

STAY-AT-HOME *MOM'S*

GUIDE TO

Successful

eBay

SELLING

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eBay consultant, and single mom of 2.*

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Digitally Remembered

Introduction

eBay will always have a special place in my life. Without it, I would not be where I am today, nor would I have been able to have a home business and stay at home with my children since 2003. This book was written to help others enjoy the freedom of working from home, and to help other people move along the learning curve much faster than I did.

I am a big believer in Karma and paying it forward. I ask that you please pass this eBook on to others via email, post on your blog, your Facebook page, work at home groups, Twitter, or anywhere else you wish. Keep paying it forward and let's hope this reaches someone who needs it.

This eBook is written based on my experience as an eBay seller since 2003 and was revised in March 2010.

Chapter 1

What You'll Learn in This Book

Since I started selling on eBay in 2003, I have sold thousands of items to thousands of buyers all over the world. During this evolving process, I have had numerous requests from friends, family, and other moms to share information about how to sell items and make money on eBay all from the comfort of home, and on your own flexible schedule. This guide will give you valuable information about the entire selling process. You'll learn:

- How to make thousands of dollars a month selling on eBay
- What to sell
- Where to find items to sell
- How to use eBay to its fullest potential
- How to take professional looking photos of your items
- Creative strategies for building your customer base
- Time-saving shortcuts
- How to fit eBay into your busy, stay at home mom schedule
- All about shipping
- Effective methods for growing your business
- How to get started TODAY, with no financial investment

This guide was written with stay at home moms in mind, but any motivated seller can benefit from the information.

As a stay at home mom, you have some flexibility to make an eBay business successful because you can arrange your own schedule. You can decide when you shop for, list, and ship your items. Most importantly, you can decide how much you want to work. An eBay business has unlimited potential as long as you are dedicated and persistent with growing your business. This truly is a business where the more you work, the more money you will make.

Note: You may need to hold down your CTRL key while clicking on the links to open them.

Chapter 2

How my eBay Journey Began

My eBay journey began in 2003 after I went through a divorce. I was in the process of “cleaning out the junk,” and was pondering a garage sale. The thought of having a garage sale made me tired! I have had garage sales before, and they are entirely too much work for the return. A few friends at work were hooked on eBay, so I thought I would give it a try. If they could do it, so could I.

First, I bought a few things on eBay to learn about the process. Everything went well and I enjoyed the experience. I borrowed a neighbor’s digital camera and started creating my listings to sell my own items. At first, I sold quite a few items that were just lying around the house. Some examples include:

- A Dale Earnhardt car seat (sold for \$71)
- An ugly bowl that I received as a wedding gift 15 years earlier (sold for \$51)
- A used Kitchen Aid stand mixer (sold for \$101)
- An old, gently used electric blanket (sold for \$30)
- A collection of used high-end kitchen gadgets (sold for \$42)
- A bottle (partially used) of expensive perfume (sold for \$32)
- An old, broken, crystal clock (sold for \$28)

The list goes on. Once I ran out of items from my own home, I realized that I had better find more things to sell. I was beginning to enjoy that extra income.

Chapter 3

What to Sell and Where to Find It

This section will cover some of the most frequently asked questions about what items to sell and where to find them.

How Much Money Can I Make?

I'll start by saying that eBay has not made me a millionaire (yet), but it has made me a thousandaire. The first month on eBay, my profit was \$200. By the third month, my profit was \$1,000. Before long, my profit reached \$2,500 a month. Then my earnings grew to \$3,500 a month. It will take time to grow your business, and you have to be willing to learn, experiment, and be patient. The potential is unlimited. Understand that building your eBay business is a process that takes time.

What do I Sell?

The most popular question I hear is, "What should I sell?" My answer is, "Anything." Once you start selling on eBay, you just need to keep your eyes open and your antennas up. You can sell just about anything. Here are some examples of items I have found while I was out doing every day errands that sold for big money on eBay.

[All Bran Fiber Drink from grocery store](#) (discontinued item)

[Nicroette Lozenges from grocery store](#) (discontinued item)

[Ugg Slippers](#) (DSW clearance)

[Candle](#) (Tuesday morning)

[Rothschild Coat](#) (Kohl's clearance)

[True Religion Jeans](#) (purchased from eBay)

[Click here](#) to watch a 90-minute webinar hosted by my boss, Skip McGrath and myself about how to determine what to sell on eBay. This will give you lots of ideas about how to spot items to sell.

You may not have to purchase anything to sell. EBay has a section on services. Here sellers offer graphic design, calligraphy, event planning, and artistic services. If you are a skilled artist and can draw or paint, you could have buyers email photos to you to work from. Do you sew, knit, crochet, or embroider? You can make custom gifts for buyers. Just make up a few samples, take photos of them, and post them on eBay to see what happens. The possibilities are endless. [Click here](#) for a more in depth article about selling services on eBay.

Where do I Get It?

There are many sources for finding your products. The easiest are garage sales, flea markets, church rummage sales, and consignment sales. Check for garage and yard sales in the more affluent parts of town. You would be shocked at how many people are living beyond their means, in debt up to their eyeballs, and have a garage sale so they can pay their bills! These are great venues to find children's items, electronics, kitchen items, and vintage items. Here are more resources for learning about items you can find at garage sales and thrift stores to resell on eBay.

[How to Find Items at Garage Sales to Resell on eBay](#)

[Thrift Store Items to Sell on eBay](#)

[How to Find Items Free Items to Resell on eBay](#)

[Selling Estate Sale Finds on eBay](#)

[More Ideas](#)

Look at Off-Price Stores.

Try shopping at off-price stores such as Ross, TJ Maxx, Marshall's, and Steinmart. Many brand name and designer labels are available at these stores. Don't worry if the item is out of season. You can list it now or later during the appropriate season. For example, once I found a gorgeous Christmas sweater at an incredible price in July. I sold it the next week, in the middle of summer. Some eBay shoppers are savvy enough to look for deals all year. Keep in mind that if you are selling internationally, the seasons are opposite from ours in the United States. If you are shipping internationally, someone somewhere in the world is living in the right climate to wear it or use it right now. People may be shopping for vacation apparel and these items aren't available in the off-season. For example, some folks go on Caribbean cruises year round. Have you ever tried to find a bathing suit or nice sundress in January? eBay is the answer.

If you want to stretch your dollar even further, and are fortunate enough to know a senior citizen who can go shopping with you, find out when stores have Senior Citizen discount days. You can save an additional 10-25% off your entire purchase on Senior Citizen days at some stores.

End of Season Clearance at Department Stores.

Sometimes you can find designer items for 90% off the original price. The stores WANT to get rid of this inventory. As long as you can sell it for more than you paid for it, you are on the right track. You'll be building your customer base and your feedback score. DSW has ongoing clearance all year, and you can sign up for their rewards program to get even deeper discounts. [Learn how to work the DSW system.](#)

Big Lots is a virtual treasure trove and a fantastic source for inventory. You can find DVDs, CDs, candles, clothing, kitchen gadgets, and household items. Sign up for their on-line ad to be emailed to you weekly. www.biglots.com

[How to Make Money on eBay Selling Items from Big Lots](#)

Drop Shipping

Dropshipping is an inventory management system where a seller does not physically keep inventory in stock on the premises, but is an order-filler between the supplier and the final customer. The seller advertises the item, collects money from the customer, pays the dropshipper and the dropshipper ships the item to the customer. You do not have to store or ship the item. You collect the money from the buyer, notify the company of the shipping details, and send electronic payment. Drop shipping is a way to experiment with new products on eBay without having upfront costs as you would if you bought the items wholesale.

If you don't have access to a lot of shopping or thrift stores, drop shipping may be an option for you. If you have small children at home, are a caregiver, or otherwise have difficulty tracking down inventory locally, drop shipping is a great option. You can get a free 14-day trial with [eBay's Partner Drop Shipper](#). You can access their catalog of over 1.5 million products and research what you can sell at a profit on eBay.

If you live in a rural area, and don't have access to stores, there are some alternatives. If you are an avid crafter, consider selling your items on the site [Etsy](#) – the site for all things homemade. Etsy sellers offer all sorts of craft products, unique creations, and they also take orders for custom-made items.

Consider a monthly road trip to a city nearby where you can shop at thrift stores, discount stores, or outlets. This option works great for retired people since they wouldn't have to arrange babysitting or manage children while shopping. You can arrange to stay in a cheap motel or with friends, and shop for several days.

Sourcing by Finding Clearance Items Online

Many eBay sellers find inventory online by checking the clearance section of major retailers' websites. A few tips for buying clearance merchandise online:

[Always do your research](#). Pay close attention to color, size, model number or style in the keyword section. If given a choice, choose the size, color, etc that ranks highest in the average price on the keyword sort.

Watch the shipping fee. Some sites make their money on shipping so be sure to include the shipping cost in your total cost of the item. You may need to order a certain dollar amount to get free shipping.

Be cautious with quantities. The item may look like a red hot seller on eBay now, but could fizzle out. Order enough to make a profit and test the item before ordering a large quantity.

If you have a credit card for a particular retailer, watch your credit card statement for discount codes or percent off coupons. A good example is Kohls, who constantly sends special deals in the mail. You can also visit [RetailMeNot.com](#) for discount codes to use for additional discounts when buying online.

Below is a list of several websites where you can find good quality name brand merchandise on clearance. Keep this list handy and add to it as you think of more sites.

[Kohls.com](#)

[LL Bean.com](#)

[Sierra Trading Post.com](#)

[Overstock.com](#)

[Sears.com](#)

[OldNavy.com](#)

[HomeDepot.com](#)

Walmart.com

You can also check deal forums for further discounts and coupon codes. Some good deal forums:

[FatWallet](#)

[Slick Deals](#)

[Deal Taker](#)

Daily Deals

One strategy I use for obtaining items to sell on eBay is daily deal sites. The strategy is:

- 1) See what is on the daily deal site.
- 2) Check your research tool or completed listings and determine if you can sell the item at a profit.
- 3) Watch the shipping. Some sites charge a flat shipping fee no matter how many you order, other sites charge per item. So watch your cost on shipping.

I recently found these mini photo studios on a daily deal site for \$9.95 with \$5 shipping for the entire order. I bought 5 of them. I listed them in store inventory for \$39.95 in my store. Here is my listing:



I have sold 3 of them for a profit of \$18 each. Not bad for something you can buy online, have delivered to your door, and just slap a label on to reship. Here are the

daily deal sites I use:

[Woot](#)

[1 Sale a Day](#)

[Daily Steals](#)

[Compilation of Daily Deal Sites](#)

Try to check these sites every day. You will see some items "repeated" as they make their way around the internet. They may have already hit eBay and won't be profitable because the supply is too large. Don't get discouraged. Continue to check the daily deal sites. Good products to look for:

1. Consumables (specialty batteries, perfume, anything that gets consumed and has to be replaced)
2. Small computer, cell phone, and MP3 player accessories
3. Stay away from refurbished items.
4. Brand name items – Timex, Black and Decker, Logitech, Sony, Sandisk

You may also want to sign up for [Swagbucks](#). This is a site that pays you in points for using their search engine. I redeem my points for gift cards and then sell them on eBay. There is no cost to join, you just sign up. Here is an example of where I sold \$75 worth of FREE Starbucks cards on eBay:



FREE shipping **STARBUCKS Coffee Gift Card \$75** This is my store ----->

Item condition: ---

Ended: Dec 01, 2009 00:23:28 PST

Bid history: 1 bid

Sold For: **US \$67.50**

Shipping: **FREE shipping** US Postal Service First Class Mail | [see all details](#)
Estimated delivery within 5-8 business days

Returns: 30 day money back, buyer pays return shipping | [Read details](#)

Coverage: Pay with **PayPal** and your full purchase price is covered by

Seller info
atlantagolfshop (11750) 
99.6% Positive feedback

[Ask a question](#)
[Save this seller](#)
[See other items](#)

Visit store:  Atlanta Golf Shop

Other item info

Item number: 400088927758

Item location: **Atlanta, GA**
United States

[Click here to sign up](#) and start earning points for things you can sell. Cheap is good, free is better!

Wholesale and Member's Clubs

Wholesale clubs can be a goldmine for eBay inventory, and maybe something you have not considered. Keep these points in mind:

- 1) Wholesale clubs carry different merchandise in different parts of the country, and even in different parts of the same city. You may have access to something that isn't available to everyone.
- 2) Not everyone has access to a Sam's, Costco, or BJ's. Remember, much of the US is rural and the closest member's club may be 3 hours away. Not exactly convenient.
- 3) Not everyone wants to pay the membership fee. They may only be interested in buying a few items a year.
- 4) Wholesale clubs bundle their merchandise. You may be able to break the packs in to singles or smaller bundles and create a unique product to sell on eBay. Example: 1 pack of sinus medication may include 6 smaller packs. Create a listing for 2 or 3 of the individual packs. The trick is to be unique – don't copy what other sellers are doing. Offer something different.
- 5) Members clubs offer their merchandise at below retail, so you can find bargains.
- 6) Focus on items that are lightweight and easy to ship.
- 7) Health and beauty products are great sellers. Consider these types of items:
 - a. Teeth whitening kits
 - b. Monoxidil or hair regrowth treatments
 - c. Weight loss products
 - d. Clinical strength deodorants
 - e. Diabetic products
 - f. Acne products and kits
 - g. Stop smoking products
 - h. Colon cleansing systems
 - i. Anything being advertised on infomercials
 - j. Sensitive skin products
 - k. Vitamins

- 8) Consider selling items unique to your geographical area. Examples:
 - a. Sports fan apparel for college or pro teams
 - b. Regional foods
 - c. Climate related products (if you are in Florida, does your Sam's have swimwear and sunscreen year round? Think about what you have access to that other people in different regions may not).

Strategy for Listing Items from Members Clubs

- 1) Scope out what is in your store. Actually go to the store rather than looking on the website. Often, the website doesn't have everything the store has.
- 2) Find some products that may work, record the information, and go home and research the average selling price and competition. I go around the store with my camera phone and just take pics of products to research.
- 3) When you find one that you think will work, buy one. Save your receipt.
- 4) Create a listing for the item. Take your own photo, weigh the item and determine shipping cost. Create something unique. DO NOT COPY ANOTHER SELLER'S LISTING – YOU WANT YOUR LISTING TO BE DIFFERENT.
- 5) Create an auction listing. Also, create a store inventory listing with a quantity of no more than 10. Mention in your auction listing, "Don't want to wait for this auction to end? This item is available on Buy it Now in our store." Determine if it is worth running an auction in addition to the store inventory listing. Always keep the store inventory listing active for 2-3 months to see if the product will catch on.
- 6) Once you start making sales, you can use the customer's money to buy the products. You are now an order filler and don't have to keep any stock on hand.
- 7) If your product bombs, you can return it to the store. Always save your receipts.
- 8) Sign up to receive Costco coupons. You can often buy 5-10 of an item at a significant discount. Example – coupon for \$5 off sunscreen. Stock up.
- 9) If this strategy works for you, consider the Costco or Sam's credit card. You get points which translates to cash back – and reduces your cost even more.

Things you already have.

Don't forget about your kids' items that they have outgrown, or lost interest in. Has your child ever begged you to do a sport or activity and then after the first week, decided that it wasn't for him? SELL THOSE ITEMS. Case in point: My son begged me to let him play football. We bought the equipment (used of course), the shoes, the Under Armor, the pants. He decided he didn't like getting clobbered at practice 3 times a week. So, no more football. I sold his equipment and accessories on eBay as a set. I actually made money on that deal. Many parents don't want to invest in new items for sports as they have faced this situation before. You can sell apparel, equipment, and shoes from activities like baseball, soccer, dance, gymnastics, cheerleading, tennis, and ice-skating. Don't forget about musical instruments. Look for these types of items at garage sales.

Halloween costumes are good sellers. Your child wears it once, plays in it for a week, and then it goes on the closet floor. Gather up those costumes and put them up for sale on eBay. Electronics, CD ROM games, Playstation and Gameboy games, and learning products are good sellers. I sold our Hooked on Phonics set when my kids outgrew it, as well as a Leapfrog system. (Teachers, home schoolers, and day care centers often pick up used educational products on eBay.) [How to Make Money on eBay Selling Halloween Costumes.](#)

Look for name brand kitchen items. Calphalon, Circulon, Pampered Chef, Longaberger basket, and Kitchen Aid are good sellers. Yankee Candle, Bath and Body Works, and name brand (department store) perfumes sell well, even if used. Look for cosmetics like Clinique, Mary Kay, Lancôme, etc. Those "free gift" items sell well.

Whenever one of my kids outgrows a size of clothing, I sell it as a "lot." You won't make a million dollars selling used clothing, but your items will find a new home and you will add another feedback point to your score. I often start these listings at a penny – it keeps the bidding interesting, and it is fun. Gymboree clothing is huge on eBay. It is very expensive new, so many frugal moms are turning to eBay to buy Gymboree gently used.

Once your friends and family find out that you are selling on eBay, they will come to you with items to sell. They see you as their ticket to fast cash. I have sold Peach Bowl tickets for my dad, china for my mom, clothing and collectibles for my friends. You can strike up whatever kind of deal you want and keep a percentage of the sale, and you can build your customer base and feedback score with no financial investment.

Sell items in a lot or batch. When my son finished his "Land Before Time" phase, I sold all 8 videos in a lot. Take care of an item's packaging and save the boxes. When your child has outgrown or lost interest in the item, you can sell it on eBay. Keep up with those DVD cases, CD cases, shoeboxes, or Gameboy game boxes. An item sells much better if you can include the package or box it came in, even if it is used.

If you are a new stay at home mom, and have temporarily left your career to stay home to raise a family, consider selling some of your own items that you won't need. Business suits, career apparel, briefcases, purses, costume jewelry, shoes, and anything else that you haven't used in a while. Remember the rule, "if you haven't worn it in a year, you probably won't wear it again?" Take a look in your own closet and see what you can part with. Maternity clothes are good sellers (if you are sure that you are finished with them). You will be amazed at how many things you won't miss once you start selling them on eBay.

Tip: Do you have any used cashmere items lying around? [Learn how to make money selling used cashmere items on eBay.](#)

Flip Items Listed on eBay

Also known as eBay arbitrage, flipping listings is when you find listings on eBay which have no bids (or very few bids) because they are presented badly. You buy these high quality items at a low price, relist the item yourself much better than the original seller, and make a nice profit. [Click here](#) to see a demonstration video on using this technique.

Arbitrage Tips

1. Know what you are looking for! Keep a list of brand names to search for. (See a sample list [here on my blog](#).)
2. Do your research. Know what the item sells for on eBay. (I suggest [this research tool](#).)
3. Sort search results by ENDING SOONEST. Focus on items you can win in the next few hours. Watch items a few days out and check on them later.
4. Set your limits. The objective is to win the item at a low enough price to resell for a profit.
5. Watch shipping fees. You will need to add shipping fees into your total cost of the item.
6. Always snipe. One bid encourages other bids. Stay under the radar.
7. Prepare to lose. You aren't going to win every auction. That is ok. You only want to win the auctions for items you can resell for a nice profit.
8. Stay positive. Millions of new listings are added every day so there will be plenty of opportunities to win other auctions.

Drug Stores, Big Box Stores, and Grocery Stores

You may be surprised to learn that people will buy health and beauty products, medicines, and non-perishable foods on eBay. Not everyone has access to the same things in all parts of the country, or world. Here are some examples of discontinued items that I have sold on eBay (and shared on my blog) where prices went sky high.

[Aveeno Eczema Cream](#)

[Maybelline Big Lash Mascara](#)

[The Snuggie](#)

[Click here](#) to see a list of discontinued items you can sell on eBay. Also visit my [Facebook group](#) where more items are added by our members on a regular basis.

Sell As Seen on TV Products

As Seen on TV products can be quirky, ingenious, or just plain silly. Many times, these products end up on eBay selling for 10 times the selling price on the ad. Learn how to determine which As Seen on TV products to sell on eBay, when to sell them, and how to make big profits.

Your first step is to search completed listings for As Seen on TV products that have already sold and study the pricing. Pay attention to the commercials you see and the As Seen on TV products in stores such as Walgreens and WalMart. Again, not everyone has access to the same stores or products that you do. Take note of what is popular, and go home and research the items on eBay.

If you don't watch TV much and don't see the commercials, visit the As Seen on TV website and check out the products. They are listed in categories including featured products, most popular, and best selling. Use this information to choose products to research.

As Seen on TV products are great sellers at holiday time. Some people give them as gag gifts – the Snuggie is a great example. Other products are actually helpful such as safety products and pet products. Exercise products are popular in January when everyone goes fitness crazy.

Understand that hot selling trends and hot items do not last long on eBay. This holds true for As Seen on TV products. New products are constantly being released. Also, once the word gets out about a hot product and hundreds of sellers offer it, the price drops. The key is to stay "in the know" about what is hot, and keep your eyes and ears open for new potentially popular items.

Learn How to Get Inventory Free!

No, you don't steal it, although many products on eBay are probably stolen. As I have moved along in my eBay career, I have also learned how use coupons, sales, and reward programs to get free (or practically free) items to sell.

Also, watch those clearance items, free-after-rebate deals, and learn how to combine coupons and discounts to get free inventory.

More information about where to find (practically free) inventory:

[Find Free Items on Craigslist to Sell on eBay](#)

[Get Free Products to Sell Using the CVS Extra Bucks Program](#)

[Make Money Selling Items from Kroger](#)

[Get Free Products to Sell Using the Rite Aid Single Check Rebate](#)

[Get Free Cosmetics from Ulta](#)

Not free, but cheap:

[How to Find Items at Dollar Stores to Resell on eBay For Profit](#)

[How to Sell Walmart Items for Profit on eBay](#)

[Find Walgreens Deals and Get Free Items](#)

Niche Products

A niche is a specialized segment of the market where there is demand for a product but little or no competition. Here is a cool technique for finding niche products to sell on eBay or Amazon. Sell accessories or complimentary products that correspond with

expensive popular products that are selling like crazy. For example, go to Walmart.com, Target.com, Amazon, and the eBay main page and look at the products they promote on their front page. For example, let's say you go to Target.com and see they are promoting a Garmin GPS tracking system. That tells you that GPS systems are hot. So you piggyback off of this product and look for accessories to sell - mounting systems, cases, chargers, cables, map updates. There will be a market for these products, too.

Then go into your research tool ([Terapeak](#), [completed listings](#)) whatever one you use) and research what the accessories sell for. Next, you would go online and try to find a supplier for the product, and determine if you can buy the item at a low enough price to resell it for profit. A supplier could be a wholesaler, a closeout center, outlet store, membership club like Sam's or Costco, etc. This is the hard part - finding the product at a low enough price to resell for a profit.

Keep in mind that niche products will change over time, sometimes only a few months. For example, a few years ago, a VHS tape rewinder or cleaner might have been a hot niche product. But now, it would not be. Same holds true for analog cell phone accessories - nobody needs those now.

Consumable products are the ideal type of product to sell in any business, including eBay. Why?

- 1) Consumables run out and have to be replenished.
- 2) Consumable products create a stream of repeat customers.
- 3) Once type of consumable can lead to others in the same niche and are easy to cross sell.

Ok, so what are consumables? These are products that are used up by the customer and must be replenished on a regular basis. Some good examples include:

Vitamins and supplements
Printer ink and cartridges
Coffee
Cosmetics

Hair Care Products

Diet and Weight Loss Products

Gourmet Food Items

Medicines

The key to an auto-pilot eBay business with consumables is having a reliable source for your product. You don't have to look far. Try warehouse clubs like Sams and Costco. These members clubs have different merchandise in different parts of the country. Yours may offer something that is not available everywhere in the nation, or the world.

Examples of Niche Products

[Rotary Phones](#)

[Vintage Parking Meters](#)

[Cigar Boxes](#)

[Learn more here](#) about selling niche products on eBay.

Chapter 4

Time to Start Selling!

Now that you have some ideas about where to find your items, what do you need to get started? I highly recommend that you sell a few of your own things before purchasing items to sell. This is an easy way to decide if eBay is for you without a big financial investment. You will also become familiar with how eBay works. Consider selling your own items as your on the job training period. If you decide to continue selling on eBay, there are a few essentials you'll need to get started. You might already have them at home right now.

- First, you'll need a digital camera. You don't need anything extravagant, just a camera that takes good clear pictures. (A section on taking photos will be covered later.) You can even borrow one from a friend at first if you don't want to invest in one.
- Get a postage scale. Even if you are not processing your own shipments at home, you'll need to be able to weigh items to quote shipping charges. You can go to www.usps.com to calculate shipping fees. All you need to know is the weight of the item and destination (country or zip code).
- If you are selling clothing or other soft goods, be sure to have an iron, ironing board, starch, fabric freshener spray and dryer sheets. You may need to spruce up some items before listing them.
- Open a Paypal account. 90% of eBay users pay by Paypal. (More on this topic later.)

The most important step you can take in preparing yourself to be an eBay seller is to learn as much as you can. Explore the eBay site and read the help section. Ask other sellers questions. Spend the morning in a bookstore reading eBay books found in the

entrepreneur section. (If you find one you like, go home and look for it used on eBay.) Buy inexpensive items and pay attention to what other sellers do after the transaction. (Don't blatantly copy another seller's store, descriptions, or photo. This is a serious eBay violation and you can be suspended for text or image theft.)

More eBay Resources

[eBay Coach Blog](#)

[eBay Coach Podcasts](#)

[eBay Coach Videos](#)

[SAHM's eBay Facebook Group](#)

[eBay Coach Reference Guide](#) – Free Download

Chapter 5

Using eBay to its Fullest Potential

You are paying eBay to match you with potential buyers for your item. eBay is giving you access to millions of buyers worldwide that you could not otherwise reach. That is worth paying for. (You'd never get 100 million people to show up at a garage sale.) There are ways to stretch your eBay dollar.

Understand the Fees.

One aggravation of selling on eBay is the constant fee changes. As soon as we get used to one set of rules, they are changed. Accept this fact. It is what it is, and if we want to sell on eBay, we have to play by the rules.

The latest version of the eBay fee structure went into effect in March 2010. [Click here](#) to view the eBay fee system.

Open an eBay Store.

If you have at least 30 items in your inventory, opening a store may work for you. Again, consult the [eBay fee estimator](#) to see if a store is right for you. You may find great items for sale, but they don't always sell the first time around on auction. When you open a store, you can put items in store inventory on a 30-day listing for only a few cents a month. These items show up on searches, and shoppers will look at them. Always put your unsold items into store inventory immediately. If buyers can't see what you have, they can't buy it! eBay Stores also provides you with sales and traffic reports as well as a wealth of other features. [Read suggestions for a successful eBay store.](#)

Everything you need to know about technical questions, eBay policies, and eBay services is in the [eBay Help Index](#). Scan through the help index from time to time and educate yourself on all of eBay's options and features. If you have to email eBay support with a question, don't be shy. Ask what you want to learn about. They might

take a day or two to answer, but they are very helpful and will usually send a link to where you can find the information you requested.

Use your item title for relevant words only.

Have you ever seen titles with phrases like “must see” or “L@@K” or “WOW!!” included? eBay allows 55 characters for your title. The title and your photos are all the advertising you get. USE THIS SPACE WISELY. Try to use all of the characters by including as much information about the product as possible. For example, if you are selling a pair of Stride Rite shoes, your title should read something like, “NEW NIB Stride Rite sandals size 10 pink.” Experienced eBayers know how to use the search feature and you want to use [key words and acronyms](#) that will help them find your auction. If they can’t find it, they can’t buy it.

Make sure your spelling is correct. A browsing shopper might find a name brand item with its title misspelled, but shoppers won’t find you on a search if your spelling is wrong. One missing letter in a word can cost you a sale. Some keyword tips:

You are allowed 55 characters in your title. It doesn't seem like much, but there are things you can do to get the most out of those letters and spaces.

Search for other auctions with exact or similar products. Look at the titles and think about the keywords used. For example, if you were selling a bracelet, you would use the word bracelet, but also bangle, cuff and jewelry.

Avoid characters that aren't needed such as ~, !, /, L@@k, W@W, and other word and characters that are not descriptive. **Don’t waste this valuable space on characters that buyers are not searching for.**

Remember, you are not writing complete or grammatically correct sentences. You are trying to think of the most words that someone might plug into search engine for your product. Think like a buyer, not like a seller.

Look on your [research tool](#) or completed listings or whatever tool you are using for research and find the same item you are trying to sell. (Make sure you find items

that actually sell not unsold items!) Look at the keywords on the listings with the highest average price. Decide if those keywords apply to your item (color, size, style, etc) and use the ones that work with your item. Then, click on the individual listings to see what the successful sellers did. Make your listings like those! (Never copy a title, description, or photo from another listing. Change things around and make it your own.)

A quick "Do's and Don't's" List

- Do use every single space when possible.
- Always put color and size in the title of clothing.
- Avoid adjectives like "Lovely" and "Gorgeous". Most people do not search for a "lovely bracelet".
- Use spell check.
- Do stay away from unnecessary words and characters.
- Use common eBay abbreviations like NWT, NR, and BIN. People do use these when searching. The most important one to use is NEW. More buyers search for the word new than other acronyms. There is a segment of people out there who will specifically search for new items.
- Do use eBay's search engine to get ideas.
- Do use completed listings to find items like yours that have sold and utilize the keywords that seller used.
- Do use a thesaurus to find alternative words. There are many online thesauruses you can quickly search for and book mark for future use.
- If the item is new, always put NEW as the first word in the title.
- If the item or brand name is commonly misspelled, consider adding the misspelling to your title to catch the bad spellers. Bad spellers have money too. For example, the brand Skechers shoes is commonly misspelled. Many people add a T making it Sketchers. Find other sellers using this strategy and imitate what they do.

Writing Item Descriptions

Include measurements, color, size, and fabric content, manufacturer, washing instructions, weight, texture and anything else you can think of. Use lots sensory

adjectives to describe the item. eBay shoppers can't touch, feel, or hold the item, so you have to help them envision how wonderful it is. Anticipate what shoppers will ask and include that information on the listing. You'll save time in the future because you won't have to go back and take the item out of storage, examine it for the requested information, and reply to their email. Look up that item on the Internet and see how retailers describe it. I am not advocating that you plagiarize material from the Internet, but you can definitely get ideas by researching how the big companies describe their items.

If the item has a flaw, be honest and mention it, and show a photo of it. Honesty is the best policy. You can't fool eBay shoppers, they are sharp and they carefully examine their purchases. Many times, a small flaw is not an issue, and as long as you mention it, some buyers just won't care. This could even work in your favor. Case in point: I had bought a beautiful sweater at a garage sale to sell but didn't realize it had a hole in it until I got home. The hole was beyond repair. I listed it anyway. I mentioned the flaw in my listing and a buyer contacted me to ask if I had more damaged sweaters to sell. It turned out that this buyer was searching for sweaters to use as the material for making small dog sweaters. From then on, I kept her and her business in mind when I was shopping and we have now a great business relationship. There really is a buyer for everything.

You'll have a better reputation when you mention the flaw up front. You will also avoid the hassle of the return-refund process, and you won't risk getting negative feedback. [Click here](#) for more tips on writing a good description.

Use an Image Hosting Service.

I use [Seller Sourcebook](#). An image hosting service is a website that houses your photos and provides templates for your listings. The fee is nominal, but you won't be charged 15 cents per picture by eBay because you won't be uploading any pictures thru eBay – it will be done using the image hosting service. You will be able to customize your listings and give your items a very professional, clean, appealing look. Image hosting is easy to use and it makes listing your items fun and interesting. [Seller Sourcebook](#) also offers templates for your ABOUT ME page, a blog, and other seller resources.

List Items in Two Categories When Appropriate

eBay allows you to list an item in two categories for maximum exposure to potential buyers. For example, once I found an interesting, unique tie with a shark theme. It wasn't a designer tie. It wasn't a \$100 tie. It was just unique. I listed it under CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES/MENS/TIES, and also under COLLECTIBLES/ANIMALS/SHARKS. The shopper who bought the tie worked at a nature conservatory and his hobby was collecting unique shark items. He wasn't even looking for a tie; he was shopping for "shark stuff." This has happened many times. You won't want to list every romper with a teddy bear appliqué in the TEDDY BEAR COLLECTIBLE category, but when you find unique items, list them in two categories. You might be surprised at who buys them and why.

Use eBay Reports.

Study these reports. You can find out:

- Number of page views
- Number of unique visitors
- Referring domains
- Most popular pages
- Most popular listings
- Store search terms
- Percentage of return customers
- Number of items with Buy It Now purchases
- Path reports (previous and next page reports)
- Top key words that drive traffic to your store

Analyze which items have the most page views and the most unique (different) bidders. Focus on those items. See what days have the most page views. See how many unique visitors browse your store on specific days. Keep your own records so that you can track your profit (eBay doesn't know how much you paid for an item, so they can't give you profit reports).

Automate as Much as Possible.

I have my automation preferences set up to send an email when:

- A buyer wins an item
- We receive payment for an item
- We have shipped an item
- A buyer leaves feedback

The only emails I have to answer are specific questions on items, international shipping questions, or refund issues. You can revise your email templates whenever necessary. Learn more about [setting your automation preferences.](#)

*Tip: Put your best items up for sale on auction, and put other items in your store inventory. You will save you money on fees in the beginning, and you can get a feel for what sells. You are already paying for an eBay store subscription, so fill up your store.

Use Best Offer on Fixed Price or Store Inventory Listings.

When you move items into your store inventory, you have the option to ACCEPT OFFERS FROM BUYERS. This is a terrific feature. BEST OFFER gives shoppers the power to bargain with you, and it gives you the opportunity to sell more items. Let's say that you have a child's coat in store inventory at a fixed price of \$10. It has been sitting there for a while. A shopper comes along and offers \$8 for it. Certainly, you would accept their offer and take the \$8. You have made another sale, will receive another positive feedback, and have created a relationship with another customer. The customer is happy because you accepted her offer. You have empowered that customer and made a sale at the same time. Everyone is happy.

Become a Trading Assistant.

If you are looking for ways to make more money on eBay, but don't have the time to find more inventory, or don't have the cash to buy more inventory, consider becoming a trading assistant. And now is the time to look into this option as people need money for the upcoming holidays. There are plenty of people out there who know that they can make money on eBay, but don't have time, don't know how, or just don't want to hassle with it. Here are the benefits of being a Trading Assistant, also known as a Consignment Seller:

- 1) Inventory comes to you.
- 2) You don't have to buy anything to resell.
- 3) You can learn about other product lines by selling other people's stuff.
- 4) You can pick and choose what you want to work with.
- 5) You can increase your feedback using other people's stuff.
- 6) You can increase your sales numbers.
- 7) You can make local contacts that may lead to repeat business.
- 8) Large items can be sold on Craigslist for local pick up.
- 9) You are listed in the eBay TA directory, so people looking for a TA can find you.
- 10) eBay provides the advertising materials to help you promote your business.

Here are the requirements for becoming a TA:

To become an eBay Trading Assistant, be listed in Trading Assistant Directory, and gain access to marketing materials, you must agree to and abide by the eBay Trading Assistant User Agreement and you must reside in the U.S.*

- 1) Have an eBay account in good standing at all times.
- 2) Have sold at least ten (10) items on eBay in the previous three (3) months and maintain 10 sales per 3-month period.
- 3) Maintain a minimum feedback score of 100, with at least 98% positive, at all times.
- 4) Abide by the terms of the Trading Assistant Style Guide.

The key to running your TA business is to decide what you will and won't do. You can set your own commission level.

eBay provides promotional materials such as flyers, business cards, and advertisements that you just print off and use to promote your business. I hang signs in my gym, grocery store, and other community bulletin boards. You can place ads very inexpensively in your local newspaper or other small community newsletters.

[Click here](#) to find out more about the eBay Trading Assistant Program.

Using Buy It Now

I offer Buy It Now (BIN) on most of my items for several reasons. First, it is only 10 cents per listing to offer BIN. One item sold on BIN can pay for all the BIN fees for the whole month. Second, someone may need the item to give as a gift and time is running short. They need it now, so they want to buy it now. Third, people may be buying items for trips, vacations, weddings, parties, or holidays and they simply do not want to wait for an auction to end. Finally, some people are just impatient and in a hurry. They see it, they want it, and so I give them the chance to buy it immediately. I would rather see one of my auctions end early and get the sale, than to have the customer buy a similar item from another seller, just because he is in a rush.

You can capitalize on those procrastinators by offering BIN on your auction items. BIN is great to use around holiday time – Christmas, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Valentine's Day. You can use it on 3 and 5-day listings as the holiday gets closer. Be sure to factor in shipping time so that your customer has time to receive the item before the holiday. Be careful not to short change yourself by putting the BIN price too low.

Chapter 6

Building Your Feedback Score

You have probably learned that feedback is eBay's rating system that is an indicator of a member's reputation in the eBay forum. You'll want to build your feedback score since a [high feedback score](#) indicates experience, quality products, and good customer service.

Always use your store name when leaving feedback for others. For example, an automated feedback response could say, "Fast payment, easy transaction. Thanks from Suzie's Savings Center." Why should you do this? It is another way to get your store name in front of a potential customer. Let's say a shopper is scanning through another member's feedback. She may see the store name on the feedback and think, "Wow, that sounds interesting. I wonder what this place is." Out of curiosity she clicks over to your store, and maybe she buys something, or adds you to her FAVORITES and visits you later when she has more time. See how that works?

You will want to build up your feedback score to gain the trust of potential buyers. An easy way to do this is to buy items on eBay. You can buy inexpensive items that you'll actually use such as party gifts, children's clothes, kitchen gadgets, office supplies, and your shipping materials. I make it a habit to buy 2-3 items a month on eBay so that I can check on the competition. I can see how items are packaged, how quickly they are shipped, how professional the seller is, and I even get new ideas for my own store by being a customer in someone else's store.

Negative Feedback from Buyers

You have done everything right. You found a great item, taken a nice photo of it, written an accurate detailed description, sent professional emails to the buyer, and shipped the item promptly and securely. Then, you log on to check your eBay account, and BOOM! There it is. Someone has left you undeserved negative feedback. You are heartbroken. Now what?

First of all, this is not the end of the world. With negative feedback, it isn't a matter of IF, it is a matter of WHEN. It probably isn't your fault. The buyer may have had a bad day, lost his job, or had a fight with his wife. You have no idea what happened in his life that day. He impulsively takes it out on you because you are accessible and you can't fight back. He takes out his aggressions on the computer, and you are the recipient.

Make it clear that you are the bigger person and you will always handle problems professionally and be fair if given the opportunity. Don't be impulsive and when you react to a negative feedback without thinking about how it will affect your reputation. Be careful what you say!

When you do get a negative feedback, be sure to leave a reply below it on your feedback profile giving your side of the story. For example, we usually say, "Customer did not contact us regarding problem. We always refund!" Shoppers will see that you were blindsided with this remark and that you are willing do whatever it takes to make the customer happy.

You must be proactive in taking steps to prevent negative feedback. Add a sentence to your listings, your About Me page, all email correspondence, and your packing slip stating, "If you are not satisfied with your purchase, please contact us prior to leaving feedback and we will issue a refund." You want to satisfy your customer so that he is eager to leave positive feedback for you.

Maybe you did make a mistake. Maybe you sent the wrong size or missed a flaw on the item. In all fairness, a buyer should give you a chance to correct the issue before slamming you with negative feedback. We are all human, we all make mistakes. Unfortunately, a small percentage of eBay members are too quick to leave negative feedback at your expense. This is part of doing business. Be sure to block that member from bidding on any more of your items. You probably don't want to work with someone who isn't willing to let you correct a mistake.

[Click here](#) to learn when to block a buyer.

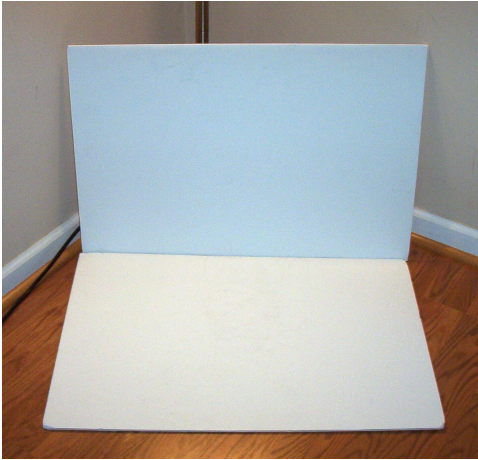
Chapter 7

Photographing Your Items

After you have learned how to use your digital camera, you will need to take photos for your listings. This isn't hard, but it does take some thought and planning.

Have you ever surfed eBay and seen pictures of items taken on someone's kitchen floor, bed, or couch? My favorite was a wrinkled dress lying on someone's unmade, rumped bed. All I could think of when I looked at that photo was, "I wonder what happened in that bed before this picture was made." Yuck. I quickly clicked away from that photo. I've seen photos of items where the seller's feet are in the picture. I remember a photo of a dress hanging from a tree in someone's backyard and it wasn't even on a pretty hanger. Their dog was in the background doing his business. It wasn't appealing.

You can make your photos look clean and professional by using a solid background. I use white or black foam core board. You can use poster board that costs 25 cents. Use whatever colors you like, but keep in mind that you want the item for sale to be the focal point of the photo. Crop your pictures so that nothing else is in the photo except the item and the solid background. Make sure your photo is clear and you have used good lighting. Sometimes, the photo won't turn out even after you have tried to edit it on your computer. Put the item aside, and retake the photo again. A good photo is a major factor in getting a sale.



My set up is a foam core board in a corner of the room. Simple, easy, and creates a nice quality photo! [Click here](#) for instructions on how make an eBay photo background for less than \$1.

If you are selling “lots” of clothing, consider making one photo collage to use as your gallery image. [Click here](#) for a trick on how to make a collage photo.

You can also use your scanner to copy images to post on eBay. If you are selling CDs, DVDs, books, anything new in a package, or new in a box, try scanning it. You can show close-up detail of a fabrics or clothing. Experiment with this technique and find out what works for you.

If you want to get creative with your photos, look at how the big companies do it. Look through some of those catalogs you get in the mail for background ideas. If you are selling bath products, you could use a pretty fluffy stack of towels for a background. I’ve seen listings with scrap booking paper as the background. It is cheap, fun, and re-usable. Be creative, but keep your photos neat and free of clutter.

While you are at the mall walking around with your kids, pay attention to store displays. If you see something attractive that may work with the types of items you sell, think about how you can replicate the background at home. You can get lots of ideas by paying attention to what you see in a retail store. Use the big companies’ ideas as a springboard for your own.

Pay close attention to the item in the photo. If you are finding items at a garage sale or flea market, they will be in less than stellar condition even if they are new with

tags. Take time to iron or press items so they are not crumpled and wrinkled in the photo. Remove lint from soft goods. Put a coat of shoe polish on kids' shoes and boots. Clean hard goods with window cleaner or furniture polish, whatever applies. (But don't take the price sticker off; you want to say it is NEW WITH TAG if possible.) Take a few minutes to make the item look as new as possible. You don't want your buyer to have to imagine what the item could like if it was cleaned up. The potential buyer can't touch, feel, or examine the product in person. You have to convince him that it is worth buying through your words and pictures. A picture is worth a thousand words, especially on eBay.

Chapter 8

Listing Your Item

Many books on eBay selling tell you what days and times to post your listings. In my experience, anything can sell at any time. (As of this writing, I have sold over 20,000 items.) Don't overlook holidays. Think about it – not everyone is with family and friends on holidays. Businesses are closed and there is nothing to do. Some folks are at home alone, or at work with nothing to do, goofing around on the computer. They may surf over to eBay for a look. I sell just as much on Christmas, New Year's, and Thanksgiving as I do on any other day. Some people are just plain addicted to eBay and will compulsively shop every day if given the chance. Provide items for them to buy!

If you can post your listing at certain times, like when both kids are at preschool or during the baby's nap, use eBay's SCHEDULED LISTING feature. You can write up your listing, post your photos, and program your listing to start on any day at any time you want. Ebay charges 10 cents per listing for this feature, but it can come in handy if you have to do all of your listing for the week on one day. Maybe you are having company or going on a trip and won't be available to post your listings. You can do it in advance. You can schedule your listings to start at different times throughout the week.

I find it beneficial to list new items every single day of the week. Some shoppers only come in to eBay on certain days – maybe their day off, or when their kids are at preschool. You want to expose yourself to new shoppers every day! Repeat customers will check on you frequently for new items. Make sure you have items available for sale. [Click here](#) for more information on when to start and end your listings.

Chapter 9

Selling Internationally

Selling your items internationally is not as hard as you might think; it just takes some preparation. When you offer your products to worldwide customers, you expose yourself to millions more shoppers and buyers. Even if international customers don't win your item, their bids will help drive the price higher.

EBay and Paypal do all the translating and currency conversions for you. In the event that you are having trouble communicating with your customer, a great resource for working with international customers is www.freetranslation.com - an on-line instant translation service. Just type in what you want to say in English, and select the language that you would like your email translated into. Bear in mind that you will receive an exact translation that may not account for slang, dialect, or expressions. At least you'll be trying to communicate better with your customer and he will appreciate your efforts.

Include information about international shipping on your listing. Either state that you will quote a price if they email you, or list prices for particular countries. The more information you can provide up front, the more likely a customer is to bid on your item.

If you are confused about how to ship an item internationally, go to the post office and ask a clerk. He will show you the materials you need, how to fill out the forms, and explain the shipping options. Once you have shipped a few international packages, you'll be a pro. It's really easy. International shipping delivery time can take up to 30 days. Packages have to be processed through the destination country's Customs Service. If your buyer emails you after a week looking for his package, politely remind him that this process can take up to 30 days and to be patient. The package will usually surface.

Selling internationally can be a great geography lesson for older kids. When I am preparing my international packages, I ask my kids to find that country on the globe.

It's fun when you've sold Uncle Bob's cowboy boots and then ship them to Australia. Who knew?

Here are some related articles about international selling and shipping:

[How to Ship an International Package from the United States](#)

[How to Increase Sales by Offering International Shipping](#)

[How to Sell on eBay UK](#)

Chapter 10

Collecting Payment

Paypal is definitely the preferred method for several reasons. First, buyers generally pay faster when using Paypal. If a buyer has to go purchase a money order, then mail it out; you won't receive payment for several days. Checks and money orders can be fraudulent, so I do not accept them. Paypal is an electronic system, there is a record of the transaction, and the funds are guaranteed. You also won't have to worry about having a business account at the bank to deposit checks and money orders into. The great thing about having a Paypal account is that you can transfer your funds to your bank account on-line, or just go to an ATM and withdraw cash. When you sell on eBay with Paypal, you can get paid every day!

If you have not received payment or communication from your buyer after 2 weeks from the sale date, go ahead and relist the item. Next, block the bidder from bidding on anything else from you.

Chapter 12

To Refund or Not To Refund – That is the Question

I offer a 100% satisfaction, money back guarantee on everything I sell. I know, you are thinking, "How can I make any money if anyone can return anything at any time? Once I have a customer's money, I want to keep it!" Giving money back is a scary concept at first, because it sure feels good to make those sales. But, a money back guarantee is a way to increase sales.

First, shoppers are more likely to buy from you if you have a fair refund policy. They may never have to use it, but it gives them peace of mind that they can get their money back if they want to. You are giving your customers options and empowering them. Again, use the Internet. Look at how the big companies handle refunds and how their refund policies are worded.

Second, you can re-list the item again once it is returned. Just refund the customer's money, (I refund the purchase price only, not shipping) and then go to eBay and look up the item in your archived listings. Just click on RELIST, and you're done. Sometimes, it sells for more the second time around! You can still get positive feedback from the first buyer, especially if you promptly process his refund and include a professional email thanking him for his business. The key is to make the customer happy and get positive feedback. Make them want to return to your store.

Third, customers may contact you about a refund but never follow through with sending the item back. You know how it is, you put the item in your car to return it to the store or take it to the post office, and six months later it is still there. I keep my refund policy simple. Refund for the purchase price only, no store credit. I feel that only offering store credit may make the customer feel trapped - that they do not have options if they can't find a suitable exchange. The idea is to keep the customer happy. Less than 1% of sold items are actually returned to me each month. (I sell around 300 items a month, and only 2 or 3 ever come back.) Some customers who have made returns will come back for future sales because they know first-hand that you are an honest seller who stands by your policy.

If you can get your customer to agree to a mutual withdrawal, you can have your eBay fees refunded as well. [Click here](#) for instructions on how to file a mutual withdrawal on eBay.

Chapter 13

Shipping

I ship my orders about 4 days a week. I try to ship an item no more than 48 hours after payment is received. I prepare all of my packages at home, and drop them off at the post office, or have my mail carrier pick them up. (You don't have to wait in line if you are dropping off items with postage affixed. Get some tubs from the post office. Place the tub with your packages in an empty window at the post office, and you're done.)

I strongly recommend that you prepare your packages at home through an on-line service such as www.usps.com, www.stamps.com , www.endicia.com or even through eBay. You can prepare your packages at your leisure, on your schedule, even if the post office isn't open. You won't waste hours of your time each week waiting in line at the post office.

Any size package can be shipped Priority Mail, but the minimum fee is \$4.05. Supplies for Priority Mail are free and can be picked up at the post office, or shipped directly to you, free of charge, through www.usps.com . I order them in batches of 100 so that I always have a supply on hand. If you are selling books, CDs, DVDs, or other media items, use media mail. Media mail is a special, lower rate shipping class used only for media products. You can charge your buyers less for shipping and increase your chances of getting the sale. (Media mail may take longer to reach the destination, so you may want to give your buyers a choice of shipping options on your listing.)

Here is my philosophy on shipping. If an item weighs 13 oz or less, it can be shipped First Class. I purchase my own shipping bags and use First Class for these lighter items. (I get poly bags through an eBay store called esupplystore .) I can buy poly-mailing bags for a few cents each when ordered in quantity. I don't have to spend the minimum \$4.95 shipping an 8 oz item just to get the free Priority Mail supplies. So, if you have charged the customer \$4 shipping and it only actually costs \$2 shipping, plus the 10-cent investment for the poly-mailing bag, you have still made a

profit and you can keep your shipping fee reasonable. If you have an item over 14 oz and are shipping Priority Mail, use the Tyvek envelopes whenever possible because the boxes weigh more than the envelopes, and you will be paying more for the shipping if you use a box. I also like to keep my packages small enough to fit into a customer's mailbox. Boxes and packages can be stolen off porches and doorsteps. Sometimes, using a large box is unavoidable, just be sure to use insurance or delivery confirmation.

If you are shipping fragile or breakable items, you don't have to spend a lot of money on bubble wrap or packing peanuts. Use those plastic grocery bags that you have piled up in the laundry room. They are lightweight and good for wrapping and cushioning items. You can also use newspaper. If you feel like you have to use bubble wrap or packing peanuts, look for these items on eBay and buy them in bulk.

International packages must be handled through the post office. You'll need to complete a customs form (which takes about 2 minutes) to attach to the package. I ship international items by Air Mail Letter Post. It is just as efficient as and cheaper than Global Priority. You can find information on international shipping through www.usps.com and on eBay. International shipping isn't hard or complicated; it just involves a different procedure. You expose yourself to millions of more customers if you are willing to handle international shipping. International customers have an affinity for American products. Ironically, they also love products made in their home country, but it is cheaper for them to buy it on eBay and have it shipped to them, than to buy it in their own country! [Learn all the steps and details about international shipping.](#)

*Tip: Avoid the post office on Mondays and Saturdays. Drop your packages in mailboxes or have your carrier pick them up on these days. The post office is more crowded on Mondays, Saturdays, and the day after a postal holiday. Even if you are just dropping off, you can avoid traffic, parking, and crowds by staying away from the post office on these days.

How Much to Charge for Shipping

Calculating shipping for an item is not as complicated as you may think. If you plan to start selling regularly on eBay, you will want to invest in a digital scale. You can find them for \$10 or less at office supply stores, or my favorite place - eBay!

Calculated shipping is the easiest and most fair way to charge for shipping on eBay. [Here is a short video](#) about how to use the calculated shipping feature when listing your eBay items.

More information about shipping and eBay:

[How to Get Free Shipping Supplies](#)

[How to Reduce Shipping Costs](#)

[How to Ship to a Military Address](#)

[How Much to Charge for Shipping on eBay](#)

Chapter 14

Customer Service

This is a short chapter. Our customer service policy is simple. Treat customers the way you would like to be treated as a customer. Just because you are a small seller on eBay, doesn't mean that your standards have to be any lower than a major retailer. Be honest about your products, be polite, communicate well, act professionally (even in uncomfortable situations), and treat your customers with respect. Sometimes smaller sellers can get the job done faster, friendlier, and more efficiently than large mega-sellers.

Happy, satisfied customers are the key to your success. Keep them happy, and they will keep coming back, and maybe tell their friends about you.

Chapter 15

How to Fit Ebay into Your Stay At Home Mom Schedule

The baby is crying, your 3-year old is drawing tattoos on his arms with magic markers, and your 5-year old is trying to see if Marine Corps GI Joe can really swim by flushing him down the toilet. The dryer is buzzing and the cable guy is at the front door. How can you possibly run a business with all of this going on around you?

Be organized and plan ahead. You're not going to be able to devote 12 hours a day to this business because you are a mom and there simply isn't time. You have too many other responsibilities. But, you can make time for eBay if you are organized.

Try to do your serious shopping without your kids, if possible. You will want to give shopping your full attention, as this is the time that you are selecting items to convert into cash.

Be prepared. Keep extra digital camera batteries on hand. The last thing you need is to find your camera batteries are dead at 10:00 at night and the kids are in bed. Great, you're stuck. You aren't exactly in the mood to run up to the Wal-Mart to get batteries at this time of night so you can post your listings for the day. Have plenty of supplies like extra printer cartridges, labels, paper, and shipping supplies on hand. As a mom, you know it never fails that the kids get sick at the most inconvenient times. You have 20 packages to ship, and you have run out of Priority Mail supplies - your daughter wakes up the next day with a fever of 102. You can't leave to go out and get more supplies, and you sure can't take her with you. Realize that there are days you will be stuck at home with sick kids, so be prepared with plenty of supplies and inventory to list for sale so you can work while your child is resting.

For a more efficient workday, do similar tasks in batches. Do all your shipping at once. Set aside a time to prepare packages for shipment and prepare them in a batch. I prepare my packages first thing in the morning as soon as my kids have left for school, so that those orders go out in that day's mail.

I spend my day at home preparing items and taking photos, in between doing laundry, unloading the dishwasher, and running to the grocery store. I take the photos, edit them, and save them in batches. Examine your item and decide what you will say about your item as you are preparing and photographing it. Is it vintage? Is it new with tags? What is unique about it? What color is it? Brown, topaz, cinnamon, or milk chocolate?

At night, after the kids hit the bed, I hit the computer and post my listings. Again, I do this in batches. Set a goal for yourself - 5 items a day, 10 items a day, 25 items a week – whatever works for you. Listing is the fastest part. It is quiet, I can concentrate, and I end the day on a positive note because I have just added new exciting items to my store.

Chapter 16

Timesaving Shortcuts

You will need a space dedicated to your eBay business. You'll need to set up your computer, printer, scale, and a storage system for your products. I started off using plastic tubs. It wasn't elaborate but it kept the items secure and out of the way.

Don't reinvent the wheel every time you do something. You experience all kinds of situations with buyers when working on eBay. Keep a form letter file with responses to commonly asked questions, or for special situations. Every time you write something unique or original, save it for future use. If it was asked once, it will be asked again. For example, customers may ask you to email them when you get a specific item to sell in your store. You won't have time to do that. I use the following form letter in that situation:

Dear Customer,

Thank you for your inquiry regarding ITEM. Unfortunately, I do not have more of ITEM in stock at this time.

Save time when returning to eBay for great deals by storing your favorite searches, sellers, and categories. My Favorite Searches lets you save up to 100 item searches for easy viewing. You can also let eBay automatically search for you and notify you by email when new matching items have been listed!

How to save a search

1. To begin your search, click the **Search** button at the top of any eBay page.
2. Enter the keywords you want to search for in the box.

3. After you get the search results you want, click the **Add to My Favorite Searches** link, which appears at the top right and bottom left of the item list.

The search will now be stored in My Favorite Searches. Next time you want to run a Favorite Search, simply click on the link to see your search results.

Note: If you're running the same searches frequently, you can sort search results by "newly listed" so that you see **new search results** at the top of the page and save some time!

Once your searches are stored, click on **Edit Preferences** in My Favorite Searches to:

- Name your search
- Choose to be emailed new results from this search
- Choose how long (from 7 days to 12 months) to receive search update emails

All of this information can be found at:

<http://pages.ebay.com/help/myebay/track-favorites.html> under eBay help.

Thank you again for your inquiry and we look forward to working with you.

All of this information was copied from eBay's help page, and you have given the link to where you found it. You have just given your customer some valuable information about using eBay, and you won't have to keep up with his wish list. He will appreciate that you took the time to educate him.

Along those same lines, keep copies of all of your photos. Organize your photos into folders for quick and easy access. If you do this business long enough, you will find the same items over and over again. (You'll be shopping and think, "I know I have sold this dress before.") When it is time to list that item, you will already have your own photo of it. You can also check your archived listings and see if the item is still

there. (eBay purges archived listings after a few months.) If it is in your archived listings, you can just hit relist, make any minor changes regarding size or measurements, and you're done. You can also save listings of items to reuse in the future.

Keep a spreadsheet of your inventory. You'll know what you have, and most importantly, how much you spent. If someone asks you if you have a particular item, you can check your spreadsheet instead of having to sort through your stock to find it. You can also try [Easy Auctions Tracker](#) which is a spreadsheet which integrates with your eBay account to help you keep track of your sales and expenses.

Chapter 17

A Little About Marketing

eBay will do most of your marketing for you by exposing your items to millions of buyers. Have you ever tried to get 100 million people to come to your garage sale? You don't have to because they are just waiting on eBay for you. Be creative, have fun, and do other things on your own.

Use eBay services to give your store a professional look. Did you know that you can buy services like logo creation and web page design on eBay? There are lots of creative people who offer these services at very reasonable prices. (Maybe you are one of them – you can sell your design services on eBay and you won't even have to buy any inventory!) Look for services sold on eBay and see what you can find!

Have business cards printed. [This site has great deals](#) on business cards and promotional materials. You can get high quality glossy or matte business cards thru this website for a very reasonable price. You can also get other promotional items like magnets and flyers at very reasonable prices. Have cards printed and ask your friends and family to pass them out when appropriate. You can also include your business cards in your orders so that your customers can save them for future use, or give them to a friend.

Get involved in social websites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Squidoo, and StumbleUpon. Here are my profiles on each, please add me to your friends!

[Facebook](#)

Facebook ([Moms in Business Group](#) – Join us!)

[Twitter](#)

[YouTube](#) (free eBay videos)

Chapter 18

The Bottom Line

eBay is not a get rich quick scheme. If it were, everyone would be doing it. Building an eBay business takes time, effort, organization, creativity, and diligence. Do your homework, and watch what other sellers are doing. Think, experiment, and keep your eyes open. eBay is your chance to express your creativity. Unlike any other job I have had, eBay gives you positive feedback every single day. How many of us have had jobs where the boss never has a word of praise for our efforts? On eBay, you will receive glowing comments and positive reinforcement that just makes you feel good. There is nothing more motivating than words of praise about your work.

eBay is the second most visited website on the Internet, has hundreds of millions of members in over 150 countries around the world, and is easy to use. 80,000 new users register on eBay every day. You can reap the benefits if you are ambitious, patient, and willing to learn and experiment. Now go out there and get started!

Don't forget to join my [Facebook Group](#) – an on-line community of eBay sellers of all levels, WAHMs, professionals, and entrepreneurs sharing information and supporting each other in business and in life. Ask questions and get answers, input, and advice from other sellers who have “been there, done that.”

For more information on what to sell on eBay, how to market your eBay store, and how to make money selling on eBay, [see my other eBooks](#) on my website:

- The Secrets of Thrift Store Shopping – What to Buy and Resell for Profit on eBay
- How to Make a Profit Selling Used Clothing on eBay
- What to Buy at Garage Sales to Resell on eBay for Profit
- How to Make Money Selling Men's Golf Shirts on eBay

- International Shipping Tutorial

You may also want to subscribe to my eBay blog, [eBay Selling Coach](#) where I share hot tips about what to sell on eBay, and how to put together deals for practically free items using coupons and rebates.

Happy Selling!

Suzanne Wells

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About the Author

I am a Silver Level Powerseller and have been selling on eBay since 2003. eBay has been my full time job for 7 years, and I have sold over 20,000 items. During this time, I have gained expertise on what items to sell, where to find items, and how to successfully market products on eBay. I am on staff with Skip McGrath coaching and I also provide [private consulting services](#) for anyone interested in learning eBay, starting a full-time eBay business, or improving their sales on eBay.

My professional background: I have a BA in Business Administration from Queens College in North Carolina where I graduated Summa Cum Laude. My professional background is in banking and marketing. I have worked for Macy's, Wachovia Bank, and Equifax Credit Marketing Services. I left my corporate job in 2003 to pursue eBay full-time. I am a single mother of 2 children, ages 15 and 12 and live in Atlanta, GA.