



The eBay Auction Newsletter

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IN THIS ISSUE

- Welcome from Brian McGregor
 - 1. Thought for the Day
 - 2. Best Match in Practice
- 3. Automatic Unpaid Item Strike in Real Life
- 4. Items That Sell Well on eBay (Guest Article)
 - 5. A Gift From Me to You
 - 6. News & Views:
 - Getting Ready for Christmas
 - An eBay Shopping Basket? Yes Please!!
 - The Odd Couple: Alibaba Invites eBay for a Talk
 - UK Cyber Security Challenge Competition
 - It Takes All Sorts
 - BlackBerry & eBay Team up in Charity Auctions
 - Coffee Time
- 7. Someone's Auctioning What???

Proudly published for over 6 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.

According to Experian Hitwise in their report on 12th July 2010, eBay is the most visited shopping website in the United Kingdom receiving 21.32% of visits. Amazon takes the top spot in the US and comes a close second in the UK. The top five most visited shopping and classified sites by country and percentage of visits were:

United Kingdom

eBay UK 21.32%
Amazon UK 5.98%
Argos 1.86%
eBay.com 1.17%
Play.com 1.13%

United States

Amazon.com 15.47%
Walmart 5.62%
Target 4.19%
Best Buy 1.86%
JC Penney 1.86%

The message is that eBay remains a massive marketplace in which we can sell our items. Don't listen to the doubters!

I wish you every success in your eBay business.

Speak to you soon.



1. Thought for the Day

"A man wrapped up in himself makes a very small bundle."

Benjamin Franklin

2. Best Match in Practice

As we know, Best Match has changed the way in which your items get positioned in search return lists.

Here are some thoughts on the best way to list items to make sure Best Match treats them favourably in search returns.

1. Use the best keywords in listing titles

You should follow this rule of three: make the first three keywords in your item title those that you think your potential buyers are most likely to search with.

As your item title doesn't have to read like a sentence, this should be possible. For example, let's say I have a reproduction print of a painting called Autumn - 1900 by the artist John William Godward. You could use the 55 characters allowed to create a title such as:

Repro Print 'Autumn' by John William Godward

However, that doesn't use the keywords in the most optimal way.

Let's consider our rule of three. A far more effective way to list such an item would be to put the three most important keywords first. For example, this would be a more effective title for search purposes:

Godward Autumn Repro 1900 Print 140gsm John William 10"x6"

With regard to keywords, it pays to think like a buyer. Research into how your buyers use keywords to search for items, and use the rule of three to your advantage.

2. Use Item Specifics

eBay is developing the use of Item Specifics at great pace! It is clear that Item Specifics are going to become an increasingly important factor in the Best Match algorithm. After listing title and correct categorisation, it is Item Specifics which eBay say has the next most significant effect on Best Match.

eBay says, "List your item's features, attributes, and condition. We use these item specifics to help determine which ones are most relevant to the buyer's search. Don't skip important information, such as Condition. If your item is new but you don't specify it, buyers who narrow their search results to look for only new items won't see your listing."

Gradually you will find Item Specifics become mandatory on all listings, so it would be a good idea to start using them fully from now.

3. Don't keyword spam in listing titles

Keyword spamming means including words in your title that are not directly relevant to the item you are listing. For example, you are selling an unbranded rucksack. IN the absence of a brand name to promote, you come up with this:

Black rucksack fits iPod w/Sony headphones

eBay consider this to be against the spirit of listings. They cover this practice in Search and Browse Manipulation Policy. Breaches of this policy can mean any or all of the following penalties:

- listing cancellation
- forfeit of eBay fees on cancelled listings
- limits on account privileges
- loss of PowerSeller status
- account suspension.

Avoid keyword spamming in listing titles. It isn't worth the risk.

3. Automatic Unpaid Item Strike in Real Life

You may not be aware but eBay's new Unpaid Item Assistant is up and running.

If you've got the Unpaid Item Assistant turned on, are you sure you're using the correct settings? With the options of 4, 8, 16, 24 or 32 days before cases are automatically opened, is it more important for you to get cases opened and closed as quickly as possible, or would you rather give buyers longer to pay?

I had a real life example of this in action recently. A member of our staff bought an item on eBay but didn't notice that they weren't signed into eBay under their own eBay ID. In fact they bought the item when signed in under our company eBay ID. As far as the seller was concerned, the buyer was our company eBay ID.

The member of staff then logged in under their own eBay ID and bought the item (again). They emailed the seller and explained the situation. The seller said they would sort it.

We (the company) then received an Unpaid Item email from eBay about this item. We (the company) contacted the seller by phone and email and explained to them (again) what had happened asking them to cancel the transaction.

Then we received another automated email from eBay saying this was an unpaid item and we had 3 days to pay!

We spoke to eBay Customer Service and explained the situation. They said that only the seller could resolve this by cancelling the transaction. We said we knew that, but the seller didn't appear to be co-operating.

We contacted the seller yet again, told them what eBay had said and the seller said they knew they had to get this sorted (i.e. cancel the transaction) and that they would do so.

Today, we received an Unpaid Item Hit! Our eBay company ID (which is a Gold PowerSeller and Top Rated Seller account) will now be penalised in eBay searches.

The moral here is that if you are a seller, it is recommended that you check whether you have the automated Unpaid Item Assistant set to "on". If you have, there is zero flexibility in how your customers are being handled by eBay's rather harsh emails. For example, the default is that this process is begun four days after your buyer's purchase. If they happen to go on holiday for a few days or a week - tough!

You can find the unpaid the status of your unpaid item assistant under My eBay/Account/Site Preferences/Unpaid Item Assistant.

STOP PRESS

We again spoke to eBay Customer Service. This time the person on the other end of the phone was a little more sympathetic. They reviewed what had happened and, because this was our first Unpaid Item and we could prove we had tried on numerous occasions to get the seller to resolve this, she would remove the strike. Hurrah!!

She said that they had some discretion when the first Unpaid Item Hit occurred on an account, but she warned that they couldn't do anything about second and subsequent Hits.

So if this happens to you as a buyer, remember the one strike leeway.

4. Items That Sell Well on eBay

Guest Article by Matthew Read

This article details some well known as well as some more unusual items that sell well on eBay time after time. Some of these items may just be lying about in a basement, under a bed or even be on their way to the bin but could make some substantial cash for the owner.

Although all of these items sell well on eBay the seller should always make sure to list an eBay item in the best possible way with clear details, a good photo and a well written description and title. Even with the best selling items it is always good to make the most of the listing to optimize the selling potential.

Old Smoking Pipes on eBay

With eBay it is often the case that second hand items do not sell as well as new items but with smoking pipes it is often the other way around. Pipes can get better with age as they become worn in and buying second hand means the buyer does not have to take the time to personally wear it in.

Old smoking pipes can also be very valuable if the brand and edition is no longer being made or if it is just known as coming from a particularly good batch of pipes. Brands such as Dunhill, Dr Plumb and Falcon sell particularly well and pipes made of good briar and meerschaum.

Even though there are consistently over 5 pages of smoking pipes on eBay at anyone time most will sell and sell well. Basic pipes will fetch anywhere from £5-£20 each. Meanwhile rare pipes and particularly unique meerschaum pipes can sell for hundreds of pounds.

When listing smoking pipes it is ideal to show a photo of the bowl as well as the side of the pipe so buyers can see the condition it is in. It is also good practice to list the length of the pipe, the width of the bowl, the height of the bowl, the make, the brand and the material. Also make sure to note any scratches or noticeable blemishes on the pipe.

Lego on eBay

With Lego it is basically a case of how much for rather than whether or not it will sell. Individual Lego men and women, jumbled up lots of old pieces even old Lego instruction books with no pieces all sell well on eBay. Group lots of Lego people from the same set or complete sets of pieces and instructions do go for the most on eBay but really any Lego item will sell.

Most families have a box of old Lego and this will sell and should not be thrown away. As Lego has stuck to the same basic design buyers will buy any Lego as it will fit and build with what they already own. It can be separated into small lots making it easier to photograph and post or one big lot which saves time with separate listings.

However it is listed it will be very likely to sell and sell for a good amount despite being second hand and even very well used. In particular the castle themed sets of Lego with knights and cannons sell very well as does under water Lego, the old space sets and the newer Star Wars Lego.

Other Ideas

There are of course many items that sell very well on eBay and many things that can affect the level of money received. It may be that an item is not rare or valuable but it just happens to be that two bidders really want the item. It can also be that expensive items don't sell well as there are too many of them on eBay at the same time. Here are some more items that consistently sell well on eBay:

- * Shopping bags - More specifically designer shopping bags from shops such as Paul Smith, Vivienne Westwood, Prada and Louis Vuitton.
- * Old Programmes - From concerts, important football matches and West End theatre shows.
- * Star Wars merchandise - Any old figures, toys, posters and any other collectible with the Star Wars logo.
- * Sweets - If marketed as selling abroad a bag of sweets which costs £1 in the UK may sell for £5 in a country that doesn't have that brand or particular sweet.
- * Vinyl records - Vintage vinyl records can sell for tens even hundreds of pounds on eBay, with rare picture discs selling particularly well.
- * Electronics - In particular cameras, MP3 Players, iPods and Blackberry's sell very well on eBay.

5. A Gift From Me to You

John Thornhill has been an inspiration to me. He is a fellow UK north easterner and a few years ago was the king of how to sell ebooks on eBay.

John has moved on considerably since then. He's just released a controversial ebook entitled "Why You'll Never Succeed Online!"

If you've a desire to make some money on the internet, this 12 page document is well worth reading. You can download it here:

http://www.workwinners.com/john_thornhill/

6. News & Views

Getting Ready for Christmas

Are you getting ready for Christmas in your eBay business?

It might be useful if you reviewed how eBay was going to help you in the run up to the busiest trading period of the year.

<http://sellerupdate.ebay.co.uk/september2010/index.html>

An eBay Shopping Basket? Yes Please!!

In my opinion, one of the reasons why eBay will never achieve its potential is that it does not possess Shopping Basket technology.

On most retail websites customers expect to be able to add items to a cart and, when they finish shopping, to go to checkout and pay for all the items in one transaction.

As eBay's heritage is based on person-to-person single sales, there has never been a shopping cart facility.

Well it looks like that may be going to be remedied. That could be really exciting for sellers. More details here:

<http://sellerupdate.ebay.co.uk/september2010/testing.html>

The Odd Couple: Alibaba Invites eBay for a Talk

eBay and Alibaba have long been arch-rival in the e-commerce business world. Alibaba's Taobao unit overtook eBay's Chinese unit in large part by undercutting its commission fees, causing eBay to effectively withdraw from China in 2006.

This year Alibaba is hosting a guest speaker at the annual Internet Summit whose industry credentials are clear: John Donahoe, president and CEO of eBay.

The speaking engagement suggests the two companies lately have been acting in some ways more like partners than rivals. Alibaba's wholesale e-commerce site, AliExpress.com, now accepts payments from eBay's PayPal. Alibaba and eBay say they can work together and compete with each other simultaneously.

Maybe there are other tie-ups in the future between the two giants.

UK Cyber Security Challenge Competition

Security of the software and websites we use to run our business is important. The hunt is on for the UK's top cyber security professional.

If you think you have what it takes, you can take the challenge today. Try and crack the code on this page - I warn you it's a little more complicated than Sudoku:

<https://cybersecuritychallenge.org.uk/docs/cybersecuritychallenge.txt>

If you want to see how others have done, here's where you go:

<https://cybersecuritychallenge.org.uk/cipher.html>

It Takes All Sorts

You wanted an APC Back-UPS 600 backup battery. You saw one on eBay and you won the auction. You paid with PayPal and the item arrives.

You open the box full of excitement.

The story continues here....

<http://www.sadanduseless.com/2010/07/some-guy-bought-this-at-ebay-it-didnt-work/>

BlackBerry & eBay Team up in Charity Auctions

Fancy a walk on part in a Brett Ratner film?

Would you like a tour of the DreamWorks studio and meet Jeffrey Katzenberg?

How about a day on the set of Criminal Minds?

These are charity auctions which you can see here:

<http://cgi3.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewUserPage&userid=mptvfund>

Coffee Time

This game is about balance and poise. That's why I'm useless at it!

Make sure you skip the ad at the start.

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

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.

[Want to buy a nice business in Chester?](#)

[That's what I call a sweet listing.](#)

[Read all about it!!](#)

[How the "mighty" have fallen.](#)

[How to get 6,035 feedbacks yet only post on Saturdays!](#)

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.