



The eBay Auction Newsletter

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IN THIS ISSUE

- Welcome from Brian McGregor
 - 1. Thought for the Day
- 2. Sell on eBay or Amazon - Which is Best?
 - 3. eBay and Guerrillas!
- 4. Tips to Ensure a Perfect First Email to Your eBay CustomerShop/Store?
 - 5. A Gift From Me to You
 - 6. News & Views:
Interesting 8 Page eBay Ebook
Lightening Fast!
Only on eBay!
What's Hot on UK eBay
eBay PayPal Rule Change
Last Minute Bargains
Coffee Time
- 7. Someone's Auctioning What???

Proudly published for over 5 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.

At eBay's recent annual meeting, CEO John Donohoe said that auctions now make up less than half of all listings on the site. And he predicted it would drop to 30% by 2011. Just a few years ago, auctions made up around 70 percent of the listings on the site.

This is not by accident. Since Mr Donohoe took over, eBay has made a concerted effort to look more like Amazon, attract large merchants and focus growth on fixed price selling.

The very nature of the auction business is that it only works when there is a sense of community and a shared passion between buyers and sellers - the traits that made eBay successful. Given the direction in which they are now moving, I wonder if eBay are thinking about selling off their auction business.

But who would buy it?

Maybe someone like Yahoo would be a good buyer. Yahoo tried the auction business once before, but they couldn't really break in against eBay. But today it might work.

While we're talking about John Donahoe, I notice that he sold 16,667 eBay shares on April 28th at an average price of \$23.9 each. I wonder what he knows that we don't???

I wish you every success in your eBay business.

Speak to you soon.



1. Thought for the Day

"The average pencil is seven inches long, with just a half-inch eraser - in case you thought optimism was dead."

Robert Brault

2. Sell on eBay or Amazon - Which is Best?

Chances are that you've bought something on eBay, and maybe you've been shopping at Amazon's Marketplace for years. But which is the better choice for making money? That probably depends on what it is you're planning to sell!

eBay is definitely a great place to turn obscure stuff into cash. But it does take a little work - you have to take pictures, upload them, write an enticing description, and so on.

And yet... once you click on the button to make your listing go live, you may be required to do more work such as answering questions from prospective bidders or buyers.

Indeed you could invest hours of work for sometimes just a small profit.

Now let's look at Amazon. If you're new to selling on Amazon, you can only sell what is already on their Amazon marketplace. For example, when you're buying on Amazon and you find an item you like, there is a link which says "Have one to sell?" If you click on the "Sell yours here" button, you'll be guided through a few simple questions, mostly dealing with classifying your item by quality, writing a one-sentence description of its condition, deciding on a price, selecting shipping options, and you're done. (On Amazon UK, there's a menu item you click on called "Sell Your Stuff")

Amazon will do all the advertising for you. No need to upload photos, or even take them. No need for hypnotic copywriting fireworks. It's all done, ready to advertise your item. And you won't even have to think of your item again until someone buys it or until 60 days are up, at which time you have the option to renew it with the click of a button.

So it does look like Amazon might be easier to use to get started selling.

What about how much it costs to use these sites to sell items. Well, eBay charges listing fees. Amazon does not. But once the book sells, Amazon takes a hefty bite out of your profits. eBay does too, but the eBay bite is a lot smaller. And on eBay you have the PayPal factor. If you're paid via PayPal for your eBay item, you pay PayPal fee. So, if you don't sell your item, eBay costs more than Amazon. If you do sell your item, then all in all the total fees you pay more or less balance out between eBay and PayPal.

In summary, the pros for Amazon are no upfront fees, no complications during the listing process and a basically maintenance free listing until the item sells.

The cons for Amazon are that it can sometimes take a long time, even years, until an item sells. There are ways to cut that short, but basically, you better have some room for your items to hang out until it's time to send them to their new owners. You can also only sell things that are already in Amazon's catalogue, unless you're a Pro vendor.

The pros for eBay are that if your item sells, it sells within days, and you can sell pretty much anything you want.

The cons for eBay are the upfront work required to list, and the listing fees. Also, people go to eBay to find bargains and so you may not make as much as you'd hoped for your item.

So which one should you use?

Personally, I use both! There things that are better suited for one or the other. Mostly, I sell books and media stuff on Amazon, and everything else on eBay.

What's right for you will depend on what exactly you plan on selling. If you make the right choice for each item, however, you may well be able to reduce your workload and maximize your profits.

If you're new to Amazon, this is the best ebook I've found to show eBay sellers how they can take advantage of the Amazon marketplace.

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

3. eBay and Guerillas!

There is a covert figure who operates in a shadowy "legal grey area" as he fights a secret war in neglected corners of Bolton in north west England.

Steve Jones, aged 46, is a guerrilla gardener, one of a growing number of an international movement whose mission it is to brighten up towns and cities by illicitly planting flowers.

He operates by making "seed bombs" and throwing them onto pieces of land that he thinks could do with a splash of colour.

Mr Jones said: "I try to do it as often as I can. The only problem is that it's a bit of a grey area legally. Traditionally, the places targeted by guerrilla gardeners are owned by the local authorities. I'm not averse to stepping over a few lines - I'm bang up for it. Up to now no guerrilla gardener has ever been arrested."

If you're not familiar with them, seed bombs are made by mixing five parts powdered dry clay with one part compost and a mixture of seeds. Water is then added slowly - just enough to allow the mixture to be moulded into small balls, each about half the size of a Malteser.

When they are scattered, the hard mixture keeps the seeds safe from birds, rats and other animals until rain causes them to dissolve into the ground.

Flowers he uses include nasturtiums, sunflowers, forget-me-nots, ox-eye daisies, wild poppies, French marigolds and cornflowers. He is supported by a number of other "seed guerrillas", including his partner and an active group in Horwich. Mr Jones' ultimate aim is to recruit an army of hundreds of guerrillas all over Bolton, and to plant fruit and vegetables to grow food for people on low incomes.

He claims that the results of his work are noticeable in several parts of Bolton, mainly Great Lever and Morris Green.

Mr Jones makes about 200 seed bombs per day, which he scatters around Bolton and also sells to other guerrilla gardeners on eBay.

He said: "The main reason is to provide habitat for insects, in particular bees and other beneficial species. "We're going to brighten the place up and look after the insects with flowers, but we want to grow food as well."

A Bolton Council spokesman said: "We welcome, and would want to support residents getting more involved in looking after their local environment, as long as it is done responsibly and safely."

It isn't clear if this support includes Mr Jones and his growing army of guerrillas!

4. Tips to Ensure a Perfect First Email to Your eBay Customer

Quality merchandise at reasonable prices is the winning combination when attracting people to bid and buy on your eBay listings. But what can make you stand out from your competition is outstanding customer service. Customers will buy from you again if they liked the service that you provided them.

Where does service start in an eBay sale? It's the very instant that you email them after they have purchased your product. It is at that point when you have the opportunity to begin creating a long term customer from a one time purchaser.

Here are some tips to take into consideration when generating that first email.

eBay tip number 1: Let your new customers know when they are going to get their product. I realize that the timetable for shipping varies but do the best you can based on the shipping option that is being used.

eBay tip number 2: Provide your customer with the name of the item that they bought and the listing number. This is also another way to double check their order and to avoid unnecessary refunds. Yes, it is their responsibility to record this information but it is insurance on your part to go the distance and remind your eBay customer of these details.

eBay tip number 3: Be sure to make it clear and verify the closing purchase amount. Although this will be known, it is still nice to remind the customer of how much they have paid for your item.

eBay tip number 4: If you allow your customer to pay by cheque, let them know you will hold the product while waiting for the cheque to clear. Give them an idea of how long this will be.

eBay tip number 5: If you are allowing a cheque or money order payment, be sure to tell them your name and address and to indicate to whom the payment should be made payable.

eBay tip number 6: Request that your buyer include the item name and listing number with their payment.

eBay tip number 7: Confirm in your email that you will be shipping to the address shown on the eBay sale email, unless they inform you otherwise. Do not risk a bad feedback from a buyer just because you did not confirm the shipping address.

eBay tip number 8: If your buyer has already paid you via PayPal, leave them good feedback and let them know of this in the first email. This may help to ensure a smoother transaction and a good reciprocal feedback from your buyer.

eBay tip number 9: Last but not least, be sure to include your phone number for contact information when selling your eBay products. This may help expedite the process and also gives them a point of contact which could help to prevent problems from arising.

By using some or all of this suggestions you will be giving yourself the best chance to complete a smooth transaction with positive feedbacks all round.

5. A Gift From Me to You

One of the aspects of using PCs that always annoyed me was how Microsoft managed to create a monopoly position for itself in so many areas.

Most people have to use Microsoft Windows and Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser because they come pre-loaded on most new PCs and laptops. , Want all functionality of Microsoft Office applications, but don't want to pay the price.

Many people are steered towards Microsoft Office as trial versions are also usually pre-loaded onto those new PCs.

Well, if you don't want to pay several hundreds of pounds to Microsoft to use their Office products, here is an alternative.

It's called OpenOffice and it comes at zero cost.

OpenOffice contains a word processor, spreadsheet, presentation software, database and many other features. It will read Microsoft Office files.

More information here:

<http://www.openoffice.org/>

6. News & Views

Interesting 8 Page eBay Ebook Bay India - On the Right Track

I'd read about Mike Perry before - he's a successful businessman and entrepreneur. When I heard he had published something about using eBay to make money, I had to find it!

Here it is...

An interesting description in 8 pages of how to utilise the power of eBay.

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

Lightening Fast!

Here is another one of those tools that searches eBay titles for misspellings in the hope of uncovering bargains.

What I like about this one is that it is lightening fast!

Try it yourself and see.

<http://www.typo-shark.com/>

Only on eBay!

Mo Park from Chelmsford was trawling eBay looking for nothing in particular.

His eye caught an item listed as an "old film". Being a film collector, Mo was as interested in the battered tin than the 35mm nitrate film inside. So he bought it for £3.20.

The tin lay around the house for a few days before he decided to open it. Inside he saw the title "Charlie Chaplin in Zepped". I guess you're ahead of me now...

This was previously unseen footage of a Charlie Chaplin film. Experts believe the movie is a First World War propaganda piece designed to calm fears of airship bombing raids.

They pointed to legal controversy surrounding the film's producers, Essanay, as to why Zepped never saw wide circulation.

How much is it worth? Well, Mo has turned down an offer of £900,000 for the film by a private collector. Now that's what I call a find!

What's Hot on UK eBay

The weekly service I run called "What's Hot on UK eBay" reveals what products are being sold most successfully on UK eBay.

You can get the basic service of "What's Hot on UK eBay" for nothing here:

http://www.auctioninnercircle.com/whats_hot_on_ebay/

In addition to the What's Hot service, we also offer detailed analysis of individual sub categories on UK eBay. If you need to dig deeper than the top level category to find out what is selling best, this could be for you. More information here:

http://www.auctioninnercircle.com/whats_hot_on_ebay/special_reports.html

eBay PayPal Rule Change

An interesting battle has been fought in Australia whereby the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission wanted eBay to change the ebay.com.au website and payment policies to remove the requirement that sellers offer PayPal as a payment option.

They argued that by forcing sellers to offer payment for goods via PayPal it was potentially forcing out potential alternatives through ubiquitous use of the payment system (PayPal).

During discussions between the two parties, eBay agreed to make some changes on ebay.com.au. In effect eBay is now allowing other payment services the Australian site.

"The ACCC welcomes the action taken by eBay which gives eBay sellers further choice as to the payment system they use, while ensuring consumers are offered safer payment options by all eBay sellers."

I wonder if this might happen in any other eBay country sites?

Last Minute Bargains

If you're interested in finding last minute bargains on eBay, this site might of interest.

It displays eBay auctions which have attracted zero bids. You can ask it to show you auctions that are about to end - say 1 minute left - and have zero bids.

I found some incredible bargains when I searched for Sony items. It's also good fun!

<http://www.0bids.com/>

Coffee Time

Do you like doing sums? Here's an easy(!) game for you...

<http://www.kongregate.com/games/Aaants/mental-maths>

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.

[What a lovely item. It takes me back...](#)

[And this takes me back too!](#)

[Are you a Coronation Street fan?](#)

[Can you think of any likely candidates for this?](#)

[Fancy your own wind turbine?](#)

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 favourites.