

e-Wealth Secrets

By

Terry Mason

Lesson One

Disclaimer: The information contained in this course is given for entertainment purposes only. Whilst it is accurate to the best of our knowledge, neither the author, nor the publisher accept responsibility for the way in which this information is used, or the accuracy of such information. This is a course on making money from the Internet. It is up to the individual always to ensure that they do not invest more money in a business than they can comfortably afford to lose. All business carries some risk.



Introduction

Welcome to e-Wealth Secrets.

The purpose of this course is to help you make money – real money – on the Internet by working part time (or even full time if you wish) just by using your computer from the comfort of home.

All you need is an average PC with Internet access. You don't need any other special equipment, special skills, experience or prior knowledge to operate any of these projects. None of them require a full time commitment, unless you want to. You can operate any of them in a few short hours each week, just logging on now and again whenever it suits you. *Using these methods, you can even make money on the Internet while you sleep!*

The Internet has something of a reputation for 'here today-gone tomorrow' opportunities. *You won't find any of them here.* All my projects are well established and proven - in most cases projects that someone, somewhere is already using to make money right now. In each case I'll explain how they work, how to start and how to run them. And I'll reveal all those little-known secrets that experienced online profiteers use to make them succeed.

The great thing is, none of these Internet projects require you to set up a business as such. You won't need to rent an office or employ staff, and you won't be swamped with bureaucracy and paperwork. They're all quick and efficient projects that are very easy to start and very easy to run.

Most important of all, although many of these Internet projects may be small they can be exceedingly profitable - profitable out of all proportion to their size. While some of them are ideal for making an extra £20 or £50 here and there others have potential to earn you hundreds or thousands - still working part time from home!

Read through these projects carefully right now. Choose the one you like best (or more than one if you wish). Then simply switch on your computer, go online, and you'll be able to start making money on the Internet really soon!

Best Regards

Terry Mason



The e-Wealth Surfer's Guide to the Net

Essential Insider Information to Help You Make More Money Quickly, Easily and Safely

Before you get started on your new project, a word of caution.

Remember that the 'rules of the road' for using and making money on the Internet are still evolving. In many cases, there are no rules! Millions of companies and individuals do business on the Internet every day and most of them are honest. But there are some who use the Internet as a way to offer substandard products and services, or to commit fraud. So, carrying out any kind of moneymaking activity on the Internet should always be approached with care and common sense. This information will help you minimise the risks – and maximise your profits.

Know Who You're Dealing With

When you're dealing with a High Street company you know where to go if you have problems. But on the Internet all you may have is a web address. It's often the case that the best organisations to deal with online, are organisations that also have an offline presence. Try to find out if there is a street address and phone number behind the website and then check if they're real.

If the website you're dealing with isn't well known then carry out a search on it using any search engine and look for information, reviews or warnings placed on the forums or websites by other users.

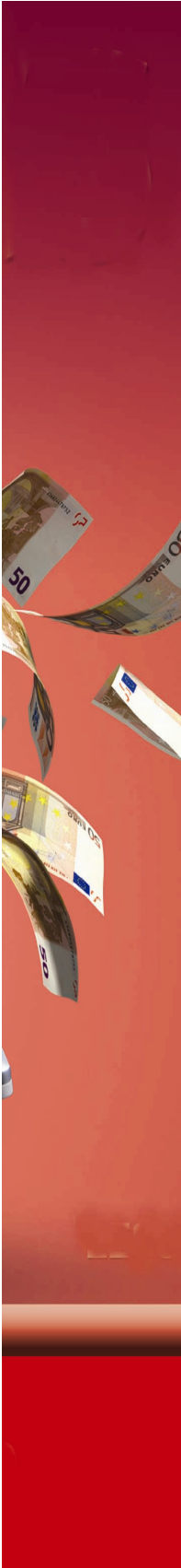
What Laws Apply?

Organisations and people you deal with on the Internet may be – and often are – based in another country. So, it's often unclear which country's laws apply to your transactions. It may be the country where the company is located, or just where their server is located, or somewhere different entirely!

Look in the website's fine print under 'Legal Notices' or similar for information on this. And be on your guard here: Some organisations, even reputable ones, try to specify that contracts with them are regulated by the laws of countries (or particular US states) whose laws give consumers less protection than others.

Do You Need Any Permission?

As far as legal experts can determine, only require a licence or permission to sell a product and carry out certain activities online if you also require a licence to sell or carry them out offline. However, again, it's often unclear which country's laws apply to



Internet activities. Check before you start a new project. For example, businesses involved in the sale of alcohol, tobacco, providing financial services, health services or gambling services require a licence in some countries but not in others.

Also remember that age limits covering certain activities (such as gambling or entering into contracts) vary from country to country, eg. 18 in some countries or 21 in others. Again, double check if in doubt.

Terms, Conditions and Contracts

Different websites use different ways of displaying legal terms and conditions. Some are more conspicuous than others. You might find a page containing ‘Legal Terms’ or ‘Disclaimers’, but not always. Some sites display legal terms on a *click-wrap screen* which requires you to click on a button that says ‘I accept’ the terms, even if you cannot see them. Courts in some countries have held that clicking will indicate that you agree to the terms, while others have held that it doesn’t!

Be careful about dealing with legally binding documents (eg. contracts) online. The legal standing of electronic documents created using a so-called ‘digital signature’ is not yet established. It’s sensible to produce, print out and keep *hard copies* of order forms, invoices, contracts and terms and conditions and keep them on file. Remember that online copies of this important documentation can easily be changed by the other party.

Consumer Protection

For sites based within the UK, consumer protection rules are more rigorous for Internet purchases than for offline purchases. However, if the site is based outside your own country the risks are always higher. Some countries have better consumer protection than the UK, others have worse. So, it’s best to observe the long established principle of *caveat emptor* – buyer beware!

Website Security and Passwords

Websites which require you to transfer data (such as credit card details) should always use Secure Sockets Layer (SSL), or similar technology to encrypt the information that you send. Check if the web address on the page that asks for your information begins with ‘https:’ instead of ‘http:’. If so, this security is in place.

Many Internet sites require you to have a password to access them. If so, use a different password for different purposes, e.g. don’t use the same password for an auction site and banking. The best passwords are *not* your address, birth date, phone number, or recognisable words. Choose at least six random letters and numbers. An easy way to create a memorable password is to take the first letter of each word in a song lyric and add some numbers. For example, ‘hthasdec25’ might relate to ‘Hark The Herald Angels Sing’ – a popular Christmas carol!



Financial Transactions

Credit cards are the best way to protect yourself when you make online transactions, especially if you have problems with fraud, theft of credit card details, unsatisfactory goods or non-delivery. In these cases, assuming you notify the credit card company promptly, your personal responsibility is limited by law. Note that most credit cards offer superior protection in this regard than debit cards.

But remember that when you're using a credit card to pay for online transactions you are running up a debt, whether you need to borrow money or not. So, always keep an eye on your outstanding balance. Using a separate credit card for your online business, rather than your own personal credit card, makes it much easier to manage your finances. You can also buy really neat prepaid 'credit cards' from garages and corner shops and on the Internet. These are pre-loaded with £10, £20, £50 or whatever you pay, and you use them exactly like a regular credit card but without any risk of credit card fraud. Once you've used all the money, the card expires.

Fake Goods

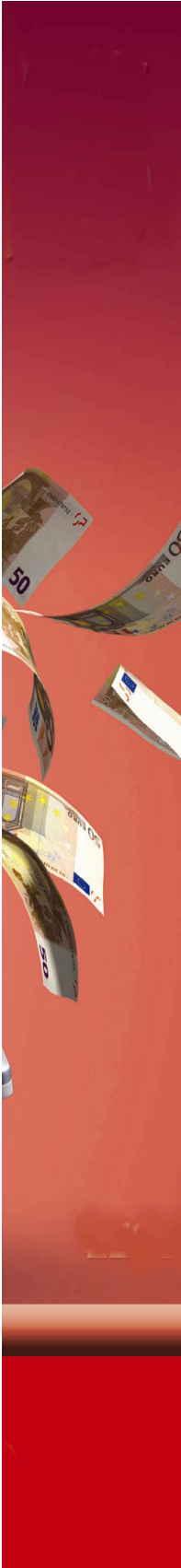
A recent consumer report revealed that you're more likely to encounter fake goods in online transactions than offline ones. In these cases, not only are goods likely to be of poor quality, but you may well be committing an offence in one or more countries by reselling or even buying them. A good way to detect a fake is to look at the price and compare it with similar items being sold elsewhere. If the price seems *excessively* cheap, be suspicious.

In case of high value items, e.g. jewellery or software, try to obtain the original sales receipt/invoice, manufacturer's documentation, or a serial number which you can check out with the manufacturer. Any item you buy to resell will be worth more if you have this, known as '*provenance*'.

Online Fraud

Several types of fraud attach themselves to Internet activities – I'll alert you to some of them as we go along – but one you need to be particularly careful of if you're doing a lot of business online is *phishing*. Phishing is a scam that uses e-mail or pop-up messages asking for credit card numbers, bank account information, passwords, or other confidential information. The message will claim to be from a business you deal with – for example, your Internet service provider, bank, or online payment service – perhaps telling you that you need to 'update' or 'validate' your account. The phishers direct you to a website that looks just like the legitimate organisation's site, but isn't, where they hope you will provide them with your personal information.

Be wary about responding to e-mails, phone calls or even letters from anyone who asks for confidential information, even if they claim to be from a company



you are doing online business with and even seem to have quite a lot of details about you already.

Try Not to Get Addicted...to Making Money!

According to some medical experts surfing the net can be addictive – and specific online activities like gambling can be even more so. They claim that because Internet surfing is a solitary activity which requires a degree of concentration, surfers develop ‘a distorted sense of time and value’! Some of these experts suggest that you shouldn’t spend more than 45 minutes at any one time surfing the net. The good news is that, with many of these projects, you won’t need to!

Make Money from...Internet Auctions & Internet Stores (Part I)

How the Internet Has Transformed the World’s Richest Business

Buying and selling goods and services is, of course, the cornerstone of most successful businesses - no wonder it has been called *the world’s richest business*. Tesco, Asda, Dixons and B&Q are all examples of giant businesses earning many billions of pounds a year yet all they do is simply buy, and sell.

Until now, however (assuming you aren’t a supermarket or major retailer), it’s always been very difficult to make serious money from buying and selling in a small way, based at home...because a small business normally means small profits. You could, of course, always buy and sell by sticking a postcard in the local shop window, or using your local freeads. But no one ever made a fortune like that.

Now, however, the Internet has changed the world’s richest business for ever. With the advent of simple, cheap Internet auction and Internet store sites it is relatively easy to make a lot of money from buying and selling, even from a small business working part time from home.

In the last 12 months alone buying and selling on the Internet has become an extremely lucrative way to make an excellent part or even full time income for yourself. *According to ‘The Sunday Times’, 150,000 Americans already make most of their income from doing just this!*

Of course, to make a big profit from a small business you need to know exactly what you are doing, be well organised and determined. In this lesson, I’m going to show you exactly how you too can make excellent profits buying and selling on the Internet, using famous sites like eBay, and other exciting auction and store sites you’ve probably never heard of.



Junk or Treasure...How and Why Does It Work?

Many people ask how and why it is possible to make a lot of money just by buying and selling ordinary, everyday items on the Internet.

The answer is simple: Have you ever heard the saying ‘*One man’s (or woman’s for that matter) junk is another man’s treasure.*’? In other words, what one person places very little (or even no) value on, another will value very highly. This is called *divergence*, i.e. different people place a different value on the same things at different times, whether or not they are ‘in the zone’ to purchase, or enjoy that product or service, at the time.

Think of the last time you really wanted something. That is, really wanted it. Whether it was a mobile phone, a games console, a designer outfit, bracelet or just a CD you wanted. Remember how you were willing to pay *almost anything* to get it? How the price, no matter how high, seemed a snip? Maybe even the fact that you couldn’t really afford it made it all the more desirable!

A few months later, after you’ve bought and enjoyed the product or service, it’s never quite as desirable is it? You probably didn’t use it quite as much as you once did, or used it as much as you thought you would. Maybe you even put it in a cupboard and forgot about it. Maybe you even gave or threw it away. Am I right?

Yet someone somewhere wants that item as much as you originally did and will be happy to pay good money for it. That’s why, to give a realistic example, you can buy a digital camera for as little as £10 and sell it for £100!

Of course, you’ve always been able to buy and sell goods in this way. But the Internet, through auction and store sites, has made it possible to do it on a big scale, cheaply, quickly and most of all globally – so that you really can make serious money from what is essentially a small business.

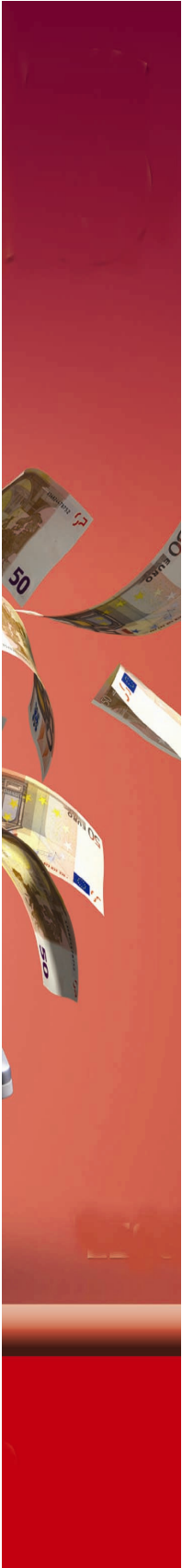
At it simplest, buying and selling on the Internet just involves choosing a suitable product, listing it on suitable sites, selling it and then sending it off to the buyer. However in this course I will show you all the techniques, strategies and tips you need, to help you do this successfully and professionally.

Ways to Sell Easily on the Internet: Auctions and Stores

There are two main ways to sell successfully on the Internet – *auction sites* and *store sites*. If you’re not already familiar with these operations here’s a quick explanation of what they are:

What’s An Internet Auction Site?

An Internet auction site is a site where both private and trade sellers can advertise (known as *listing*) a product or service they wish to sell on a ready-



made site. People wishing to buy that product or service can then bid for it electronically over a specified period of time. At the end of that period the product or service is sold to the highest bidder. The process works just like a conventional auction except that it is conducted on the Internet and, normally, spread out over a period of days.

Internet auction sites allow sellers and buyers from all over the world, no matter where they are located, to sell their products to each other. No special software or technical skills are needed as the auction takes place within the framework of an existing site. The site charges a small fee on each transaction.

What's An Internet Store?

An Internet store or shop is *significantly different* from an Internet auction, yet is *not the same* as a regular store or shop you might find on the Internet. Several auction sites have a dedicated store/shop. For example, eBay has eBay Shops while Amazon, the famous Internet bookseller, has zShops and Marketplace.

Internet stores are a special kind of site where sellers can show you all of their listings and tell you more about their business, through their own customised pages. Most stores include 'shop inventory' items – additional fixed price items that are not sold in auctions.

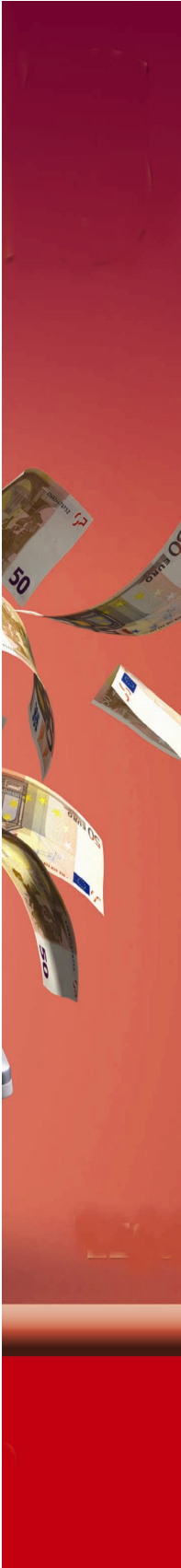
Internet stores are an easy way to set up and run your own store on the Internet without the need to design and build your own website. Overall they can be cheaper to run (listing fees are normally less than an auction site, although there are subscription fees and a final sales commission to pay), and easier to manage as there is no auction to monitor. You get ready access to, potentially, millions of existing customers without the need to promote your site, plus a chance to plug in to existing trade on any corresponding auction site. Selling in a store does not involve the unpredictability that selling at auction involves.

On eBay, a red 'stores' tag next to a seller's User ID indicates that the seller has an eBay Shop. (Click on the tag to go directly to that shop.) eBay claim sellers who move to a shop on the eBay site will see a 25% increase in sales within three months.

What You Must Know About Internet Auction Sites

There are many Internet auction sites, but by far the biggest and most well known in the world is *eBay*. eBay attracts over 1.5 billion page views a month! It has around 52 million users (at the time of writing) and around 9,000 new users register every day. There are five million items for sale at any one time, and a million sales each week. This makes eBay one of the greatest money making opportunities on the Internet!

eBay is probably the site you will want to use most of the time, simply



because it is so big and so well known. It gives the best choice of products, most buyers and is also very user-friendly. However, there are both advantages and disadvantages to this. The slight disadvantages are that because eBay is so well known it attracts a flood of items for sale and drives prices down in some cases (although this is good when you are buying), and you do have to contend with competition from both highly experienced eBayers who know exactly how to work the system, and inexperienced amateurs selling things for any price they can get.

eBay has several different international sites. eBay.com is the US site but is used extensively by UK buyers and sellers. eBay.co.uk is the dedicated UK site which is growing rapidly, attracting more than 11 million users to its site each month. You can also use other eBay international sites which can give you access to more customers interested in a wider range of goods, or customers who, in some cases, will pay more for whatever you are selling. Some of them are in English, but you do not necessarily need to be familiar in the foreign language simply to list a product on a website.

Yahoo! and QXL also operate a number of auction (and store) sites. These are currently smaller than eBay in terms of registered users and the number of transactions. However, they do have their enthusiastic followers (some of whom would never consider visiting eBay) and so can also be worth using. There are also a number of smaller auction sites, in the UK, USA and worldwide, many of which tend to appear, change or disappear on a regular basis. Don't overlook these! Since many of them are little known the listings often attract few buyers and so selling prices are much lower than they would be on a popular site such as eBay. To find these sites you'll need to do your own detective work and search the web.

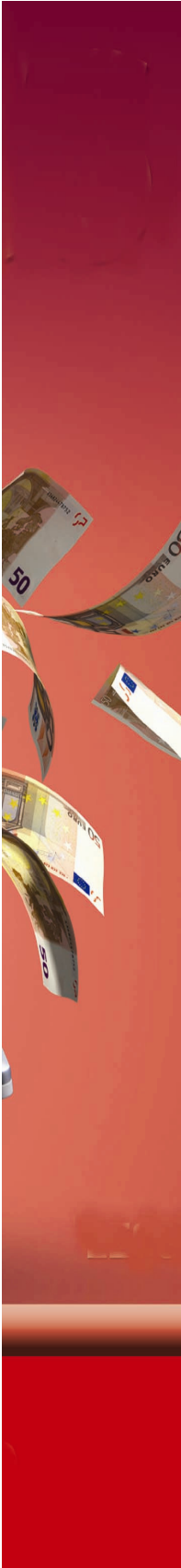
You can find useful website contact addresses in the Appendix at the end of this section.

Getting Started With Auctions and Stores

Getting to Know Your Marketplace

Warning: Too many Internet sellers don't take enough, or even any, time to get to know their Internet marketplace before buying or selling at an auction or store within it. *This is always a bad idea.* It's about as inadvisable as opening up a new bricks-and-mortar shop in a town you've never even visited! So visit your chosen site or sites regularly. Register, if only as a buyer. Choose an item (clothing, a book, electronics – something specific) and track it. See how well or badly it has done on eBay in the past by searching under 'Completed Auctions'. If you haven't already, bid for a few inexpensive items (even things you don't want), to see exactly how the site works.

Look at how the site works as well as the product. For example, the same



item may bring much higher bids in one auction than it does another. Pay close attention to the differences in the listings: Starting/ending time, title or headline, description, photos etc.

Types of Internet Auctions

Internet auctions fall into five different categories, which work in slightly different ways.

- Absolute Auction: Products are sold to the highest bidder regardless of price. There is no minimum price set.
- Minimum Bid Auction: A minimum price that the seller will accept for the item is set and shown clearly.
- Reserve Auctions: A reserve price is a minimum selling price and bidders are aware there's a reserve but are not told what it is. To win the auction the bidder must meet or exceed the reserve. When the reserve is not met the seller does not sell and the highest bidder is not obliged to buy.
- Dutch Auctions: This type of auction is for selling multiple copies of the same item. An example would be 10 mugs, 17 sets of earrings or 25 books. Sellers list an opening bid or minimum price along with the number of items. Bidders enter the price they want to pay and the quantity to buy. All winning bidders pay the same price – the lowest successful bid.
- Private Auctions: This kind of auction protects a buyer's privacy. Bidders' details are not made public. When the auction ends the seller is the only one who knows the winner. Private auctions can't be tracked by bidders and so are usually less popular.

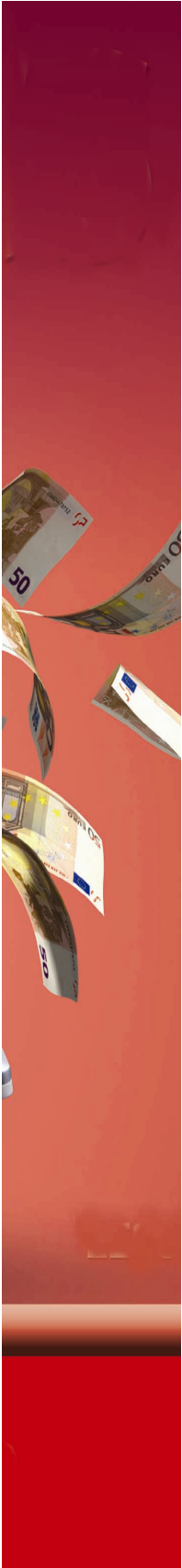
Registering With a Site

With most auctions and stores, including eBay, you need to register/open an account or similar. This is normally free. You only need to give basic contact information. If you don't want to place a credit card on file, you'll need to register with an e-mail address from a company or paid Internet Service Provider, such as AOL.

Choosing & Using a User ID

The next step is to choose your User ID and password which you need to sign on to the site. Your User ID will also appear alongside all your listings.

You can use your own name as your User ID, but most sellers do not. Instead, most users create a made-up, anonymous name. A well chosen User ID can also help attract attention, advertise and sell your products. For example:



.... You might use an ID based on your favourite product area, eg. 'Mr Beatles'.

.... You might use an ID based on what you do best, eg. 'CheapoPaul'!

You can use almost any User ID assuming someone else doesn't already have it, although there are a few practical restrictions with most sites. User ID's must be at least two characters long, can't contain spaces or most symbols (eg.&), be in bad taste or be an e-mail address or website. (On eBay you can't include the word 'eBay'. eBay based User ID's identify eBay employees.)

Note: You can only change your User ID once a month. But bear in mind that your User ID is a valuable asset. Other buyers and sellers will come to recognise you by your User ID, so it's a good idea to choose one you'll want to use for the long term.

As soon as you've registered and chosen a User ID, you can bid on and buy items immediately. However, take some time to set up your 'About Me' profile page (on eBay). This is the one place that you can tell potential bidders about yourself and your products and even include a photo. (What you aren't allowed to include in your auction listing you can include here!) There is evidence to suggest that an interesting, personal description can actually help to increase your product sales, because people still like to think that they're buying from a person.

Key Principles of Super Successful Internet Selling

Although you can sell goods on the Internet just by choosing a suitable product, listing it on a suitable site and sitting back to see what happens; if you want to make serious money you need to be organised and methodical. These key principles will help you:

Key Principle One: Be Professional

Professionalism breeds confidence in buyers. Remember, when an eBay buyer bids on one of your auctions they are not initiating a transaction with a well established company like eBay itself. They are placing their trust in someone who could easily no longer be in business tomorrow. The only thing that the buyer has available to them to assess the legitimacy of your offer is your listing, the way you deal with enquirers and buyers and your feedback (more about feedback later). So, this must be top quality, and stand out above other buyers.

Key Principle Two: Start Small

Start small, both in price, quantity and size. For example, even if you are a computer expert who lives and breathes the latest hardware and software, start by selling a £20 accessory rather than a £1,000 PC system. And try selling things one or two items at a time. Small, cheap things sell more easily than large, costly things and it's less risky, so if they flop it's easier to move on to something else.



Key Principle Three: Sell Narrow Not Broad

Work within just two or three categories – or even just one. (Every Internet auction site or store divides itself up into categories, eBay.co.uk has around 4,500.) A limited number gives you the time to research and keep up to date on each particular category. This is made easier by finding your own niche market (see later). A good idea is to look for a single item you can sell in two or three categories.

Key Principle Four: Always Know Your Costs

In Internet selling your main overhead is the fees charged by the site. If you are selling on a site like eBay, then you will pay a fee based on the sale price (ie., the amount of the winning bid). With auctions, it can be tricky to predict what your item will eventually sell for. But you should have a reasonable idea of where your item will end up and so be able to calculate your overheads. If something is worth £25, you cannot realistically expect someone to pay £100 (sometimes this will happen, but don't count on it!). Good Tip: Keep a list of all the costs involved in a sale.

Key Principle Five: Test, Test, Test

One advantage of Internet selling is that you receive feedback very quickly. In as little as three days, you should know if your product is going to sell or not. If it's a hit, sell more. If it isn't, consider changing some of your variables to see if you can turn it into a success before you drop it. For example, maybe the item would do better in a different category – or maybe the content of the listing can be improved.

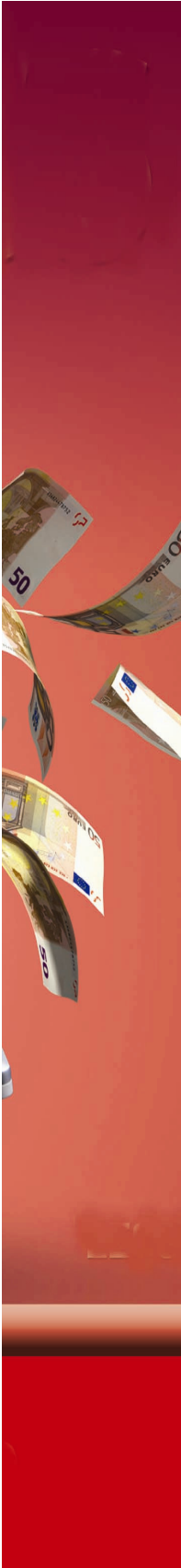
Key Principle Six: Have a Sales Strategy

There are two basic sales strategies to consider:

Sales Strategy One: Sell a large number of small, lower-priced items. This is a simple business model in many ways. You don't need a lot of specialised knowledge and it's easy to find bargain merchandise that will appeal to a general audience. The downside of this strategy is that you will have to do a lot of transactions to make money. For example, if your profit on a particular item is £2, it's easy to see that to make £500 a week you'll have to sell 250!

Sales Strategy Two: Sell smaller numbers of more expensive items. It's easier to handle, for example, one sale of an item at £500 compared with 250 that make you £2. Large items almost always have a larger profit margin. The downside, of course, is that expensive products often require specialised knowledge, and your target market will probably be smaller as well.

You can read more about how you can use the concepts of High Volume Listing and Low Volume Listing, to virtually guarantee a profit later in this section.



Lastly, while you're thinking about which strategy to adopt, remember this: The most successful sellers on eBay and most other auction sites tend to focus on what I might call 'mid value' products, i.e. not too cheap and not too expensive. Typically they are priced around £20-£50. So, it's an advantage if you can find something in this price range too.

Finding and Creating Your Own Successful Market

Finding Your Niche Market

Listing an item with eBay alone gives you access to over 50 million potential buyers! But with around 5,000,000 items listed in thousands of categories you can't even hope to tackle all of it. The solution to this, and to make your business manageable and efficient, is to find a *niche market* you can specialise in. Most successful people who sell on eBay specialise right from the very beginning.

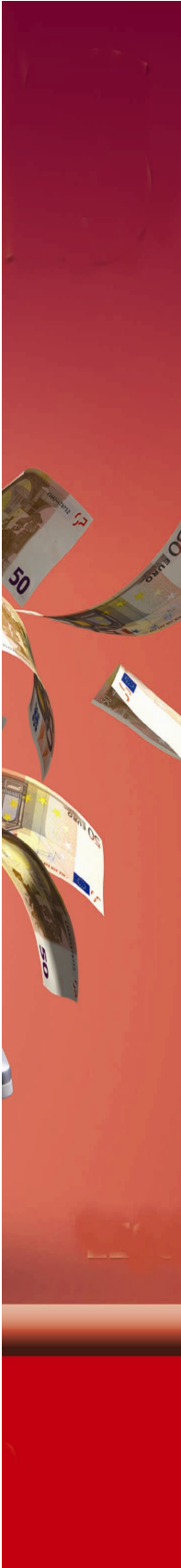
It isn't difficult to get good ideas for niche markets: Brainstorm a list of your interests, hobbies, job-related areas, existing businesses and anything connected to them. For example, perhaps you have been a Dinky toy fanatic since the age of five. You live, breathe and sleep Dinky toys. In this event, you'll probably already know where to buy the best Dinky toys, who your customers are, where they'll live and exactly what they'll want to buy. This is an obvious choice for your niche.

While you're thinking of the possibilities don't forget the practicalities. Remember that the vast majority of products you sell will have to be mailed to the buyer, so shipping weight, cost and packing need to be considered.

Once you know what you might sell you need to know who your customers are, what they like and where they go. So brainstorm a list of *their* interests, hobbies, likes and dislikes, age range, income potential, likely occupation, marital status, etc. In particular, consider what categories within an auction site or store they are likely to visit.

You then need to find a *hot market*. In Internet terms, a hot market is one with lots of buyers, lots of sellers and a fast turnover of sales. The best way to find a hot market is to search for similar products, decide which ones sell best and see what they're doing. Use the site's search tool – preferably the advanced search facility – to do this. Also look at the proceeds generated in 'completed sales' on an auction site. Take your time and check different categories, especially those ending 'today'. Look in the number of bids column and you will know immediately when you hit a hot one.

Auction sites like eBay can provide you with all kinds of facts and figures to help you decide. There are also several software packages that can help you do this. For example, Deep Analysis and Market Research Wizard. Deep Analysis is powerful software that can analyse any eBay market sector and produce detailed



market research reports. Market Research Wizard can tell you: 1. How much demand there is for a product. 2. How much competition you will be up against. 3. What kind of advertising others are using to sell that product.

Always Remember:

Ideal Internet products should be:

- Within a niche market.
- Of mid value.
- Part of a hot market.
- Shippable at a reasonable cost.

Choosing the Very Best Category to List Your Product

The next step, once you have found your niche market, is to find the category in which you will list your items. eBay has thousands of categories to choose from, although other sites have less, so this can be a tricky process.

Before listing your item in any category, follow these simple steps: First, browse through all the categories and write down which ones you feel are relevant to your product. You should be able to find at least 5-10 possible choices.

Next, write down the number of auctions currently online in each of those categories (in the case of auctions). An average in an eBay.com category is about 1,000 and experts conclude that 1,000 or more identifies a category as 'active', while less than 1,000 and it is 'inactive'. Experts consider categories with over 2,000 auctions to be 'popular' and those with over 5,000 are 'very popular'.

Using this ranking system, rate the categories that you have chosen for your product. I recommend listing mainly in 'active' or above categories because they get the most traffic.

How to Successfully Sell Almost Anything...on the Internet

What is the secret to making money on eBay? Attract as many bids as possible! How do you attract bids? Establish professionalism, have a compelling listing, include a photograph of your item, and maintain an exemplary feedback record.

Think of your listing as your shop window. The better your shop window looks, the more people will be attracted to your listing, the more people will bid, the more people will buy and ultimately the higher the prices will rise.

In this section we will look at the various elements of creating your perfect shop window on the Internet.

Writing a Great Sales Pitch for Your Product

Successful sellers on any Internet site know how to write an item description (sales pitch), that instantly pulls the browser's interest and then draws them in after a few sentences. Don't rely on just a picture to sell your product, assuming buyers will immediately know what it is and why they want it.

When writing a sales pitch, attention to psychology counts as much as writing style. Before you start, refer to the profile of potential customers in your niche market that you should already have compiled. You need to make your item description appeal to that type of customer. What are their likes and dislikes? What are they looking for? How old are they and what jobs do they generally have? What are their hobbies and interests? What makes them tick? A successful sales pitch appeals to the base interests and self-interest of the customer. Your potential buyer wants to know what your product will do for them.

Writing the Title

The first part of your sales pitch is the title, which should immediately focus a potential customer on your listing. If you get them to click on your listing, then you have won half the battle. On eBay, you're allowed 45 characters for the title, so make the best use of them.

Try to make your title concise but captivating. Don't just state what you are selling. For example, let's say you were selling software. Here are two possible titles:

Accounting Software Program For Sale

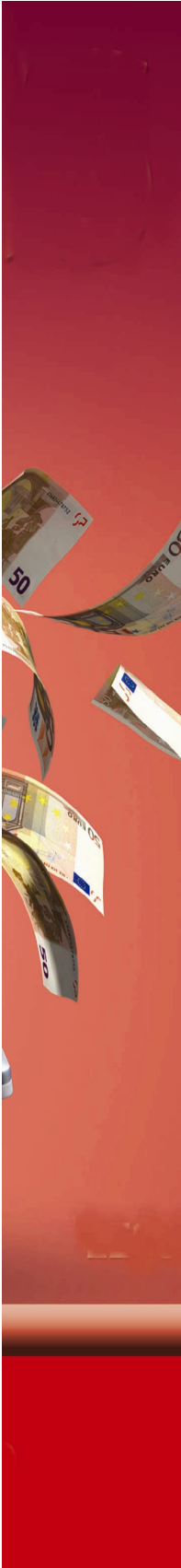
Sage Line 50 Accountant Plus – NEW/SEALED – SUPER DEAL
--

The first title might attract a few buyers but the second would attract a lot more – especially those who are looking to buy that particular product right now. It also gives them solid reasons to click on your listing.

It can be a good idea to use proven catch words such as HOT PRICE, BARGAIN, RARE, UNIQUE, SUPER DEAL, UNBELIEVABLE, BEST VALUE, etc. But don't use fancy symbols or other 'cheesy' ways – such as '**!?!' or 'LOOK' – to attract attention to your listing. Such tactics can turn off potential customers and make your listing look unprofessional.

Writing Your Description

A successful selling description always comes from the heart. If *you* don't believe in what you're selling why should *your buyer*? Try to pass on this



positive energy about your product to the consumer. Within this, there are a couple of essentials to include in your listing:

.... Use plenty of keywords.

Keywords are the words that browsers use to search for the products they want to buy, including such things as the product type, brand name, model, colour, size, description, condition and price. If a user performs a search using the keywords you have inserted into your listing there's every chance they'll be directed right to your product.

.... Include everything about your product.

The more you include, the more reason you give a browser to buy your product. So describe it fully and completely not only in glowing terms, but in a factual way.

Don't assume that a buyer will know what a 'Model 6S Widget' is, does or includes.

Experience proves that many listings on eBay fall down in one or more of three key areas. So check through your description to make sure yours doesn't:

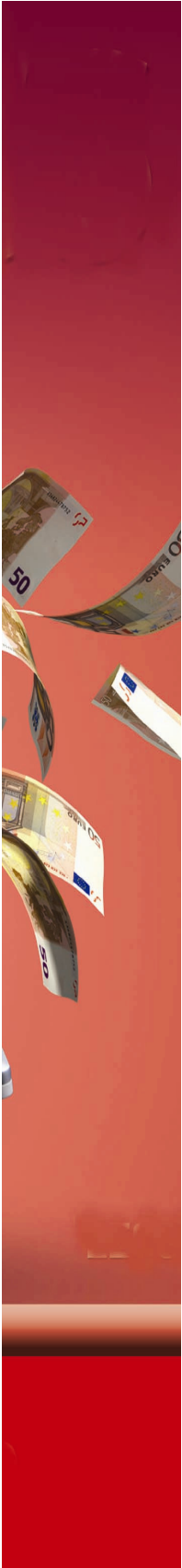
What is it? Will browsers clearly understand what you are selling, or will they have unanswered questions? Most buyers will skip right on by merchandise if they don't understand.

What condition is it in? One of the quickest ways to ruin an auction business is to misrepresent condition. Many sellers do this through ignorance rather than dishonesty. Words like 'good', 'excellent', etc. can be misinterpreted.

Terms of the transaction? State what you want for your item (if an outright sale), how and when, e.g. before shipping. Say how much shipping will cost, how long it will take and where you are willing to ship. Again: Incomplete information results in lost buyers.

More Good Writing Tips

- **Knowledge Is Power!** Know your buyer. Get into your customer's mindset and write for him or her. There are certain magic words and ideas that will 'push the buttons' for your potential customers. Understand your visitors' needs and wants, and it's easy to find those powerful words.
- **Look And Learn.** Learn from other *successful sellers*. Spend time surfing listings of similar items to yours. Evaluate their strengths/weaknesses. Are they highlighting a feature/benefit you didn't think about?
- **Practice Makes Perfect.** Like all skills in life, writing profitable listings



requires practice and more practice. So tweak and edit them until you get them just right. If in doubt, start by saying ‘everything’ and gradually clip things out to see if it makes a more concise, snappy listing without reducing the sales power.

Try This Exercise

Imagine your buyer sat at their PC, scrolling leisurely down the page. Out of all these choices, what is going to make them stop and click on a particular one? There’s one main thing

.... the title.

Choose a category from your favourite site at random. Any category. Preferably one with which you’re not familiar. Now take 10 separate listings and rank their titles from ‘most effective’ to ‘least effective’.

Which title would *you* click first? Why? Second? Why? Third? Why?

Now look at the title you have ranked as ‘least effective’. Do you think that you would even read the content that follows it? Not likely. But why?

Now write your own title accordingly!

Presenting Your Listing Effectively

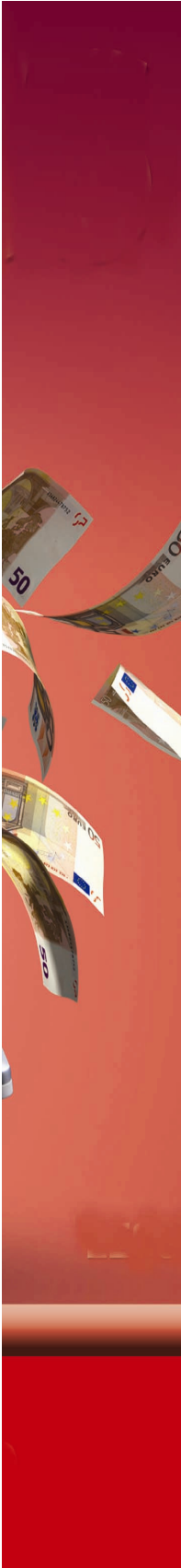
All auction and store sites allow you to simply type in a listing. When your copy appears, it will be one long black and white paragraph, with no spacing – a bit like a classified advert in a newspaper. This is perfectly acceptable for many products, but with a little effort you can present your listing much more effectively.

Some sites have an inbuilt design tool to help you enhance your listing design. For sites that do not (or if you prefer to design your own listing), HTML (hypertext mark-up language), allows you to present your listing using designs, fonts and colours of your choice. There is no doubt that using HTML format is easier to read and more professional looking which will almost always lead to better sales. If you don’t know how to write HTML, you can use a simple program to create it for you. You can also learn some basic commands at www.htmlgoodies.com.

If you create your description using a standard design package such as Frontpage, 1st Page, or indeed any other web design program, you can simply copy the code and then paste it into the description field.

Using Photos in Your Listing

An essential aspect of every auction or store in which a physical product is sold, and sometimes also for services, is a photograph (or image as it is known in



techno-speak). When browsing through auctions, often the image is the first thing to attract potential customers. Also, people are less likely to buy what they cannot see and may be prepared to pay less, while they are more likely to buy and pay more for what they can! If a competitor shows off an impressive photograph of their product and you don't, then you can lose business.

To attach a photo to most auction and store sites is easy. You will need a digital camera to take a picture of your item. Although many sites allow you to display one image free of charge, it will cost you a little more to display multiple pictures. The alternative is to host your pictures on an external website or use an image hosting service.

The photograph should be clear, but should be taken so as to highlight the best aspects of your product. Make sure that the lighting and the positioning is correct. Most items, whether large like cars, or small like jewellery, look better when taken from below rather than above. Take the time to take several pictures of your item and then view them on your computer screen before choosing the best one to use.

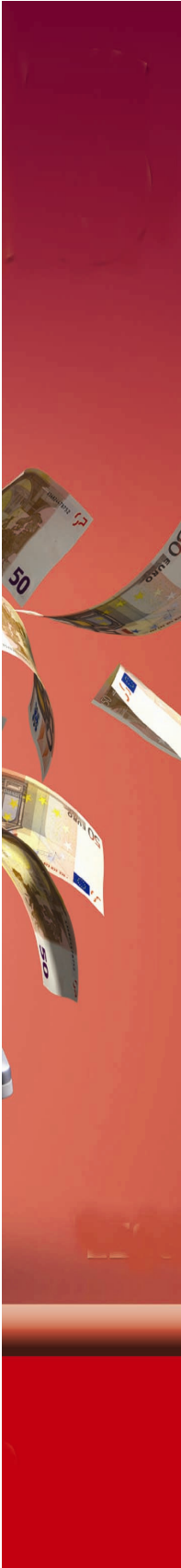
You're nearly ready to sell! When all this is done all you need to do is log on to your chosen auction site or store, type in your listing, add your photo and the sales process begins. However, here are a few more insights and advanced techniques that will make the auction process more successful:

High and Low Volume Listing: How It Can Guarantee You Will Make Money

On eBay at least, expert online profiteers consider that there are two types of sellers which they refer to as *High Volume Listers* and *Low Volume Listers*. High Volume Listers are those who list more and keep more than 10 auctions running at a time. Low Volume Listers keep fewer than 10.

The profit margin of the product you sell determines which category you will fit into. For example, if you sold valuable antiques and make £500 per sale, you may only need to list a few items each week to make a real killing. The same applies for the sale of expensive jewellery, cars, and other items with a large profit margin. In this case you would be a Low Volume Lister.

However, if you sell second hand books or other inexpensive items you may only make £5-£10 per sale. In this case, you would need to list hundreds of items at a time to make large profits, and so would be regarded as a High Volume Lister.



You might ask why would anyone go through the effort of listing so many items when it seems so easy to list a few large items and make a fortune? The answer is simple: Online buyers are mostly willing to spend under £50 for a product – the ‘mid value’ limit. This makes sense: Would you pay hundreds or thousands for something you have never seen? Another reason that High Volume Listers are more common and often make more money is that it is very easy to buy inexpensive items at wholesale prices, but more difficult to buy expensive items at wholesale prices.

The power of this strategy can be confirmed with some simple maths. For example, let’s assume you have decided to sell inexpensive costume jewellery. You have identified your niche market and found the associated categories. You feel that your buyers will probably spend £10-£12 per purchase and you calculate that the average profit of your auctions will be about £6. You have plenty of time, want to make a sizable income from online selling, but your profit margin is fairly low in comparison. So you decide to become a High Volume Lister and list 100 auctions per week. By doing your research, or testing, you discover that 70% of your auctions will end with successful bids (which is the eBay average for jewellery). Based on this prediction, therefore, you calculate your weekly profit at £420.

By repeating this process using your chosen product, profit margins and listing levels, you can decide your basic sales strategy from the outset, *and* get quite a good idea of how much money you stand to make before you even begin!

Useful Tips

- Use a bulk uploading tool if you run more than 10 auctions at a time. This way, you can upload hundreds of auctions at once, saving you much time and effort. Bulk uploading is known as ‘Turbo Lister’ on eBay.
- You can also relist auctions that have sold. Go to the URL for the ended auction and click on ‘relist’. eBay allows you to relist the item even though it is sold, saving you time and effort so that you don’t have to copy and paste the title and item description into the form again. This is particularly useful for High Volume Listers.

Low Initial Bids Mean Higher Profits

This is a key principle for success proven by many successful auction sellers. *Start the bidding low.* A low initial bid price attracts buyer interest. Because the price starts at a level that is well below most buyers’ maximum price limits, more buyers on average are able to place a bid well before the bid price approaches the market value. Once a buyer has placed a bid, it’s likely that you’ve captured that bidder’s interest and the odds increase that they will re-visit the auction. If a re-visit occurs, even though the bids may already have exceeded that buyer’s maximum price, there’s always the chance that they might reassess their position and increase their maximum price threshold, and possibly bid again.



What About Reserve Prices?

In auctions, *reserves* – a minimum figure below which the item will not be sold – protect the seller, but turn off the buyer. It is easy to understand why some sellers use them. Either their investment in the item is considerable, they are emotionally attached to the item ('I'll only sell it if I can get £100 for it.' etc.), or their understanding of its value is wrong. In each case they are not willing to let the market decide the value of their item (which is the true value), so they use a reserve auction to ensure that the item sells only if it reaches the price they would like.

Reserves are all too often set excessively high and the item goes unsold. Auction buyers love the thrill of the chase. And, some people avoid reserve price auctions because they have no idea what the actual value of the piece is! On the other hand, it's also very disappointing for high and serious bidders to be turned away because their high bid did not meet the reserve. The auction was essentially a waste of their time. This can be more of a serious problem than you might think. Buyers often remember which sellers have disappointed them. A buyer may well not bid in the future auctions of a seller who has disappointed them in the past, which will decrease your pool of potential buyers.

Serious sellers often realise that reserve auctions are a turn-off to many bidders and so make a no reserve policy a selling point. They openly advertise this by placing the statement 'No Reserve' or 'NR' in their listings. Some even advertise this in their auction title.

Instead of reserve auctions, a much better way to protect your investment is to set your initial listing price just high enough to protect your cost and prevent a loss. Nothing is hidden. Your minimum sales threshold, when built into the initial listing price, is presented for all to see and you've avoided disappointing any bidders and potential bidders by a 'did not meet the reserve' auction conclusion. If the item doesn't sell, start again at a lower price or list different items.

Should You Use 'Buy It Now'?

Buy It Now on eBay is an arrangement where a buyer can circumvent the auction process and just pay whatever you ask for your product. In most cases it is best not to use the Buy It Now feature and use a conventional auction instead. If a buyer makes a purchase using Buy It Now it's probably because they realised that your item was underpriced (slightly or considerably) and so you almost certainly did not receive a maximum price for your product.

However, this feature is much more useful when dealing with popular new products (such as new books, CD's etc.), where everyone knows the usual retail price of the item.



Should You Use Dutch Auctions?

A Dutch auction (known as The Multiple Item Auction format on eBay) is used to offer a *number of identical items in a single auction*. For example, if you have 20 scanners, all the same, that you'd like to sell for at least £29.99 each, you would list them as with a quantity of 20 and a starting price of £29.99. Bidders then specify both their offered price and the number of items they want.

Successful Multiple Item Auction bids must have a higher Total Bid Value (bid price x number of items bid on), than previous bids. Reducing this Total Bid Value in subsequent bids is not permitted. On completion of the auction all winning bidders pay the same price, ie. the lowest successful bid. If there are more buyers than items, the earliest successful bids get the items. Higher bidders get the quantities they've asked for.

Dutch auctions are suitable if you have a consistent supply of identical items and *proven sales* for them. Experts often use it only for their hottest selling items. There is evidence to suggest that the lack of 'rarity value' reduces the number of number of bids and thus the price achieved but this is more than compensated for by the volume of sale - assuming it is a *hot item*.

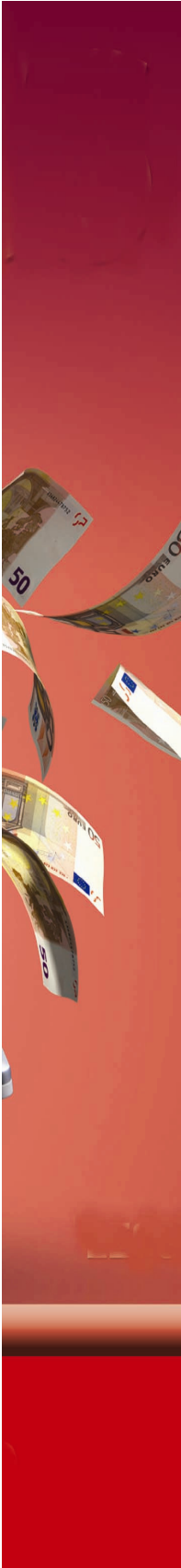
When is the Best Time to Run Your Auctions?

When planning auction listings, an extremely important consideration is the day and time your auction will end.

Why is this important? Well, much of the really competitive bidding occurs in the last hours, minutes, or even seconds of the auction. The most profitable auctions are those where last minute 'bidding wars' occur. Where two bidders who are intent on winning the auction, carefully monitor the auction to its close, and continue to bid the auction higher in an effort to win. Emotion can take over in these situations and a potential buyer may bid far more than they planned. Your strategy should be to schedule your auction to end at a time when these very competitive bidders are online.

As you may know, some of this last minute bidding is done automatically through the use of automated 'sniping' software (discussed later) but much, especially that undertaken by the really serious bidders, is not.

If you're using seven day auctions (the norm on eBay), your auction will end exactly seven days after you list it. The best times for your auction to end are evenings, and the best days are weekends. If you're using seven day auctions, therefore, you should post your listing on Saturday or Sunday evenings. You can also post five day auctions on Mondays and Tuesdays. However, since sellers are charged the same listing fee for a five day auction as for a seven day auction, and longer auctions normally result in more bids than shorter auctions, five day auctions shouldn't be used too much.



One exception to the weekend listing recommendation is listing Monday. Mondays can be particularly good selling days. Not everyone has Internet access at home and experience proves that there are buyers who are searching auction sites and placing bids at work, particularly on Mondays!

To make all this easier to manage use the *Scheduled Listing Option*. This way you can delay the start of the auction until a specific date and time up to three weeks in advance. It costs a little extra, so avoid using it for low value auctions, but it is a good tool if you have a job or another business to attend to.

What are the worst days and times for your auctions to end? Well, whenever there might not be many buyers around. The worst days are holidays – such as Christmas Day, New Years Day and indeed most other public holidays. Extremely popular sporting events can also adversely affect shopping, especially if your intended buyers are likely to be keen fans. Fridays are not very good days to end auctions as people are often travelling or ‘going out’. Even periods of good weather can be poor for bidding, although of course it’s difficult to predict these!

Although not as important as the day of the week, another consideration if you’re selling items internationally is the *time zone* that you live in versus the time zone of your target customers. If you wish to sell to buyers in the USA (eg. on eBay.com), remember that US east coast buyers are five hours behind UK time, while west coast buyers are eight hours behind. Auctions that end at lunchtime in the UK will end up being breakfast auctions in New York or middle-of-the-night auctions in Los Angeles!

Maximise Your Salesby Appealing to International Buyers

Although you will find that many sellers on Internet auction sites and stores do not accept bids from international buyers, it is strongly recommended that you do. To attract as many customers as possible (and push up auction bids), it’s important that you don’t limit the universe of bidders and buyers solely to those in one country. Also, because so many sellers, *especially eBay sellers in the USA*, are not willing to sell internationally, many international customers seem almost grateful for the opportunity to buy from listings that do.

There are a few reasons why some sellers don’t accept international orders. First, is a lack of understanding about available payment methods, but nowadays you can make and accept payment in almost any currency. Write any special payment requirements into the listing (‘International buyers to pay via PayPal or money order in UK pounds or US dollars.’), so that buyers understand your terms. Another reason sellers don’t like international bidding is that they think the shipping cost will be too high. However, since the buyer is responsible for the cost of shipping you can normally assume that if an international buyer bids, they are probably willing to pay the shipping cost.



Maximise Your Sales...by Showing Your Human Side!

If you can show that there is a ‘real person’ behind your online presence you can maximise your sales greatly.

Most importantly of all: *Always answer your customers’ e-mails*. Whether the customer is praising your product, complaining or asking a question, they deserve an answer. (Particularly on eBay where feedback really counts!) If you fail to answer e-mails, you may receive such comments as ‘unresponsive seller’ or ‘ignored my repeated enquiries’ in your feedback file. You will earn yourself a poor reputation and lose buyers.

However, keep your answers short, courteous, and to the point. Provide all relevant information and be friendly, but don’t get bogged down in long e-mail conversations. Consider using template answers: Create a folder in your e-mail program for ‘FAQ’s’ in which you have ready made answers to common questions such as: When was my item posted? When did you receive payment? How long does shipping take? It is much easier to send out a pre-written form e-mail than write a specific answer to each query. But – make sure that it doesn’t sound like a form e-mail and always personalise it.

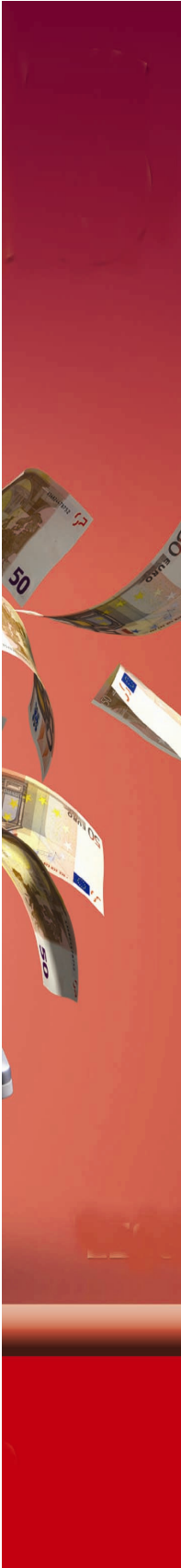
Often you will find that a buyer or prospective buyer is ‘just checking’ to see if there is an efficient seller behind the listing, and a simple response to their e-mail will be reciprocated with an immediate buy or bid.

How To Make Bigger Profits Using ‘Featured Auctions’

Featured auctions are offered on most auction sites, and featured products are offered in some store sites. By featuring products you can virtually guarantee bigger profits but the secret is to figure out which items to feature and which items to discontinue. Trial and error works!

It is a proven fact that featured auctions get more bids and, very often, higher bids. However, they also cost you more. Before deciding whether or not to feature your item, run regular listings for several weeks and analyse the market using some of the software that is now available to do this. For example, Deep Analysis.

There are two types of featured auctions on eBay.co.uk: Those which are featured in category are known as ‘Featured Plus!’, show up at the top of the item’s category main page and is available for a modest fee. This ensures that anyone who visits that category will probably see your auction, as the normal browser scrolls down a few screens and then leaves. Usually you should consider featuring your item in its category, if it has an average sales percentage *of 50% or greater*. In other words, after running regular auctions for a few weeks you should choose the featured category option if more than half of the auctions for that item have ended in a sale.



‘Home Page Featured’ is the highest level of visibility on eBay.co.uk. Your item will be listed in a Special Featured section and will most likely be rotated for display on eBay’s Home page. Your item may also appear on the main ‘Browse’ and in your category index page ‘Featured Plus!’ section. This costs a lot more and so you should only consider this option if your item has a sales percentage of 60% or greater.

Other ways of drawing more attention to your listings on eBay include to use a *highlight* or *bold print* for your item title, add a *sub-title*, or have a picture of your item listed in the ‘Gallery’. You may wish to experiment with these since the cost is small. However, most experts find them unproven as a guaranteed way of attracting more and higher bids.

The bottom line is that people are either interested in your type of product or not. If not, additional pictures will seldom persuade them. Concentrate on a good, accurate description and one picture if possible. That said, of course sometimes you need more than one picture.

How To Conclude an Internet Sale Successfully (and Get Your Money!)

Concluding and finalising the transaction effectively is an important part of selling over the Internet.

With Internet auctions, once the sale ends, it is customary for the *seller* to contact the *buyer* with terms of payment and the final bid price. The buyer should not have to contact the seller. Send a prompt e-mail congratulating the buyer and requesting payment. This should include the final auction price and your acceptable payment options. An example is shown below. You can modify it for your use if you wish:

Subj: Congratulations !
Date: [Insert date]
From: aseller@seller.net
To: abuyer@buyer.net

Dear Buyer

Congratulations on your winning bid for the [cut and paste actual item title here].

Winning bid £xxxx
Shipping £xxxx
Total £xxxx

PayPal, money orders, bank drafts and personal cheques are great.
(Payment with a personal cheque will require at least a 10 day waiting period to clear.)
For PayPal, our account is: xxxxxxxxxx.

If paying via money order, draft or cheque please send to: xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx.

Remember, your satisfaction is guaranteed. If for any reason you are not happy with this item you may return it to us. We will refund your money immediately, less listing fee/commission and postage.

By the way, we always leave feedback! (Normally within a few days of receipt of payment or when a cheque clears.
Thanks, we appreciate your business.

A Seller

Receiving Payment Made Simple

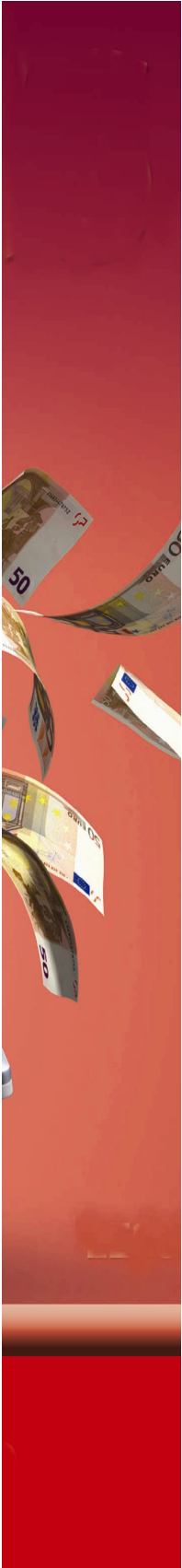
When it comes to getting paid for your sales you should offer the buyer as many different payment options as possible. However, there are pros and cons of each. We will look at the different methods and the pros and cons here.

Always state in your listing what methods of payment you are willing to accept i.e. 'We welcome cheques, money orders, bank drafts or PayPal.'

PayPal: PayPal (which coincidentally is owned by eBay) is an online money transfer service. It is popular for Internet transactions because it is easy, free to buyers, secure and trusted by buyers and sellers. On eBay, 75% of auction purchases are paid for by PayPal.

To open a PayPal account simply register at www.paypal.com. You can accept payment in a range of currencies, which can then be exchanged into pounds sterling. As the seller, you pay a small commission. PayPal also now offer a range of tools, such as payment management and invoicing, for sellers who run Internet auction sales and stores.





Personal Cheques, Money Orders and Bank Drafts: Most experts recommend that sellers accept old-fashioned ‘paper’ payments as well as PayPal. Why? Because it maximises the number of potential buyers. Anyone who doesn’t like PayPal will normally be happy to send you a paper payment. Another good thing about these methods is that it buys you, the seller, *time*. If a buyer chooses to pay by cheque you’re entitled to wait for the cheque to clear before shipping the item, and you won’t attract negative feedback or complaints if the item doesn’t arrive immediately.

One drawback with cheques is that, if they are in a foreign currency (such as US dollars), exchange fees can be high (ie. typically £6-£12 per cheque at most UK banks). Therefore, they may only be suitable for accepting payment for higher value items.

Money orders and bank drafts (known as cashier’s cheques in the USA), can be a solution to this problem in that you can request that the buyer has them issued in pounds sterling and so you avoid the exchange fee. However, the disadvantage is that they require the buyer to make a trip to a bank and they have to pay a fee for them.

Escrow: A system where the buyer pays an impartial third party, who holds the money until you ship the goods, and then releases it to you. As it’s time consuming, it’s best avoided unless you are selling a very high value item and the buyer is reluctant to pay any other way.

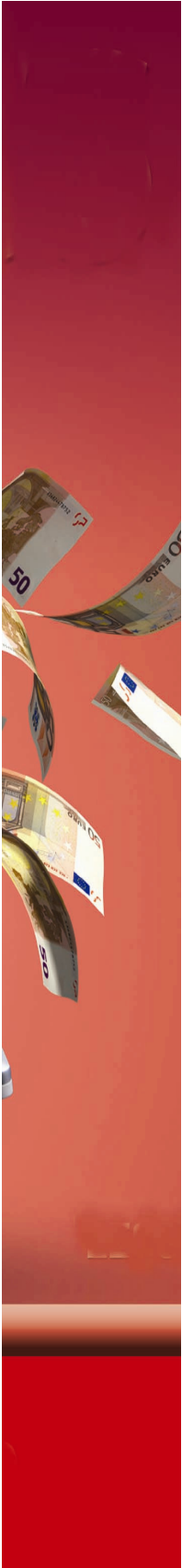
Cash: It is normally best to discourage it by not listing it as an auction payment option. If the cash is lost or stolen the buyer doesn’t get the item, you don’t get the money and you may get negative feedback too, even though it is not your fault.

Packing and Shipping Made Simple

The final step in the successful sales procedure is to mail your items out - or ‘ship’ them as it is usually called in Internet sales speak, following the US parlance!

It is good practice to ship as soon as possible (allowing for clearance of any cheques if you wish to). Some eBay sellers openly state in their listings that they only mail on certain days, eg. ‘Shipping Every Friday’ but this is never a good idea. Shipping as quickly as possible builds buyer loyalty and will earn you good feedback.

Don’t try to make an extra profit by charging your customers inflated shipping or ‘handling charges’. Internet buyers are very sensitive about shipping costs and are put off by spurious high charges. It can also be a good idea to offer a choice of shipping (ie. next day courier or ‘slow’ parcels), so buyers can decide whether they want to pay more to receive the item quickly, or pay the lowest



possible shipping cost, even if it means waiting longer for delivery.

Many sellers offer to charge only the *actual cost* of shipping. This is fair and can be popular with customers, but takes extra time since, once the item is sold, you have to find the postage cost, inform the buyer, and then wait for them to confirm this is acceptable. Other sellers simply round the postage cost up or down to the nearest pound, even though it may vary according to the destination (especially when selling internationally) and quote a *fixed cost*. The advantage of this is that you can state the postage charge in your listing and so don't have to check the cost with the buyer after you have made the sale. The drawback of a flat-rate shipping charge is that the buyer can be overcharged (and if too high you may drive away bidders), or the seller can undercharge for shipping, thus eating into profits.

You can get quotes for postage costs of any item for any destination worldwide by checking on the Royal Mail's website at www.royalmail.com or the Parcelforce website at www.parcelforce.com, if you are sending parcels. (Items weighing over 2kg are normally cheaper when sent as parcels.) A number of private courier services such as TNT or Fedex are available. These are of most use if you need to send something urgently.

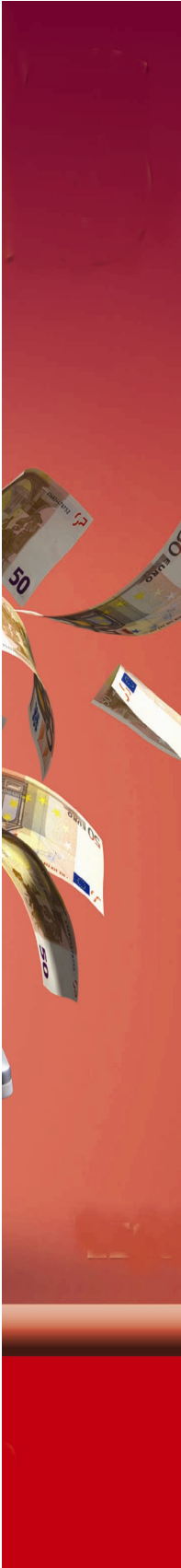
Whatever you send, it is always a good idea to pack it up securely. Use professional packaging materials such as shipping boxes, bubble wrap and wide carton sealing tape. Even if this costs a little more, it will save you time and minimise the chances of the item arriving damaged. Items that arrive inadequately packed and/or damaged are a major source of negative feedback on eBay.

Normally you wouldn't *insure* an item when shipped unless the buyer pays the cost. (If you are sending something valuable it's sensible to offer them this option.) However, note that if the item doesn't arrive, or arrives damaged, your reputation could suffer even if it wasn't your fault!

Feedback: What It Is and How To Use It

To succeed in Internet selling you must know about the *feedback* system and how to use it properly. Part of the reason auction and store sites works so well is the feedback system. Most sites, particularly eBay, offer a feedback page where buyers and sellers can leave positive, neutral or negative feedback about each transaction. And, researchers at Vanderbilt University in the USA found that even a 1% increase in your positive feedback rating can raise the price at which you sell your items! So if you're going to sell really successfully you'll want to start building your own feedback rating quickly.

You can check the feedback rating for any registered user by clicking the 'Search' tab on the eBay homepage, then clicking on 'Find Members'. You'll be



able to see their feedback rating and read all the comments others have made about their transactions with that user.

Although not all buyers will check your feedback most serious buyers, and those buying higher-priced goods, will. If they see comments such as ‘product not as ordered’, ‘slow to arrive’ etc. they either won’t buy, or they will make only poor auction bids. You need to have an outstanding feedback rating brimming with positive comments to make really good profits. And you need a feedback rating of 10 or more to use featured auctions or Dutch auctions, which can be very lucrative.

The easy way to ensure quality feedback is to deliver a good quality product quickly and efficiently. But don’t leave things to chance. It’s also a good idea to invite or even ask for positive feedback when communicating with your buyers.

There will, of course, always be a few people who leave negative feedback for no good reason, or even for mischievous reasons. A good way to solve this problem is to offer a *money-back guarantee* on everything that you sell. This will not only minimise negative feedback, but ‘neutralise’ most of what does arise in the minds of buyers.

A Shortcut for Getting Great Feedback

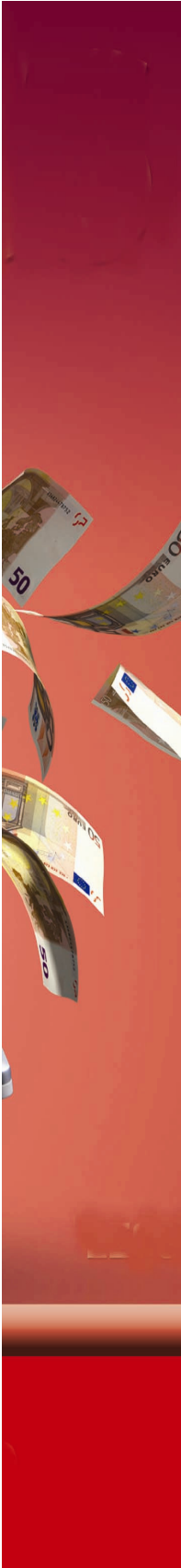
Since your feedback for buying and selling all contributes to *one rating*, you can start to establish a positive rating even before you start to sell. The easiest way to build your reputation (and do some valuable market research at the same time), is to participate in the auction experience as a *buyer*.

Pick an inexpensive item to buy. Keep a note of how the seller completes the transaction, how long your item takes to arrive, how it’s packaged and how it lives up to its listing. Then, leave the seller positive feedback and ask that they do the same for you. Repeat this process a few more times and you’ll have learned a great deal about online auctions and, you’ll have a great feedback rating when you start to sell!

Simple Sales Management Techniques

You will find that as the number of listings you’re running increases, it will become increasingly difficult to stay organised. If you’re only running one or two products a week, you shouldn’t have much trouble with administration. But when you start running 10, 20 or more sales a week you need to adopt some type of system to stay organised. Operating your Internet selling business without a basic administration system, is likely to get you into trouble – losing track of payments, or late mailing of items will result in negative feedback.

But it’s relatively simple to handle administration. Even in this day of online selling the easiest way to stay organised is by using *printed copies* of your documents. Use a simple ring binder divided into five sections:

- 
1. Closed sales awaiting payment.
 2. Paid awaiting shipment.
 3. Paid awaiting cheque clearance.
 4. Shipped products waiting for feedback.
 5. Complete.

At the close of a sale, print out a copy of the auction end notification and a copy of the e-mail that you send to the buyer (see example earlier) and staple them together. Together these will make up a simple *Order Process Docket*. File this docket in the 'Closed sales awaiting payment' section of the ring binder until you receive payment.

When you receive payment, the payment information (amount and type), is written on the docket. If payment is in the form of PayPal, bank draft or money order the docket is then filed in the 'Paid awaiting shipment' section of the binder. If payment is in the form of a cheque, the buyer's name, the amount, cheque number, bank, and date are recorded on the docket and it is filed in the 'Paid awaiting cheque clearance' section for 10 days while it clears, then moved to the 'Paid awaiting shipment' section.

Then, when you ship the item, this date is entered on the docket and it is moved to the 'Shipped products waiting for feedback' section. Finally, when you leave feedback for the buyer, you record that date also and move the docket to the 'Complete' section of the binder. Keep dockets in the 'Complete' section for about a month, in case the buyer has any queries about the sale, or about the date that you shipped the item.

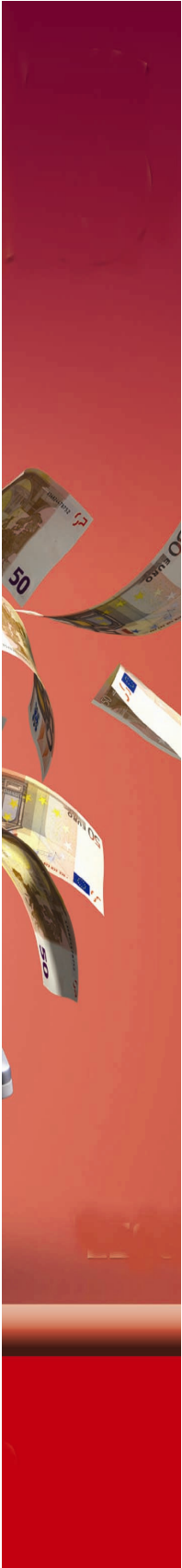
By using printed copies of documents, the documents can easily be handled and processed by several people (say for example if one person handles e-mails and another handles mailing), throughout the entire process from close of the sale to posting feedback. The binder method makes it quick and easy to determine the status of a sale and you don't need to be online to manage your sales.

Did My Product Show a Profit?

It's also important to keep a track of each product listing to ensure it made a profit. (Or if it made a loss to ensure you don't repeat it!)

You can do this using a spreadsheet, or simply using pen and paper: Use a separate sheet of paper for each sale you list. Write down the item number, URL, listing date, listing price, category and buying price. When the sale ends, write down the ending date, the selling price, the buyer's contact information and the fees payable. You can then work out how much you made. Index auctions by auction number and keep in a file for reference, when choosing products for the future.

Later we will discuss some *advanced sales management techniques*.



In Part I of this lesson of the course I have discussed how to set up and run Internet auctions and Internet stores. In Part II, coming next, I will discuss how to *choose and source products* you can profitably sell on the Internet.

Appendix of Websites: Lesson 1

eBay Sites Worldwide

Argentina

www.mercadolivre.com.ar

Language: Spanish

Australia

www.ebay.com.au

Language: English

Austria

www.ebay.at

Language: German

Belgium

www.ebay.be

Languages: Dutch, French

Brazil

www.mercadolivre.com.br

Language: Portuguese

Canada

www.ebay.ca

Language: English

China

www.ebay.com.cn

Language: Chinese

France

www.ebay.fr

Language: French

Germany

www.ebay.de

Language: German



Hong Kong
www.ebay.com.hk
Language: Chinese

India
www.ebay.in
Language: English

Ireland
www.ebay.ie
Language: English

Italy
www.ebay.it
Language: Italian

Malaysia
www.ebay.com.my
Language: English

Mexico
www.mercadolibre.com.mx/
Language: Spanish

Netherlands
www.ebay.nl
Language: Dutch

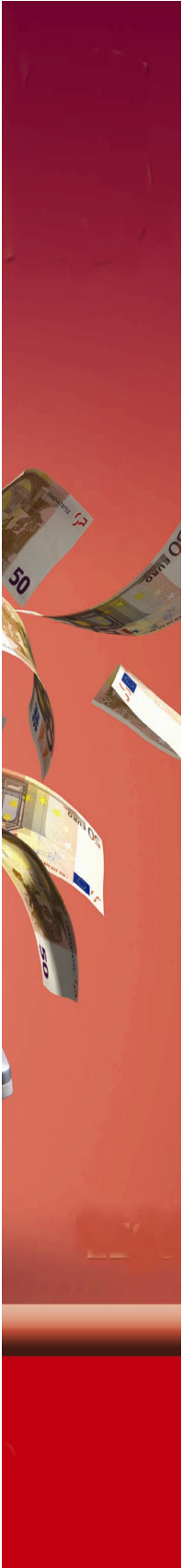
New Zealand
<http://pages.ebay.com/nz>
Language: English

Philippines
www.ebay.ph/
Language: English

Poland
www.ebay.pl/
Language: Polish

Singapore
www.ebay.com.sg/
Language: English

South Korea
www.auction.co.kr/



Language: Korean

Spain
www.ebay.es/
Language: Spanish

Sweden
www.tradera.com/
Language: Swedish

Switzerland
www.ebay.ch
Language: German, French

Taiwan
www.ruten.com.tw/
Language: Taiwanese

Turkey
www.gittigidiyor.com/
Language: Turkish

UK
www.ebay.co.uk
Language: English

USA
www.ebay.com
Language: English

Vietnam
www.ebay.vn/
Language: Vietnamese, English

Selected Other Auction and Store Sites

Amazon
www.amazon.com and www.amazon.co.uk
Originally an Internet bookseller now offers a store facility for a variety of new and used goods but is especially strong in books, audio, video and entertainment goods.

Auction Air
www.auctionair.co.uk
Not a selling auction site, but a buying site where you can submit sealed bids for a range of new merchandise.



Auction Fire

www.auctionfire.com

Site offers free listings, and is especially suitable for sellers who also have their own websites.

BigDealBids

www.bigdealbids.com

UK-based site similar in operation to eBay but with very cheap selling fees.

eBid

uk.ebid.net

UK-based auction site.

QXL

www.qxl.com

Similar to eBay, but specialises in the UK and continental Europe with no US site.

uBid

www.ubid.com

US-based site which specialises in brand name goods.

Yahoo!

www.auctions.yahoo.com

As well as the USA and UK there are Yahoo! auction sites for Brazil, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, Mexico, Singapore and Taiwan.

Please Note: Websites included in this appendix, or elsewhere within the course, are all operational at the time of writing and I do aim to check and update these listings on a regular basis. However, due to the nature of the Internet and the way in which websites can appear and disappear without notice it is always possible you may find some sites which have been renamed, moved or removed.