

Entrepreneur's

101

TIPS

For **STARTING** And
GROWING
Your **BUSINESS** On
EBAY



UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE.

Sell on eBay. Ship with U.S. Postal Service.®

C O N T E N T S

Dear small-business owners, entrepreneurs and future entrepreneurs,

Many people admire American entrepreneurs. But it wasn't always so. About 20 years ago, entrepreneurs operated in near anonymity. We knew people were out there starting and running businesses, but we didn't give them much thought. Most of us aspired to corporate success—climbing the corporate ladder was a lauded goal. Then things changed.

Corporate ladder-climbers gave way to a sea of entrepreneurs. In the 1990s, millions of Americans turned to business ownership, first as a way to pay the mortgage between jobs. But these “accidental entrepreneurs” (as I call them) discovered they loved being in charge of their own destinies and never looked back. And an entrepreneurial revolution was born!



Fueling this revolution was technology, which had become smaller, more affordable and much easier to use. Entrepreneurs (who needed every advantage they could find) embraced technology, which helped them start, grow and innovate for less money than they ever thought possible. E-commerce became an accepted (and welcomed) way of doing business.

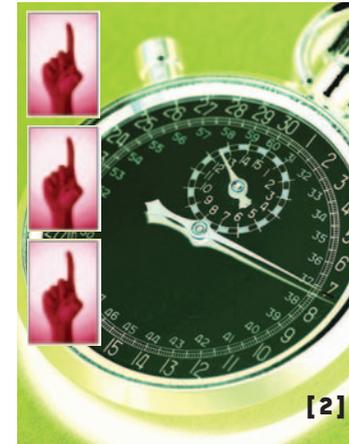
Soon, the business owners who had started these small, often home-based companies found they needed help. So they started hiring. The people they hired started spending money in their communities, leaving local entrepreneurs in need of more help. So they started hiring. And so the cycle went. By the time we got to the end of the 1990s, it turned out that entrepreneurs had created most of the jobs (75 percent) and innovations (55 percent) in the entire decade.

And that trend continues today—only it's even easier to start a business in this century. Often, all it takes is something to sell and a way to sell it. And for hundreds of thousands, eBay® has become that way. This booklet is filled with tips and ideas you can use right now to start (or grow) a business on eBay. You'll also find out how eBay and the U.S. Postal Service® have teamed up to make running a business on eBay even easier. And you'll hear from some eBay entrepreneurs, people just like you, who went from thinking about starting a business to becoming successful business owners.

So c'mon. It's not too late to join the entrepreneurial revolution!

Rieva Lesonsky

RIEVA LESONSKY
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
ENTREPRENEUR MAGAZINE



[2]

2 GETTING STARTED

Lay a strong foundation for your eBay future. Pick a great User ID, set up a Seller's Account, and get all your basics in order.

3 EQUIPPING YOUR OFFICE

Get the materials you need. Bring your office up to speed with the right hardware and software, and learn to optimize your space.

4 DOING YOUR HOMEWORK

Double-check your plans. Get to know your audience and the eBay Marketplace to make sure your business is structurally sound.

5 PRICING YOUR PRODUCTS

Be right on point. Use expert pricing strategies to get the most from your products.

5 PERFECTING YOUR LISTINGS

Put your best foot forward. Focus on the details to ensure your listings exude professionalism.

6 MANAGING YOUR TIME

Stick to your schedule. Balance your home and work life, and know how to get help when you need it.

7 SOURCING PRODUCTS

Keep the good times rolling. Learn where to find a steady stream of products to keep business flowing.

8 KEEPING CUSTOMERS HAPPY

Turn on the charm. Practice exemplary customer service to avoid any disputes and keep buyers coming back for more.

9 LEGAL & TAX TIPS

Cover your bases. Insure your items, stay on top of business requirements, and know when to bring in a professional.

10 PACKING & SHIPPING

Send your products out there. Pack and post your products like the pros with a plethora of helpful tools from eBay and the U.S. Postal Service.

11 GETTING HELP FROM EBAY

Stay connected. eBay is a community—take advantage of its tools, publications and resources to keep your business growing strong.

12 USING EBAY TO EXPAND YOUR EXISTING BUSINESS

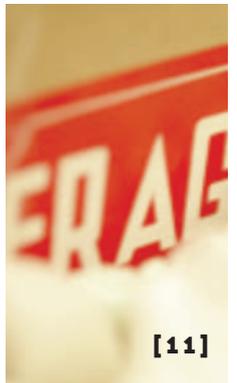
Cross-market in style. eBay can help you build your brand, increase awareness and test your market—what more are you waiting for?

12 SETTING UP AN EBAY STORE

Move on up. Listings are great, but a Store really takes sales to the next level, so go ahead, and make the most of eBay's options.



[9]



[11]



[12]



[4]



[7]

PHOTOS © PHOTOS.COM

Must have! Want to know more about starting and growing a business on eBay?

Make sure to get a copy of *Entrepreneur's new eBay Startup Guide*, on newsstands everywhere August 30, 2005.

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HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF SELLERS MAKE A PART-TIME OR FULL-TIME LIVING ON EBAY®. THERE ARE MANY PARTS TO RUNNING A BUSINESS ON EBAY, INCLUDING FINDING PRODUCT TO SELL, SETTING PRICES, MANAGING LISTINGS AND CUSTOMERS, UNDERSTANDING LEGAL REQUIREMENTS, MARKETING THE BUSINESS, HANDLING FULFILLMENT AND, OF COURSE, MAKING SMART SHIPPING DECISIONS WITH THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE®. WHETHER YOU'RE GETTING READY TO SELL YOUR FIRST ITEM OR YOU'RE A SEASONED POWER-SELLER, HERE ARE 101 TIPS TO HELP YOU TAKE YOUR BUSINESS ON EBAY AS FAR AS YOU WANT IT TO GO.

Getting Started

(1) REGISTER ON EBAY

Go to www.ebay.com and click "Register." You'll choose a User ID and password and then enter your contact information.

(2) CHOOSE A USER ID CAREFULLY

Be sure to choose a User ID that represents your business or the items you sell. This will become your eBay brand identity to prospective buyers.

(3) CONFIRM YOUR REGISTRATION

You'll receive an e-mail immediately upon registering. Follow the instructions in the e-mail to confirm your registration. You're now ready to set up a Seller's Account.

(4) SET UP A SELLER'S ACCOUNT

Click the "Sell" link at the top of any eBay page. You'll provide your debit or credit card and checking account information in this step. This verifies your identity. At this time, you will also choose how you would like to pay your eBay fees. (Don't worry—you won't be charged until you post an item for sale, and you can also edit this information at any time.) Rest assured that your information is kept safe on eBay's secure servers.

(5) GET ID VERIFIED

You can use the ID Verify option instead of, or in addition to, giving your credit card information. You'll need this if you don't have a credit card. And you might want to do it so you'll be given an ID Verify icon in your feedback profile, giving the eBay community more confidence to buy from you and allowing you to bypass some feedback requirements when selling in certain formats.

(6) SIGN UP WITH PAYPAL

PayPal allows you to accept online payments for your eBay items. According to an internal study of listings in some of eBay's most popular categories, buyers prefer to purchase items that

offer PayPal—in fact, the study showed that these listings are 6 percent more likely to sell, and experience a 5 percent average increase in final price. Sign up at www.paypal.com, and make it your preferred payment option in your item listings.

Equipping Your Office

(7) ASSESS YOUR COMPUTER

Most likely, you won't need to buy a new computer to start selling on eBay, so stick with the one you've got. However, it's time for an upgrade if your computer runs slower than a turtle crossing the road—or if it doesn't work with a digital camera, since you'll need to take photos of your items.

(8) UPGRADE TO A HIGH-SPEED INTERNET CONNECTION

Your time is too valuable to work on a dial-up connection. Call your phone company about DSL or your cable company about cable internet access.

(9) HAVE A BUSINESS PHONE LINE AND VOICE MAIL AT HOME

Some of your potential customers will have questions, and many would rather talk to you than send an e-mail. Shoppers who can't reach you, don't get their calls returned or have their calls answered by your toddler likely won't do business with you. A homebased business runs better with a separate phone line and voice mail.

(10) GET A GOOD DIGITAL CAMERA

Great photos are a must. Invest in a brand-name digital camera so you can download photos to your computer and then upload them to your new listings. Look for a digital camera with 2.0 megapixels or better, a manual flash-off feature and a macro feature so you can focus one inch from an object. A scanner is also good to have for flat items. If you're thinking about updating or purchasing equipment, keep in mind you can buy the products you need on eBay. In 2004, for in-

"eBay has allowed me to never tell a customer no.

If there is a market out there somewhere, eBay

can usually help me out." —Tux MacAuley, auction-partner

stance, businesses spent more than \$3.3 billion purchasing business equipment on eBay.

(11) CREATE A PLACE TO TAKE PHOTOS

This can take place anywhere in your workspace, as long as it's clear of clutter and gets good light. Natural light is best, but diffused artificial light can be added. Use a tripod to take sharp photos and a plain backdrop to create quality pictures.

(12) ORGANIZE A FILING SYSTEM

Keep all business records, customer information, invoices, receipts, marketing ideas and other kinds of documentation in an easily accessible place.

(13) GET COMPUTER BACKUP DISKS

Power surges or computer crashes can wipe out your valuable data in seconds. Routinely save the business documents on your hard drive to disks. Label them, and file them in a safe place.

(14) USE ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE

Accounting software helps you know how your business is doing so you can make it more profitable. It's also going to make your life much easier come tax time. You can hire a bookkeeper to recommend the right software for your business, set it up for you and teach you how to use it.

(15) MAKE SPACE FOR INVENTORY AND SHIPPING MATERIALS

These items don't have to be in your office, but they do need to be in a safe, dry place nearby. This helps you keep an eye on what you've got and what you need as your business grows. The U.S. Postal Service offers free U.S. Postal Service-eBay co-branded Priority Mail® shipping boxes. Go to <http://ebaysupplies.usps.com> to order yours.

[16] MAKE SPACE TO PACKAGE ITEMS

A kitchen table might work for new eBay sellers who have launched just a few listings. You'll soon outgrow this space, however, so look around your home or office, and start thinking about how you'll expand as you ramp up your business.

Doing Your Homework

[17] REVIEW PROHIBITED AND RESTRICTED ITEMS

Don't risk listing cancellation, limits on your account privileges or account suspension—verify that the items you want to sell aren't prohibited or restricted from being sold on eBay by going to <http://pages.ebay.com/help/policies/items-ov.html>.

[18] START DETERMINING WHAT TO SELL

Think about what categories you have an interest in, what you enjoy and what you already know. Use your existing knowledge to determine the eBay categories you might want to

sell in. Study the Category Tips at Seller Central (www.ebay.com/sellercentral) to learn about the basics of selling in each category, top buyer searches, success stories and specific selling strategies.

[19] CHECK OUT "HOT ITEMS BY CATEGORY" REPORT

This monthly report (<http://pages.ebay.com/sellercentral/whatshot.html>) reveals the categories in which demand is growing faster than supply and bid-to-item ratios are high. Be sure to print out this report and file it so you can track monthly changes and do some of your own trend forecasting.

[20] PREVIEW EBAY'S MERCHANDISING CALENDAR

Want more shoppers to see your listings? The Merchandising Calendar (<http://pages.ebay.com/sellercentral/calendar>) shows the categories eBay will feature on its home page, and on which dates. These categories will get an extra dose of free promotion, so make sure your relevant listings go live during these times.

[21] TRACK THE EBAY PULSE

Get a snapshot of what's popular on eBay every day at the "What's Hot" section of Seller Central. The lists may include hot Stores, products, and searches, as well as high-priced items and most-watched items. It's also a great place to get marketing ideas.

[22] RESEARCH THE MARKETPLACE

Search for items similar to those you want to sell, and evaluate your opportunities. Study the number of bidders and buyers, final prices, the number of competitors and the selling features your competitors promote.

Pricing Your Products

[23] CONSIDER YOUR ITEM'S RETAIL VALUE

Determine how much your item would cost in an offline store, and research prices on the web, too. A price below the item's retail value will be seen as a great deal.

[24] CONSIDER YOUR ITEM'S PERCEIVED VALUE

Some items are worth a lot more than their retail values. Before you set your price, think about how the uniqueness of your item, or the shortage of supply compared to the demand, makes your item more valuable.

[25] RESEARCH HOW MUCH SIMILAR ITEMS ARE SELLING FOR NOW ON EBAY

Run a keyword search for your item or similar items to check out your competitors. Take notes on the starting bids, current bids and Buy It Now prices.

[26] RESEARCH HOW MUCH SIMILAR ITEMS HAVE SOLD FOR ON EBAY

Search completed listings to chart the historic selling performance of items similar to yours. Also, compare the final price to the listing description to see what influenced the buyers' actions. This technique can also help you figure out good times to launch your listings.

[27] TAKE EBAY'S FEES INTO ACCOUNT

Even though eBay charges a small listing Insertion Fee and a Final Value Fee, you may want to take these into account when you're pricing your items. Both of these fees are listed here: <http://pages.ebay.com/help/sell/fees.html>.

[28] SET A LOW STARTING BID

Although you don't have to set your starting bid to the minimum (1 cent), a low starting bid invites shoppers to make immediate bids and keep track of your listing by clicking on the "Watch This Item" link.

"eBay is the fastest way to maximize returns for in-demand products and liquidate slow-moving or unusual products." —Neal Sherman, tagex

[29] USE A RESERVE PRICE ONLY WHEN NECESSARY

The allure of eBay for buyers is that they have control over what they'll pay for items. Setting a Reserve Price can make buyers think you want too much for the item because this number is hidden. While listings without a Reserve Price typically get more bids, it may be necessary to protect your investment—so use the feature with caution.

[30] TRY THE BUY IT NOW OPTION

Using this pricing option allows shoppers to buy your item immediately, at the price you set. A starting bid that is much lower than your Buy It Now price can also start the bidding battle. (The Buy It Now price will disappear once the first bid is made.) You should use the Buy It Now option only when you are sure of the market value of the item. Letting the market decide the price can oftentimes yield a higher price on a unique or in-demand item. Do your research first.

[31] USE BUY IT NOW FOR MULTIPLES OF THE SAME ITEM

When you have more than one of the same item, an auction listing won't help you sell this inventory as quickly as a fixed price will. Instead, use the Buy It Now option so buyers can order more than one at the same time. (To do this, you must have 30 or more feedback points and be registered for 14 days or be ID Verified.)

Perfecting Your Listings

[32] CHOOSE THE BEST CATEGORY

From eBay's home page, click the "Buy" button, and browse the categories to find ones that work



Photo © Photos.com

“There’s a high level of integrity among eBay buyers and sellers. eBay puts people in business when they couldn’t have gotten there any other way.” –Don Cohen, toolking

for your items. Also see where competing items have been placed. It’s a good idea to choose two categories for your listings to reach more buyers.

[33] WRITE A DESCRIPTIVE TITLE

Use words in your item title that people can look for when doing a search on eBay; examples include brand name, style, size and color. You get up to 55 characters, so make each word count.

[34] SPOTLIGHT YOUR TITLE

For an additional fee, you can grab buyers’ attention when they search for listings by bolding your text (which has increased final item prices by an average of 25 percent) and using a color highlight or border on your listing. Also, say more about your item by adding a subtitle.

[35] OFFER GIFT SERVICES

Stand out from your competitors by offering gift services. Offer gift-wrapping, a gift card, express shipping and shipping directly to the recipient. Your listing will shine on search pages with a gift icon, attracting buyers shopping for gifts. This can increase bids by 3 percent. You can also offer Saturday delivery through the U.S. Postal Service with no surcharges to the regular shipping costs.

[36] MAKE YOUR PHOTOS SELL

Photograph each item separately, because combining products in one picture confuses buyers. Use a professional-looking backdrop, good lighting and a variety of angles in your product pictures to show off the condition of your items. (Items with two or more photos are 9 percent more likely to sell.) The better your items look, the more valuable they appear.

[37] WRITE DETAILS IN THE DESCRIPTION

The type, brand, condition and value of the item are all important selling features you should describe in detail in your description.

[38] ENHANCE YOUR DESCRIPTION DESIGN

Use the simple HTML editing tools to format your description, making it eye-catching yet easy to read. Add paragraph breaks and play with the bold, underline, font colors, font size, alignment, bullet list and cross-listing links tools to create a page design that draws in buyers.

[39] PROVIDE SHIPPING INFORMATION

State your flat handling fee, include the U.S. Postal Shipping Calculator on eBay, or otherwise clearly indicate shipping costs in your listings. Shipping and handling can really tack on significant costs to buyers, so whichever option you choose, be clear about the cost and the shipping provider. The U.S. Postal Service offers Priority Mail Flat Rate packaging, which lets you ship your item (up to 70 pounds) anywhere in the U.S. for one flat rate.

[40] INCLUDE A RETURN POLICY

If you offer returns or exchanges, state this in your item description to give buyers confidence in placing their orders with you. The Merchandise Return Service from the U.S. Postal Service makes it easy and convenient to return items by providing your customers with a pre-printed, prepaid return label.

Managing Your Time

[41] SET A SCHEDULE

Assign tasks to certain times, and try not to get distracted by non-business-related tasks. For example, respond to buyers between 9 and 10 a.m.

[42] WRITE A DAILY TO-DO LIST

Schedule a time to follow up on opportunities that aren’t part of your normal tasks, and use

this time frame to respond to unplanned tasks that pop up that day.

[43] TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EBAY’S LISTING TOOLS

eBay provides seller tools to help run a business more efficiently, such as Turbo Lister and Selling Manager. The eBay Tools Wizard (<http://pages.ebay.com/sell/toolrecommendations.html>) recommends solutions based on your needs.

[44] CONSIDER HIRING A TRADING ASSISTANT

When your business on eBay starts booming, you might want help managing your listings so you can focus on other areas of growing your business and also enjoy a balanced work/home life. Hiring a Trading Assistant can free up the time you need and want. Find a Trading Assistant at <http://pages.ebay.com/tahub/index.html>.

[45] SHARE YOUR PLAN WITH YOUR TEAM

Whether you work from home or an office location, your friends and family may think it’s OK to interrupt you whenever it’s convenient for them. Unless selling on eBay is a hobby for you, discuss what you need from them so you can run a successful business.

[46] USE MY EBAY

Make sure to use My eBay to monitor your listings and activity on the site. My Messages can also help you keep track of your eBay correspondence.

Sourcing Products

[47] CHECK OUT GARAGE SALES

There are probably garage sales in your neighborhood every weekend. But shop wisely. It’s important to know which categories you really want to focus on and the kinds of products to look for.

[48] TRY THRIFT STORES

Browse thrift shops with a careful eye for good deals. Look for items that will ultimately sell for more than a few dollars, though—you invest time and money into each item you list, sell and ship, so make each item count.

[49] VISIT ESTATE SALES

You can find unique and valuable items and super deals at estate sales. Go to a few to learn what’s typically sold, then do your research on eBay to see which types of items sell for a high profit. You’ll be trained to spot the gems.

[50] CHECK OUT YOUR REGION’S SPECIALTY STORES

Most cities or regions have specialty foods, sports team collectibles and unique items that aren’t

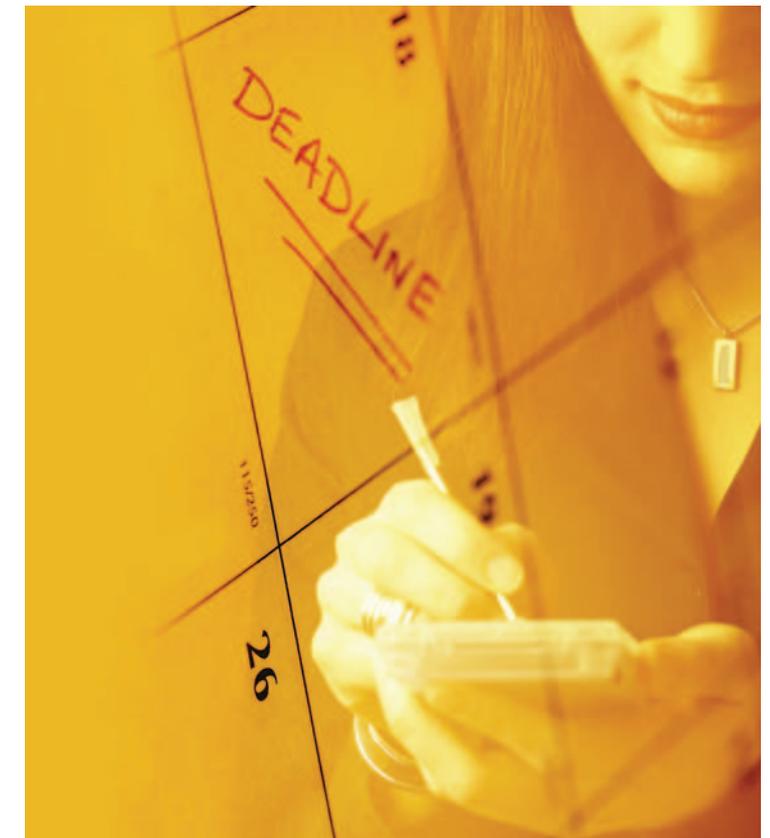


PHOTO © PHOTOS.COM

“eBay lets me pick up whatever I need on a moment’s notice and have it delivered directly to my door. eBay is a terrific educational tool for people just starting out.” —Roman Kaniuga, rexrogo

sold in other cities, states or countries. Take this promotional merchandise to eBay, and sell these great gifts to buyers who can’t travel to your hometown.

(51) LOCATE WHOLESALERS

Buy items in bulk at a significant savings. Type “wholesaler” into a search engine such as Google or Yahoo!, or check out eBay’s wholesale category at <http://pages.ebay.com/catindex/catwholesale.html>.

(52) CONSIDER MANUFACTURERS

When manufacturers’ items are on sale, you can buy and then resell them on eBay. You can also contact them about being their eBay reseller. It might be difficult to connect with big brands until you’re a successful PowerSeller, so start with local or small manufacturers. PowerSellers can also find products available in bulk directly from manufacturers at the Reseller Marketplace (www.ebay.com/reseller).

(53) ATTEND INDUSTRY TRADE SHOWS

Not only will you get a preview of product trends, you can also connect with manufacturers and discuss the opportunity of selling their products on eBay. Bring your business cards, and be ready to discuss your success as an eBay seller.

(54) DESIGN YOUR OWN PRODUCTS

With some selling experience under your belt, track demand for products your company could manufacture. Do effective market testing before you invest money in making your own products.

(55) FIND DEALS ON EBAY

Sometimes, eBay sellers don’t know the value of what they’re selling, or they’ve misspelled key item names and aren’t reaching a large audience. When this happens, you can swoop in to buy and then resell other sellers’ items at a profit.

Keeping Customers Happy

(56) CONTACT THE BUYER IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE PURCHASE

Once an item has sold, send the buyer an invoice. Go to the “All Selling” section of My eBay, and choose “Send Invoice” for the item you’ve just sold. Enter payment instructions and a personal message, which will appear on the invoice.

(57) RESPOND TO QUESTIONS QUICKLY

Answer questions about your items with lightning speed to encourage greater response to your listings. Post the answers right in your listing to avoid duplicate questions from other prospective buyers. Continue the great response time after the sale to demonstrate your concern for your customers.

(58) SHIP ITEMS AS SOON AS PAYMENT IS RECEIVED

Once your buyers’ payments are in your bank account, don’t keep them waiting. Shipping items immediately helps you get good feedback and repeat customers.

(59) SEND A SURPRISE WITH YOUR ITEM

A thank-you card or a free gift for first-time buyers or loyal customers leaves a lasting impression on your customers. You can use the U.S. Postal Service’s NetPost® Premium Postcards or Card Store to create unique, hard-copy mail. It’s like having your own direct-mail department.

(60) LEAVE POSITIVE BUYER FEEDBACK

A buyer needs to build buying credibility, so praise prompt payment by posting positive feedback.

(61) DONATE TO A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

Donate part of or the entire final sale price to your favorite nonprofit organizations. Support your community, and your charity listings will get additional visibility along with a blue-and-yellow ribbon icon. Search more than 5,000 charities at <http://givingworks.ebay.com>.

Legal & Tax Tips

(62) PICK A BUSINESS NAME THAT ISN’T TRADEMARKED

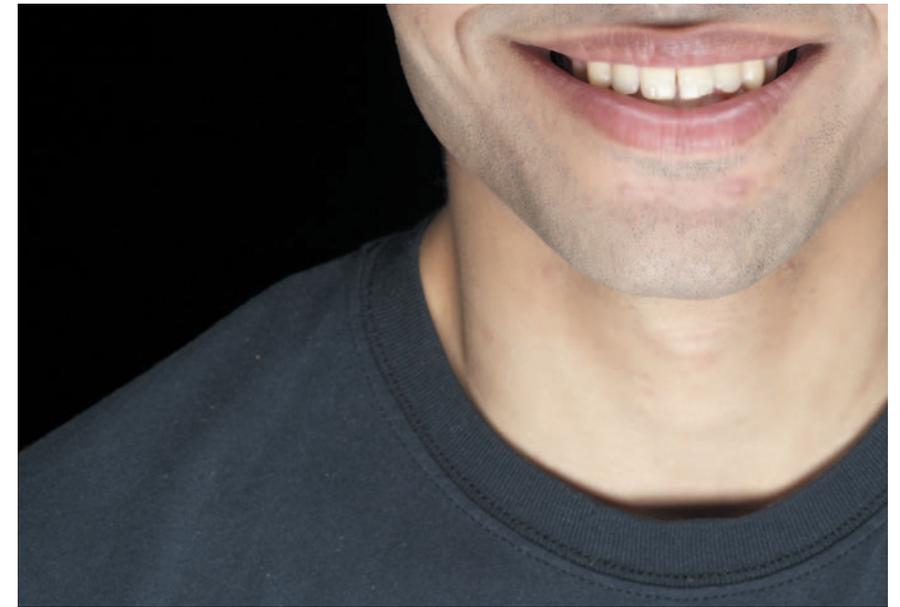
Your business name is a critical part of your brand. Before you use one you’ve selected, check with your country’s trademark office to verify it’s available. (Visit the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office’s website at www.uspto.gov.) Remember, your business name cannot contain the name “eBay” or any approximation. You may need to hire a trademark lawyer to conduct further research.

(63) CONSULT WITH A BUSINESS LAWYER

Your location (or where you live) may determine that your business on eBay is subject to certain licensing and tax requirements. Avoid future legal or financial surprises by meeting with a lawyer, preferably one that specializes in the small-business arena and is familiar with eBay.

(64) MEET WITH AN ACCOUNTANT

Even if you handle your own bookkeeping, hire an accountant to help you with your taxes. But don’t wait until the end of the year to meet—you could get great business-expense tips right



now that could help you plan a better budget for the rest of the year.

(65) INSURE YOUR ITEMS

It’s a good idea to buy postal insurance for your high-priced items in the event your shipment gets lost or damaged in the mail. Take advantage of PayPal’s Buyer Protection, and insure your items. Insurance is available for all U.S. Postal Service classes of mail available through eBay. Save yourself a trip to the post office, and order insurance for your items online.

(66) BEWARE OF UNUSUAL BUYER REQUESTS

To help protect yourself from potential fraud, be wary of buyers who have unusual requests. If buyers ask to send partial payments, consider that a warning sign.

(67) AVOID BUYER DISPUTES

Respond to a buyer complaint quickly, and try to resolve it. If the buyer threatens a chargeback, ask him or her to file a claim at the Security & Resolution Center (www.ebay.com/securitycenter)

“Without eBay, we couldn’t have grown as fast as we have. eBay just makes everything easier. It has given me the financial security I need as my business grows.” —John Homechanh, 4greatlaptops

instead, so that you can both try to work the situation out to achieve mutual satisfaction.



Packing & Shipping

[68] CALCULATE AND POST SHIPPING COSTS

You can charge a flat fee or use the U.S. Postal Shipping Calculator on eBay in your listings so buyers can figure out their own shipping costs based on ZIP codes. Try out the Shipping Calculator even before listing an item at <http://pages.ebay.com/services/buyandsell/shippingcenter7.htm>.

[69] OFFER BUYERS SHIPPING CHOICES

Let your buyers choose how they want their items shipped to them. The U.S. Postal Shipping Calculator on eBay allows you to choose up to three shipping services to offer U.S. buyers, plus up to three for international buyers. Select from First Class Mail®, Express Mail®, Priority Mail® (including Flat Rate products), Media Mail® and Parcel Post® for your domestic customers, and Global Express Guaranteed® and Global Express Mail® for your international customers.

[70] DON'T OVERINFLATE SHIPPING AND HANDLING COSTS

An unreasonable shipping and handling fee is a turnoff to buyers. Keep your price fair—or even try using a significantly lower handling fee as an incentive to buy from you.

[71] GIVE SHIPPING DISCOUNTS

Reward a buyer who orders multiple items and combines his payment by giving a shipping dis-

count. Go to eBay Preferences in My eBay and turn on the shipping preference for “Offer Combined Payments Shipping” within Seller Preferences.

[72] PRINT SHIPPING LABELS

Save time and make your packages look professional with printed U.S. Postal Service shipping labels with postal insurance through eBay (from My eBay or the “View Item” page once an item has sold) or PayPal. You’ll be able to print the labels from your own computer right to your standard printer or one of many label printers. Plus, the buyer’s address is pre-entered for your convenience, and you can elect not to show the postage amount on the label. According to a recent survey, eBay users said that printing shipping labels on eBay was easy to do (80 percent) and convenient (78 percent). In addition, two-thirds of eBay users surveyed stated they’ve saved time by printing shipping labels on eBay.

[73] USE GOOD SHIPPING MATERIALS

Protecting your items and creating a professional image increases the perceived value of your items.

[74] TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FREE SHIPPING BOXES

eBay and the U.S. Postal Service now offer home delivery of free, co-branded shipping boxes for Priority Mail service. For more information, check out <http://ebaysupplies.usps.com>.

[75] GET FREE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE PACKAGE PICKUP

Now you don’t even have to leave your home or office to ship items you’ve sold on eBay. Schedule a pickup for specific days—up to 30 days in advance—at no charge. For more information, visit the U.S. Postal Service Shipping Zone on eBay at www.ebay.com/usps.

[76] SEE SHIPPING AS A MARKETING OPPORTUNITY

Your boxes are seen by a lot of people as they travel around the world. Creative shipping labels

and stickers with your eBay Store name or URL can catch the eye of many potential customers.

[77] TRACK YOUR SHIPMENTS

Boost buyer confidence and reduce customer inquiries by tracking your shipments. When you use eBay’s Online Postage to print your U.S. Postal Service label, an automated e-mail will notify your buyer that his or her package is on the way. About half of eBay users surveyed no longer send confirmation e-mails (58 percent), hand-write labels (54 percent) or stand in line at the post office (45 percent), demonstrating the time-saving component of using shipping products and services on eBay.

[78] GO INTERNATIONAL

Visit eBay’s Global Trade Center (<http://pages.ebay.com/globaltrade>) to learn selling and shipping tips for expanding your business to a worldwide audience. The U.S. Postal Service offers a variety of global shipping options to meet your buyers’ delivery and budget needs.

Getting Help From eBay

[79] START WITH THE “HOW TO SELL” TOUR

New sellers should watch the selling demonstration at <http://pages.ebay.com/education/howtosell/index.html>. Learn more at the eBay Learning Center (<http://pages.ebay.com/education>).

[80] JOIN THE EBAY COMMUNITY

Get connected with other members, and stay updated on the latest happenings on eBay. You’ll continually learn new ways to grow your business while networking with both new sellers and experienced PowerSellers.

[81] ASK EBAY CONSULTANTS FOR ADVICE

Once you know how to sell on eBay and you’ve checked out the eBay Community, your head will be buzzing with new business ideas. Run your questions by the Seller OnRamp consultants

(<http://pages.ebay.com/startselling>) for free advice on creating a profitable business on eBay.

[82] SUBSCRIBE TO THE CHATTER

Every month, get feature articles, tips, helpful links and member interviews. Share your eBay story, and you may be next in the member spotlight (<http://pages.ebay.com/community/chatter>).

[83] SIGN UP FOR THE POWERUP NEWSLETTER

Get advance notice of upcoming events and promotions by e-mail at <http://pages.ebay.com/sellercentral/newsflash.html>. You’ll get a heads-up on free listing days, feature discounts, seller sweepstakes and more.

[84] TUNE IN TO EBAY RADIO

Listen to host Jim “Griff” Griffith, dean of eBay Education, every Tuesday for hot eBay topics. Go to www.wradio.com/ebayradio to click on archived shows, and listen to catch the live ones.



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[85] ATTEND AN EDUCATIONAL EVENT

Get the scoop on the newest selling tools and techniques from eBay's online and live workshops. You'll learn tips for turbo-boosting your business on eBay. Check out the schedule of classes and online courses at www.ebay.com/university.

[86] GET UNSTUCK WITH LIVE HELP

If you find yourself confused in the initial listing setup process, or if you have a question about an advanced selling tactic, look for the "Live Help" link in the upper right-hand corner of many of the pages in the "Sell" section of eBay.

Using eBay to Expand Your Existing Business

[87] TAKE YOUR BRAND WITH YOU

Your business on eBay is a reflection of your brand, so use your company logo, tag lines, colors, graphics and copy in your eBay listings. A business on eBay with a professional yet personalized look can often command higher final prices.

[88] CAPITALIZE ON YOUR BRAND

Companies with brand recognition can move a lot of inventory by selling popular items at a discount on eBay while offering their same satisfaction guarantees.

[89] TEST-MARKET PRODUCT IDEAS ON EBAY

Conduct market research before you promote new items on your website and in other media.

[90] SET UP AN EBAY STORE

Take your sales to the next level by launching an eBay Store. You'll have access to tools that streamline the eBay selling process, such as store reports, search engine optimization capabilities, lower listing fees and other features to generate higher revenue and profit margins. Go to <http://stores.ebay.com>.

[91] PROMOTE YOUR EBAY STORE FROM YOUR WEBSITE

Use your website to drive visitors and customers to eBay to purchase special item offers that don't compete with the ones on your website.

Setting Up an eBay Store

[92] CUSTOMIZE YOUR STORE

Use those branding elements mentioned in tip No. 87 in your Store, and create custom pages and category names, too. If you're launching a new business on eBay and don't yet have a "branded look," then select one of eBay's predesigned theme templates to give personality to your Store.

[93] DESIGN MARKETING MATERIALS TO PROMOTE YOUR STORE

Get business cards, fliers, letterhead and envelopes to strengthen your Store's brand and invite offline shoppers to check it out. Download eBay's marketing templates for

free (<http://pages.ebay.com/storefronts/collateral.html>) or visit NetPost Business Connect at www.usps.com/netpost to create and mail advertising and promotional messages to your customers.

[94] OPTIMIZE YOUR STORE FOR SEARCH ENGINES

Include relevant keywords in your Store URL, title, description, category names and page copy to achieve free rankings and traffic from top search engines.

[95] ROTATE YOUR PROMOTION BOXES

Use one or two promotion boxes near the top of each Store page, and/or below the left navigation bar, to feature new items or announce specials. Change these at least monthly to remind buyers to return for more hot offers.

[96] SEND CUSTOMIZED E-MAILS TO YOUR BUYERS

You can create and manage up to five e-mail newsletters. Within your store and in your invoices, remind buyers to opt in to your e-mail list through the "Add to Favorite Sellers/Stores" link. Write newsletters offering helpful tips to subscribers, and of course, mention your special store promotions.

[97] CROSS-PROMOTE YOUR ITEMS

Use your "Item," "Bid Confirm" and "Purchase Confirmation" pages to cross-promote other items from your store. Match items that complement each other to encourage buyers to do more browsing and buying from your business.

[98] DRIVE EBAY TRAFFIC TO YOUR LISTINGS AND STORE

Through the Keywords on eBay program, a banner ad you create will appear at the top of the search results pages for specific keywords you bid on. You'll only pay when buyers click on your ad and visit your listings or Store. Featured Stores and Anchor Stores even receive some free keyword clicks.

Without the deals on eBay, Dr. Brad Roach (bradwins) wouldn't have been able to remodel his clinic. Since the remodel, business has been booming, with about a 35 percent increase in gross revenue.

[99] ADVERTISE OFFLINE AND GET 25 PERCENT OF YOUR ADVERTISING INSERTION FEES REIMBURSED

Through eBay's Co-op Advertising program (www.ebaycoopads.com), when you advertise your Store offline, eBay will reimburse 25 percent of your Advertising Insertion Fees—up to \$8,000 worth. (This opportunity is exclusively for PowerSellers in good standing who operate eBay Stores or are Trading Assistants.) Plus, you can earn up to 75 percent off your final value fees by driving traffic to your Store from web pages outside of eBay. Get more details at <http://pages.ebay.com/storefronts/referral-credit-steps.html>.

[100] STUDY YOUR SALES AND TRAFFIC REPORTS

At least every month, you should analyze your Sales Reports. Study this data to identify areas of improvement, potential business opportunities and marketing ideas.

[101] TEST, TWEAK, TRACK

Use the free data eBay provides to continually refine your eBay Store's performance. Infuse your own creativity into your selling strategy to find new ways of growing your business.

For even more information, go to www.ebay.com/usps and www.entrepreneur.com/ebay.

CATHERINE SEDA (www.sedacommunication.com), an *Entrepreneur* magazine columnist, teaches marketing tips in her book *Search Engine Advertising* and at eBay University.



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MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY INTERFACE.



Sure our new Web site looks great. But, in this case, beauty is more than skin-deep. That's because the new usps.com is filled with easy-to-use tools to help you take care of just about all your shipping needs. You can pay postage, print labels, add insurance and order a next day Carrier Pickup* at no charge. Use Priority Mail® service and you also get Delivery Confirmation™ for free. The simple yet powerful usps.com – it's how the U.S. Postal Service® is working for you.

