



The eBay Auction Newsletter

Issue 4908 - August 31, 2010

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Proudly published for over 6 years by Brian McGregor

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Or tell them to grab their own copy free from:

<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.

eBay have announced a major revamp of the eBay community pages. This will include new discussion boards, videos, social media integration and updated answer centre and groups. The new community hub will go live on the 8th September for eBay UK and Ireland.

Be prepared for the discussion boards be "restructured and compressed to reflect the key topics of discussion by members". Reading between the lines that implies some boards are likely to be closed, merged or combined into the new boards.

One major change will be that if you have a feedback score of 10 or less you'll be limited to ten posts per day on the new discussion boards. So, if you've got a current posting ID with less than 10 feedback there's time to make some quick trades on eBay to ensure you can carry on participating from the 8th September.

You can see the full announcement here:

<http://www2.ebay.com/aw/uk/201008.shtml#2010-08-25131253>

By the way, this is your last chance to get the discount we negotiated on the wholesale resource I emailed you about a couple of weeks ago.

Trying it is free. If you like what you see, use 6DCEC as the Coupon Code to get our special discount before 1st September. Here's the link:

http://www.workwinners.com/richards_offer/

I wish you every success in your eBay business.

Speak to you soon.



1. Thought for the Day

"Reading without reflecting is like eating without digesting."

Edmund Burke

2. Good Communication Equals Positive Feedback

One of the keys to encouraging your buyers to leave you positive feedback is by using good communication. In fact good communication can help avoid many negative feedbacks.

What do we mean by communication? This is any information that you provide to prospective buyers via your listing and in emails and via eBay Messages. Let's consider some of this activity...

1. Preventing Misunderstandings

Good communication helps to avoid misunderstandings. Take delivery - spell out in your listing exactly how long your buyer can expect to wait for their item to be delivered to them. For example, if surface shipping takes six to eight weeks but your customer hasn't been made aware of this they may feel that your service is slow and poor or even that they have been cheated. So, make sure you spell out delivery time frame.

Is your refund policy clear?

Is your product clearly and accurately described in your listing?

Does your product quality meet or exceed the expectations created by your listing?

2. Prompt Response to eBay Messages and Emails

Your customers and prospective buyers will communicate with you in eBay Messages and via email. Your response to these communications will be used by them in assessing your performance as an eBay seller.

If your response is slow, this will be noted by the customer or prospect as an indication that your customer service is less than the best. If you respond slowly more than once to the same person, then you'll probably earn yourself a negative or neutral feedback and possibly poor DSR rating.

Conversely, if you always respond promptly to eBay Messages and emails this can only help towards you earning a positive feedback and top DSR marks.

One further point about Messages and emails you write - make sure you always come across as being helpful. I would say that if you're running a business selling on eBay, then there is never a time when you should create anything other than helpful Messages and emails. Even though you feel that the person deserves to be "blasted", don't be tempted to go there. You can be the only loser.

In my eBay business I take pride in converting the complaining buyer into a long term customer.

3. Encourage Queries

Always state in your listings if they have any questions about this item, please Message or e-mail you.

Whenever anyone contacts you via Messages or by email, this is not an imposition. Treat it as an opportunity for you to sell! Think about it - companies spend millions on advertising trying to get prospective customers to get in touch with them. And here on eBay, you're getting exactly that for pennies! So use those communications wisely.

4. Reversing Negative Feedback

As we've discussed, good communication can help in avoiding receiving negative feedback. However, what if you do receive negative feedback and you feel it is unreasonable, is there anything you can do about it?

Under certain very limited circumstances (such as an extortion attempt), eBay itself might reverse negative feedback unjustly given to you. In most cases, however, eBay won't interfere in the feedback process.

You can use eBay's "Mutual Feedback Withdrawal" procedure. This is where both the buyer and seller agree to withdraw negative feedback from each other. The negative feedback will be removed from both of you thus improving both feedback ratings.

In summary, good and prompt communication can prevent problems from arising and reduce the likelihood of receiving negative feedback. Good communication also enables you to demonstrate your professionalism and helpfulness and even earn you additional sales.

3. Search Engine Optimisation for eBay

Guest Article by Trevor Ginn

Despite 50% of online purchases being researched via a search engine, most eBay sellers ignore the potential of search engines to drive traffic to their listings. By optimizing your eBay presence your products could improve their rankings in the search results on major search engines and boost your sales.

High rankings can drive huge amounts of traffic to your products. Some companies spend millions search engine optimizing their sites but even with limited resources it is still possible to apply techniques which will increase the rankings of your eBay shop and listings.

How do search engines work?

When looking for a product a customer visits a search engine and enters a search term or keyword for which the search engine produces a list of results which it considers to be most relevant. It is by understanding how this list of results is produced that your eBay page can be optimized.

The ranking of a web page for a keyword depends on three things:

1. The links going to that web page

Search engines consider an inbound link as a vote of popularity. Google, for example, gives each web page a score of 1 to 10 (called a pagerank) depending on the number and origin of inbound links. For a given search the page with the higher pagerank will appear higher in the list of search results.

2. The position and frequency of the keyword on the web page

When producing results for a search term, search engines will rank your pages based on the keywords they contain and their prominence on the page.

3. The content of the page's HTML tags

The search engine also looks at the content of the title and Meta tags of the page's HTML code.

When listing on eBay you have direct control over the content and hence the keywords you include. You can, however, only access the page tags indirectly, through configuring your shop and listings.

How to optimize your eBay Shop and listings

Step 1: Choose Your Keywords

The first stage of search engine optimization is to choose the keywords for which you would like to be found.

Choose more general keywords for your eBay shop, and product specific keywords for your individual listings.

To select keywords put yourself in the shoes of your customers and consider what keywords you would enter if you were looking for your products. eBay shop traffic reports are useful as they contain the search terms that users are entering in order to find your listings. You can also use Yahoo's keyword tool for popular web search keywords and eBay Pulse to find popular eBay searches.

For example a PDA seller might choose Palm, Handheld and PDA as keywords for their shop. For the listings they also use the keywords referring to the item model number and features.

Step 2: Optimize your eBay presence

Repeating a keyword in a number of different places such as your shop URL, title and item description will increase the search engine's perception of how relevant your webpage is to a particular keyword. However, be careful not to go overboard - this is known as 'keyword spamming' and is penalized by the search engines. As well as containing keywords, your description should be clear and readable.

Your shop name.

Your shop name appears in your eBay shop's URL and ideally it should contain your most important keywords.

For example a bike shop seller might choose 'Mountain-Bikes-UK' which would give a shop URL of <http://stores.eBay.co.uk/mountain-bikes-uk>

Your item title, description, shop custom pages and about me page.

The title which you give your product is very important and your product description and custom pages copy should also include your keywords.

Search engines attach the most importance to words in titles and bolded words, so ensure that you have placed your keywords prominently.

For example a good item title would be "Palm T3 Handheld PDA New Boxed", rather than "Palm T3 New Boxed" as the latter can not be found for searches for PDA or handheld.

Your eBay ID.

Try and choose a memorable and individual eBay ID, as this will help customers find your eBay presence by searching. For example an eBay name like "PDA-Wonderland" will be easier to find in Google than "Online-Deals".

Your shop keywords.

In the Manage my Shop area eBay enables the selection of search engine keywords. These keywords appear in the "title" tag for your Store pages, and so it is important that you specify relevant keywords for each page. Also make sure to include your keywords in your Store's description, as this appears in the description meta tag of your eBay Store pages.

Reviews and guides.

eBay Reviews and Guides are a great way of driving traffic to your listings, from both inside and outside eBay. As eBay is a major website, content is well indexed by the search engines and articles containing your chosen keywords, linked to your eBay shop have the potential to drive traffic to your listings.

Step 3: Build links to your shops and listings

To improve the pagerank of your eBay shop, create as many links to your eBay shop as possible. Encourage your business partners to link to your eBay shop and you should enter your shop into online directories such as Listmystore.com. Do not ignore the potential of links within eBay to boost your pagerank. Always link to your eBay shop from your listings and also from all of your Guides or Reviews.

Step 4: Track your performance

Once you have optimized your eBay presence it is important to constantly track your performance and make improvements. All eBay shop sellers have access to traffic reports which allow you to see the keywords used to find your listings and the search engines that are driving traffic to your shop. If you wish to see more in depth statistics, use Sellathon which can give you the traffic data for individual listings and pages.

Conclusion

eBay has set up a section that describes the basics of optimizing your eBay Store for search engines (<http://pages.ebay.com/education/SEO-introduction/index.html>). Use eBay's tips along with this article to optimize your Store. If your products show up in shopper's search results on Google, Yahoo and other search engines, it's bound to help increase sales from your eBay Store.

4. eBay Sellers - Market Those Listings

Are you an eBay seller? If you are, your goal is probably to make as much money as you can by selling products on eBay. Unfortunately, there are now thousands, if not millions, of individuals who are doing the same thing. This is a lot of competition!

However, even with competition, you should still be able to make a profit when using eBay, particularly if you can devote a little time to extra marketing of your listings. What do we mean by marketing your listings?

Simply listing your items on eBay is enough to get those eBay items exposure within the eBay marketplace. But you may want to think about taking it a step farther. There are a number of different ways that you can go about extra marketing of your eBay items without having to spend any money.

One of the best ways to market your eBay items is by joining the eBay Community Discussion Boards - or Discussion Forums as they call it on ebay.com. When you talk with other eBay Community members your eBay ID is displayed whether you start a discussion topic or respond to an ongoing discussion.

On ebay.co.uk, there's a View Items link alongside the person's eBay ID which takes you straight to the listings of the person who's entry you're reading on the Discussion Board. With ebay.com, you click on the eBay ID which takes you to that person's MyWorld page, which contains a link to their listings.

If you contribute to the eBay Boards or Forums you will find it is not uncommon for other members to click through to your listings. This may be out of curiosity, but if your entry is really interesting, helpful, or both, you will get a number of eBay members viewing your listings.

Another relatively easy way to get extra exposure is to contribute to forums outside of eBay. There are forums and message boards on just about any subject you can imagine. If you locate a forum which is connected to the type of products you offer on eBay, you can contribute to the discussions on that forum. The benefit is that most forums allow members to have a signature attached to their forum comment and which can contain a live link. This live link can be, for example, to your eBay Store/Shop, to an individual category page of your Store/Shop or to an individual listing page.

Here are a couple of directories of forums to get you started:

<http://www.big-boards.com/> - shows those forums with the most numbers of members

<http://www.theforumfinder.org/> - probably the biggest directory of forums

Another very simple way to promote your other eBay items is by including a "please checkout my other eBay listings" link on all your item description pages. As with the marketing tactics mentioned above, this is easy to do and is free.

5. A Gift From Me to You

Here's a useful document I came across recently.

It's by eBay and it's called Advanced Selling Guide.

Although it's based on ebay.com, but the information is equally relevant no matter what eBay country you operate from.

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

6. News & Views

Alibaba Strikes Again - Who's Next?

In the last newsletter I reported that Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba had acquired U.S. e-commerce company Vendio. Now we hear that Alibaba have bought Auctiva, a company that develops eBay auction management software.

Alibaba says that the Auctiva's platform will be integrated with Alibaba's online marketplace AliExpress, allowing users to list product in eBay. The company says the combination of both the Auctiva and Vendio acquisitions brings more than 250,000 new customers to the Alibaba.com family of products.

Who's next for Alibaba? A certain online auction company perchance?

Shopping Basket Update - Try it Yourself

I mentioned eBay UK's Shopping Basket experiment in the last Newsletter. If you'd like, you can try it for yourself and see what you think. All you do is opt in here:

http://www.workwinners.com/eBay_Shopping_Cart/

Do some searches and add a few items to your Shopping Basket. You can go to Checkout to see what it looks like, but don't complete the Checkout unless you really want to buy the items. These are live listings.

You don't need to buy anything to see how it works and you can opt out of the Shopping Basket experiment at any time. Whenever you go to the Shopping Basket page, there's an opt out link right at the top.

Give it a whirl. It's fun!

Changing Item Condition "New" - Deadline Passed

If you haven't updated your Item Specifics to reflect eBay's policy on "New" items, you should do so now. You can read about why here:

http://www.workwinners.com/eBay_File_Exchange/

If you haven't changed yours yet, here is a video from those excellent people at Tamebay on how to do it in bulk:

<http://tamebay.com/2010/08/how-to-edit-ebay-item-condition.html>

Last Chance Could be Your Chance

UK based auction tools provider Auction Lotwatch announced the release of a free auction tool - lastchancebid.com.

It's designed for buyers looking for bargains. It homes in on auction lots with no bids and with minutes to go on the auction.

Covering 14 eBay country sites, this could be a really useful tool if you want to find products from eBay to resell at a profit.

<http://www.lastchancebid.com>

What a Great use of eBay

Anne Van Houten has turned her furniture pastime into a business.

Van Houten refurbishes and reupholsters furniture pieces at competitive prices.

"I obtain used furniture - what I like to think of as the forgotten pieces of furniture, things nobody wants because they're worn out but were at one time very nice. I bring them back here and not only reupholster them, but I go over them with a fine-tooth comb, make sure they have enough padding, that the springs and the frame are in good condition. I refurbish the entire piece" she said.

Van Houten then lists the pieces on eBay. "Given the times, conservation is what we're all leaning toward," she said. "I like to offer something reused at a reasonable price, something a little different than you'd find on a furniture store's showroom floor. I try to keep the overhead really low, and I believe in stimulating the local economy. Almost all the fabric and furniture pieces I've bought in this area."

But it's Only \$3.8 Billion

XPRT Ventures LLC holds patents filed in 2001 covering e-commerce payments and methods.

They approached eBay at that time because the inventors believed their systems would improve upon eBay's existing payment system and hoped to enter into a business agreement.

An oral agreement of confidentiality was made with an outside attorney representing eBay, and the inventors provided the patent applications. Both parties later signed a written confidentiality agreement.

Less than one year after XPRT first approached eBay, the company announced that it was acquiring online payment company PayPal.

eBay filed its own patent application in April 2003 covering the same concepts covered by the plaintiff's applications. eBay's patent application has been rejected four times because of XPRT's existing application.

XPRT hit eBay Inc. with a \$3.8 billion patent infringement lawsuit on July 13th, 2010. In addition to six claims of patent infringement, the suit includes one count each of misappropriation of trade secrets, unjust enrichment and conversion.

Watch this space (carefully).

Coffee Time

If skiing is your thing, you'll love this. And you might know what you're doing, unlike me!

<http://www.onemorelevel.com/game/solipskier>

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.

[Who says size doesn't matter?](#)

[I guess it must be warm where he comes from!](#)

[I like the write up on this one.](#)

[Is this how Picasso started?](#)

[Better than a box of Swan Vesta matches!](#)

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.