photo square

This is the picture that eBay use to generate the gallery picture, so it makes sense to stick with the square proportions of the gallery picture. That way, you get the maximum 80 x 80 pixel picture on-screen. A rectangular picture has its longest side shrunk to 80 pixels, with the shorter side kept in proportion, so your gallery picture will include white space just to fill the gap. That's white space you could be using to sell in!

2. Use eBay's free picture (even if you have your own hosting)

However good your web hosting is, you need to allow for the possibility that it could be down. You don't want your sales to grind to a halt because all your pictures have disappeared, so take advantage of eBay's free picture on every listing. That way, there'll always be at least one image for prospective buyers to look at.

3. Use alt text on images in your description

eBay listings can bring in sales long after they've ended: there's one obscure bit of kit that I sold for someone else a year ago, that's still getting me emails asking if I have any more, just because I'm the only link in Google that looks like it has something for sale. Use this to your advantage. SEO for eBay listings is a big topic, but one easy thing you can use is alt text; this is an extra bit of HTML which tells browsers more about what's in the picture. So for example, I might write:

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This allows Google and other image-indexing search engines to see that my picture is of 6mm red Czech round glass beads, and a Google Image Search should show them up. Anyone who sells in a category with a strong visual element - from Clothing to Crafts to Cars... - should consider doing this.

I'm struggling to find any figures on the current percentage of searches run using images, but in 2007, it was around 15% and increasing rapidly. As more and more internet users are on broadband, we're going to see increasingly that buyers use image search to browse products from multiple ecommerce sites at once, so it makes sense to make it as easy as possible for search engines to figure out just what's in your photographs.

4. Use meaningful filenames

Another way to attract Google to your images is to use filenames that also describe the image: red-beads.jpg means a lot more than 456454fdfr.jpg, after all. The same goes for folders for organising your images, and this is another good argument for having your own hosting rather than using freebies like Photobucket: <http://beads-and-crafts.tv/glass-beads/red-6mm.jpg> conveys much more information than a URL full of gumph like <http://img.photobucket.com/albums/v692/biddybid/findx.jpg>.

If you're going to use multiple words, Google's Matt Cutts has said that hyphens not underscores should be used to separate words, so red-beads.jpg not red_beads.jpg.

5. Use Gallery for branding

Gallery doesn't have to be solely about your product - or even contain a product shot at all. If, for example, you sell computer memory from the UK, you might choose to include the message that you're a UK seller, not a Far Eastern seller. Adding a "sale" flash to gallery pictures has worked well for me too. If you read #1 and thought "but all my product shots are naturally rectangular", then how about adding your shop name or a logo if you can make it work at such a small size.

And if you're a seller in Clothing, Shoes and Accessories, remember you'll have Gallery Plus for free from June, so start thinking about those super-sized pictures and how to take advantage of them now!

5. A Gift From Me to You

A well known strategy on eBay is called arbitrage.

In effect, arbitrage is a mechanism where you buy an item at price x on eBay, and then sell the same item back on eBay at price y .

The difference is your profit.

Clearly you need to know how to ensure you make profits at this. Here is the ebook, called "Auction Profits from Fat Fingers", that will show you:

http://www.workwinners.com/ebay_arbitrage/

6. News & Views

I Hope He Got A Guarantee

Richard Angel, 44, from Bournemouth, robbed a security man of £15,000 at gunpoint. He was apprehended, however, when his getaway car broke down. Mr Angel is considering suing - he bought the vehicle for £180 from eBay!

Online Haggling

A company called yldfire created a system called "Make an Offer", and they made it available to eBay sellers. They said that such auctions outperformed traditional auctions by 159 percent. Never one to miss a good thing(!), eBay being eBay then introduced its own version which replaced the third party Make an Offer system. eBay called their version, Best Offer.

If Yldfire are right about the enhanced performance, perhaps you should try Best Offer on some of your listings?

Talking Of Best Offers

If you're looking to buy from a seller who accepts Best Offers, here's a clever tool.

This shows you what Best Offers have been accepted by a seller in the past 90 days. Very useful!

<http://www.tamebay.com/tools/ebay-best-offers>

Looking for UK Suppliers?

If you've had little luck in finding UK wholesalers who can supply you with products to resell on eBay, this might help.

Autumn Fair International 09 takes place at the Birmingham NEC on September 6 to the 9th.

On their website, you will find loads of wholesalers with their contact details. It's worth a look. Go to the website and click on the Find Suppliers link...

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

Your Child Will Show You How To Do This

Here is a coffee time game for you to take a break from eBaying.

Try it yourself first. Then, if you're like me, you'll probably need the assistance of a little one to help you!

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

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:-

[Now there's an interesting specimen.... I think!](#)

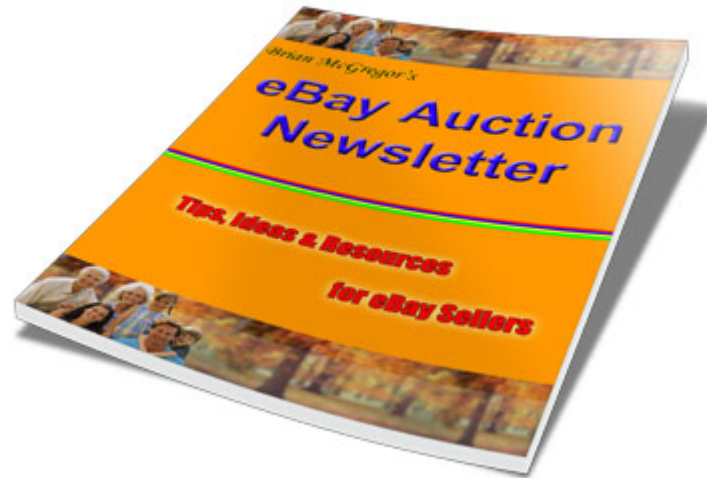
[Try counting these. The winner is the person who gets the right total.](#)

[We could all do with one of these.](#)

[I think I've seen this guy in our local hospital...](#)

[Any ideas?](#)

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 favourites.