

# The eBay Seller's Guide



**Compliments of Stephen Pope**

[See my current eBay Auctions](#)

[Work at Home Small Business Ideas](#)

## **Do You Make These Costly Mistakes Selling On eBay?**

What's the one thing that will destroy a buyer's confidence, ruining any chance he will bid on your item?

What is a simple trick with pictures to make your auction stand out and simplify your selling process?

Learn the answers to these and 6 other common, yet costly mistakes right now, by taking the free eBay Auction Sellers Quiz at:

[www.Auction-Revolution.com](http://www.Auction-Revolution.com).

**Find out what you didn't know about selling on eBay and stop making costly mistakes in your auctions.**

**Move into the top five percent of eBay sellers with the [Auction Revolution](#).**

## **About The Author:**

Terry Gibbs has sold over 12,000 items in eBay auctions over the past 6 years. Since its launch in 1995, eBay has experienced dramatic growth, and very few people are considered experts on making a living using eBay. Terry is one of those few experts. This eBay Buyer's Guide contains specific information gleaned over Mr. Gibbs many years and thousands of hours of experience, both buying and selling on eBay.

Anyone who wants to learn how to sell on eBay, or simply wants to make their eBay auctions more profitable, can learn more at [www.Auction-Revolution.com](http://www.Auction-Revolution.com).

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Contact the author at:

IWantCollectibles LLC.

PO BOX 842

Mesa, AZ 85211 USA

[www.IWantCollectibles.com](http://www.IWantCollectibles.com)

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This booklet is an introduction to [The Auction-Revolution](#). While this report provides a good overview of eBay selling, true mastery requires much more space than this simple report. To complete your eBay education, go to [The Auction-Revolution](#).

The Auction Revolution takes you through each of these steps:

Finding the right category.

Discovering the key words that will get higher bids.

Taking Photographs.

Editing and cropping photos.

Transferring pictures to the web with WS/FTP.

Writing an auction description that will get higher bids.

How to quickly and efficiently list many items.

How to get buyers to leave you feedback.

Dealing with questions.

After the sale, packing and shipping options.

And more. . .

The **real revolution** begins in the second half of the Auction Revolution manual. In the second half of the manual, you will learn:

How to make money from non bidders.

How to quickly find the right category so more buyers find your auction.

How to offer a money back guarantee and get virtually NO returns.

Why using a reserve price or "Buy It Now" price can cost you money.

How to write a description that will always get you higher bids.

**Bidder Psychology.** Knowing how buyers think and act allows you to influence buyers to bid higher amounts.

One simple sentence that will increase final bid amounts by up to 23 percent.

How to claim your auction visitors as your customers.

How to leverage your auction business into a highly profitable home business.

[Move Into the Top Five Percent of eBay Seller's with the Auction Revolution.](#)

## Introduction

This report explains the tried and proven methods of eBay Power Sellers. You'll learn how to get higher bids. How to force viewers to look at your other auctions. How to get high quality, fast loading photographs in your auctions. Learn to make your buyers more confident about dealing with you. Higher confidence means higher bids. Learn exactly what you can do to lower complaints. Find out how to offer a 100 percent money back guarantee and get very few returns. A simple strategy that will force buyers to leave feedback. All these things I learned the hard way by doing them. You won't have to learn them the hard way. You can just read the following report and be up to date in minutes. You will get higher bids for your items with this eBay report.

A successful auction has three elements. A **title**, a **description** and **pictures** of your item. We will cover each in turn.

### Write A Clear And Concise Title

The first thing a potential buyer sees is your title. The title is the headline of your ad and should be given some thought. It should tell the surfer exactly what you are selling. If you have a Lionel 2046 steam engine tell them you have a Lionel 2046 steam loco. Add additional descriptive words like old, vintage, runs, works, or condition statements like NEW IN BOX or whatever is appropriate to what you are selling. Using the right words in your title will get you better results than a paying for a bold or featured listing.

### List In The Right Category

List your item in the category similar items are in. I regularly buy trains and toys from sellers who have listed them in weird out of the way categories, then relist the items in categories where buyers search. I make a couple of hundred dollars a month doing this. If you are unsure where to list your item, search for other items. You can tell the categories where the most popular items are located by looking on the left hand side of the search results.

You want your item to be where everyone else is. This is where the buyers are. You should use descriptive keywords in your description so your item will come up in as many possible searches as possible, but many buyers just search the specific categories they are interested in, and never do more involved searches. Make it easy for them to find your item by putting it where they are looking for it.

### Write A Clear And Concise Description

Many sellers skip the most important thing when they list items for sale. They rely on "see photos," and put nothing descriptive in the description. I see many auctions with paragraph after paragraph of information about where to send payment, how to send payment, when to send payment, who can bid, who can't bid, what the weather is like, well you get the idea. This serves no purpose, and just clutters up the auction.

Write a clear and concise description of your item. Use terms the viewer can understand. I sell trains, and there are clearly defined grading standards for trains. Most of my bidders know what these grades mean. I use them in my auctions along with other descriptions of the condition so the bidders who are not familiar

with the standards can still get a great idea of what they are buying.

By writing an accurate description you will make bidders more confident about with you. If you are uncertain about what an item is, or what language you should use to describe it; search for similar items and read the descriptions. Search completed items. Look for common words in the items that bring higher prices. I found out when I was selling old toy tractors that auctions with made in the 1950s brought more money than the same items without the 1950s vintage in the description. My tractors were from the 1950s so this description was accurate. This confidence will translate into higher prices.

Tell the people exactly what the widget does. Let them know if it works, if you tested it, and what it should do or look like. Tell them if there are pieces missing or damaged parts. The more words you use to describe your item, the more likely it will come up in people's searches.

Do not use animated pictures to spruce up your listings. Buyers are looking to purchase something, they are not looking for entertaining animated cartoons or pictures of your dog wagging his tail. Don't make irritating snakes of words follow the mouse around or anything else that will distract the viewer from your auction. Keep your listing simple and to the point.

## **Be Pleasant**

Be pleasant in your auction descriptions, and when answering questions from prospective bidders. Some people will end up not paying, but most will pay. Don't treat the majority like criminals because of a few bad apples.

Here are some really bad examples I found on ebay:

"I've had 2 deadbeats in a row and I will sue you in civil court for the \$50 it's costing me to list on E-bay plus the \$50 it will cost to re-list if you win and don't pay, plus court costs. I'm not kidding. Non paying bidders will receive a very negative feedback as well." (This was in an automotive listing.)

"I just like rules! Here they are: All items are sold "As is," no returns can be accepted. YOU will contact me within 3 days of the auction end with your name, address and e-mail. You will pay me within 7 days of contacting me after the auction end. Buyer pays actual shipping and handling. Currently that's \$5.00-7.00 depending on the weight through the USPS, UPS is good for larger items though. I can't pay insurance unless you request it. Money Orders only please, No personal checks, and sorry, but no International sales at this time (Canada OK via air mail-you pay). Failure to follow any of the terms will result in you losing the auction, and negative feedback will be left. Thank the deadbeats for that one!"

"Serious bidders only, I will report ALL non-paying bidders to Ebay. All such deadbeats will also receive negative feedback. While other sellers may be hesitant to leave honest feedback because of retaliatory negative feedback, I am not!!"

"Auctions cost money to run. If you are not planning to pay please do not bid. Deadbeats' items will be relisted and appropriate feedback posted."

Think about this. If someone is going to play games by bidding when they do not really want your item, this kind of language is not going to stop them. All this does is make you look like an angry person sitting there waiting for someone to yell at. It does NOT project assurances to the bidder that buying from you will be a simple pleasurable experience.

Over the past two years, I frequently saw listings by one seller, and was wary about bidding because of his aggressive language. Finally, he had an item I really wanted, and I bid on it. After getting an email of directions, I called him on the phone to pay with my credit card. We ended up talking for an half-hour. He was very pleasant and polite. I was surprised. I expected a gruff, aggressive, nasty person.

Be easy and pleasant. Also, be brief in your description of what will happen after the auction. Most buyers just look at the pictures and bid based on them. They won't read the description. I tested this once by placing this in my auctions "Mention the word spectacular when you send payment for this auction and you get free shipping." of ten auctions I ran with this language in them only one person asked for free shipping. This means only one person had read the entire listing.

When bidders send questions, answer them clearly and politely. I always use the questioner's name in my reply. This makes them feel more comfortable with me. Many of the questions will seem to be stupid questions. Because there is no way to read body language in an e-mail you should always respond to questions as real questions. Most questioners do not end up buying the items they ask about- they do not know what they are doing and are unsure about values, but by bidding they do increase the selling price.

## **Link To Your Other Auctions**

Put a link to your other auctions in your description and tell the auction surfer you have more items in your other auctions. See the last page of this report for the source code to insert in your auctions. By telling the viewer you have similar items for sale and you will pack items together to lower shipping charges buyers will bid on other items they may not want because they can get them cheaply. I have had buyers bid on something extra, and then get outbid on the item they wanted and buy the second item. See the HTML section in the back of this booklet for the exact text of the link to your other auctions.

## **Offer A Guarantee**

Another way to increase buyer confidence is by offering a guarantee in your auctions. This can be a simple statement like if the item is not as represented you can return it for a refund. Below are a few strongly worded guarantees I found on eBay. Think about your reaction to them as you read them. Your bidders will react the same way to your guarantee.

*"This item may be returned in the same condition in five days after your receipt for a full refund minus shipping (actual, both ways) (and as long as it is received by me within 40 days of the close of the auction)."*

*"You are guaranteed to like this purchase, or I will return your full bid amount. My guarantee is immediately activated with a simple email from you"*

*within 5 days of receipt stating that you want your money back. NO OTHER REASON will be asked or is required."*

*"All our items come with a full money back guarantee and 100% satisfaction. Bid with confidence as we are a charter member of EBAY's POWER SELLER program, and have a PERFECT feedback record."*

*"100% SATISFACTION GUARANTEE - IF YOU ARE UNHAPPY FOR ANY REASON JUST RETURN YOUR ITEM FOR A COMPLETE REFUND INCLUDING SHIPPING BOTH WAYS."*

Go back and read them over again. Which one is the most powerful? Which one will instill the most confidence in the buyer? Obviously the stronger guarantee has a greater effect. I listed these in order with the weakest at the top and the strongest at the bottom. Guarantees increase the buyers confidence in the seller. If you offer a guarantee you need to honor it, but if you are diligent in your descriptions, you will not have many returns. If you get more than one complaint for every hundred items you sell, or more than one return for every 200 items you sell, you are probably exaggerating the condition of your items, or not taking enough time examining them when you write your descriptions.

### **List The Shipping Cost In The Auction Description**

Make it easy for buyers to figure out the shipping and handling fee. By listing the shipping fee in your auction, buyers will know exactly what will happen when the auction ends. Don't make them do math or look at other pages. List the shipping fee in your auction description. I currently use the simple statement:

*"\$6.00 shipping to US Destinations by Priority Mail. I will pack with care and ship with delivery confirmation for your protection. International shipments sent by Airmail letter post. I will combine items that end on the SAME day to lower your shipping cost."*

This is clear and to the point. The buyer does not have to figure anything out or look at other pages to find out shipping information. Buyers will not mind paying a bit extra for handling if you pack well. By removing doubt you will increase confidence and get higher prices for your items.

Check out this shipping statement I found on eBay:

*"Winning bidder to add \$5.85 for shipping and handling. If your purchase doesn't ship within 3 business days of receiving your payment, I will refund your bid amount and send your item out free of charge! (Paypal payments received after 12 Noon Mountain Time, are considered received the following day)"*

This is very powerful language. I would consider bidding on this item especially if I wanted it in a hurry. This is a great answer to the question "Why should I buy from you instead of another seller?"

Buy a scale and weigh everything. This way you will know what the shipping will be. The Post Office has a tri-fold rate card you can ask for that lists all the rates. For small items the shipping is the same anywhere in the country. For larger items

you can list the weight, or list the maximum shipping fee. Make it as clear to the buyer as you can. Here's an example:

*"This item weighs 17 pounds packed and will be shipped from zip code 85211. You can get a shipping price at [www.USPS.com](http://www.USPS.com). I ship with delivery confirmation which is an additional 45 cents."*

The bidder can click on the link [www.USPS.com](http://www.USPS.com) (use link to "<http://postcalc.usps.gov/>") and type in the weight and both zip codes and get a total. No confusion. This does force the buyer to work to get a total so it is less convenient and should rarely be used. You should consider just using a flat shipping rate for larger items instead. Buyers do consider shipping fees when they are bidding.

## **Use A Low Opening Bid**

This is an easy simple way to get better prices for your items. If you list your item in the right category, and use high quality pictures, you will get what the item is worth. If you are unsure if an item will get the bids to realize what you want for it, use a reserve. By starting your auction with an insanely low opening bid like a dollar, you'll save on the listing fees, and people looking for a cheap thrill or some simple entertainment will come along and bid on your item.

It seems stupid, but there are plenty of people who will bid five or ten dollars on a thousand dollar item. It doesn't cost you anything for them to put their insane bids in, but it makes the item look more desirable. When buyers see your item mixed in with the other items in categories or searches they will look at the price and the number of bids. It seems more attractive if others have bid on it or if they can get a good deal.

## **Sell Internationally**

Allow international bidders. An extra minute spent filling out a custom form is time well spent. Every time I fill out one of these forms it is proof that I get more money by allowing international buyers. The post office will give you the labels and show you how to use them.

## **Don't Use Counters**

Unless you have a specific reason for doing so, do not use counters in your auctions. When the auction surfer sees your item, and that it has been looked at by lots of people but has few bids, he will assume there is a reason why none of the other viewers bid and just leave. I only use counters when I am testing headlines, or categories, and want to compare how many people will look at the auction in a different categories, or with different headlines.

## **Use Five or Seven Day Auctions**

There are many different opinions about when to list, how long to list for, and when to have your auctions end. Over thousands of auctions, my friends and I have concluded that it doesn't matter if you use five or seven day auctions. Either will get similar results. Ten day auctions will bring less money than either the five or the seven day auctions, and three day auctions sometimes do better,

sometimes do worse than five or seven day auctions.

A ten day auction removes the urgency from the viewer. The potential bidder has enough time to decide whether to bid or not, and to look for other items. A three day auction is too short to get exposure to enough bidders to consistently bring in good money. I use ten day auctions for some of my multiple items auctions, but even then, very rarely.

Search results are presented by newly listed items or items ending today. Surfers only see the items that are either new or ending. The first 24 hours, and the last 24 hours are when the majority of viewers will see your auction. I use five day auctions because they consistently get me good results and allow me to move more stuff through faster.

## **It Doesn't Matter When Your Auction Ends**

Many sellers swear they get higher bids by having their auctions end on Sunday nights, others will tell you to end your auction on Saturday afternoon, or any time. I think it doesn't really matter. If you have something that someone wants they will bid on it. Most buyers are aware of the sniper programs, and those that aren't will bid before the auction ends anyway.

I end my auctions on Monday and Wednesday nights because this is convenient for me. It also means that more bidders are home when the auction ends. You should have your auctions run through the weekend because many bidders search on the weekend and bookmark the items they want to buy.

To learn about sniper programs consult the [eBay Bid Sniper Review page](#).

## **Communicate Quickly**

After the auction ends send the winning bidder an email telling them the total due, and your address. Tell them if you take online payments like Paypal.

If you do not want buyers to use the eBay checkout feature you should turn it off. This is done by selecting the "Preferences/ Set-Up" tab on the right side of your My eBay page.

## **Pack Well**

By packing well you are sending a message to the buyer that their purchase must be valuable. After all, no one would spend the time to pack garbage. Go to a packaging supply house and buy Styrofoam peanuts, packing paper, tape, and supplies. You can get these items at an office supply store, but they will be much cheaper at a package company. I wrap everything in packing paper- this is just fresh unused newsprint that costs \$8.50 for a stack- then surround it with foam peanuts and ship it out in a box. For heavy items, I use wads of newspaper or cut cardboard to keep the item from shifting.

You should include a short note thanking the buyer for his purchase. Put your name and address on the note in case the label comes off in the mail. I also tell the buyers to contact me if there is a problem and to leave feedback for me and I will reciprocate.

The whole idea is to make the buyer want to keep the item. Many times when buyers have remorse, they will look for some small slight to use as justification for complaining and returning an item. By packing well you avoid giving them poor packing as an excuse for returning or complaining.

Once I had a buyer send back a box of trains because he claimed they smelled like cigarette smoke. I think he was exaggerating in order to justify sending back something he had second thoughts about buying. If you smoke, do not smoke around your packing materials and auction items. You can make your boxes smell good when they are opened by putting some cedar shavings in the box when you pack. Cedar shavings are available at pet stores. Don't use perfume or incense as some buyers may be allergic.

It is very rare for someone to complain about just one thing. Usually they have a list of complaints. The list adds up to they are unhappy and they are returning the item. By not giving them reasons to complain, they cannot build a list of grievances, and will not return unless you have grossly misrepresented the item.

Don't give buyers reasons to complain. Be fast to answer questions during the auction, after the auction ends let them know the total quickly, and wow them when they get the item by packing it well.

## **Use A Bulk Lister**

By making all your auctions end within seconds of each other you will force bidders to bid in advance on certain items. This pushes up the final price because they have to choose what to snipe and what to bid early on. The bidder will bid early on the cheaper common items, and snipe the more desirable items. The more desirable items will get bids anyway, and the common items will look desirable because of the earlier bids.

Ebay has a program you can download for free called Turbo Lister. This is the best one because it is supported by eBay so when changes are made to eBay the program will still work. Other programs like Auction Submit (free- [www.auctionsubmit.com](http://www.auctionsubmit.com)) and Auction Watch (fee based- [www.auctionwatch.com](http://www.auctionwatch.com)) are available. I used Auction Submit for years because it has a preview screen, and it was free.

Bulk listing programs also allow you to write auctions at your convenience, and then list them to get maximum exposure. You want to list similar items together so you can get bidders to bid on multiple items. With a program like Turbo Lister you can write auctions and save them as a group. You can then add new listings to the group later, and start all of them at once.

Another advantage of bulk listing programs is you won't have to go through the seemingly endless pages of stuff for each auction. I use Turbo Lister, and looked at the sell your item pages on ebay for the first time in years when I was writing this report. No wonder it seems complicated. It is page after page of select this select that make sure your item is allowed, what color is the moon on the second Tuesday of March? Etc. . .

## **Use Big Clear Photographs**

Use big clear photographs in your auctions. The best way to get nice clear photos is to take them with a digital camera. I use a Olympus D-360L camera. This is a Megapixel camera. Megapixel means there is more than 1 million pixels in the pictures. I use white unprinted newsprint as backing and shoot the pictures with the high resolution setting. You need a camera. I started with a box that converted the image from a camcorder into a digital image, then went to a web cam. Web cams are the small cameras that plug into the USB port on your computer. These will make nice pictures if you have good lighting, but should only be used until you can get a good camera. TYou can get a good quality digital camera for under \$100 today. The camera will pay for itself within a few months in higher sales.

Before I bought my camera, I took some trains to a camera store. I took pictures of them to find out what was the best camera to use at the lowest possible price. I talked to all my friends, and asked them what camera they used, and what they liked and disliked about it. Spend some time to find the best camera for you.

## **Use Good Lighting**

I use GE blue colored bulbs from the camera store in painter's floodlights to light the items. A fluorescent light will also give you nice clear pictures. Test the settings on your camera and use different bulbs until you get nice clear pictures. The GE bulbs get quite hot, so I only use them when I am taking a picture, and then turn them off again. Practice taking pictures with your camera to get better results.

If your items are unusual or unfamiliar, put something in your photos so bidders can estimate the size. This is called a reference item. I use a nine volt battery; but a dollar bill, a quarter, or any household item bidders are familiar with will also work. You can also tell them the measurements, but most bidders search by looking at pictures. Tell them why there is a battery in the picture. This will cut down on the questions from idle surfers wanting to know if your item is battery powered.

## **Editing Your Pictures**

Use a photo editing program to crop out the extra areas in your pictures. I used to recommend a program to use, but the woman who wrote it retired. I am currently looking at a few programs and will write a review in the near future. Subscribe to my free collector strategies newsletter to get a notice when I complete the review.

[Subscribe to the Collector Strategies newsletter to get more information about photo editing software.](#)

You should NEVER use a picture bigger than 80 KB in size on an eBay auction. Pictures with large file sizes take too long to download, and some potential bidders will leave rather than wait for them. If your picture is larger than 80KB can use SuperJPG to make it smaller. SuperJPG is so easy to use I used it for a year before I even read the directions. The video demonstrates the program

## **Host Your Own Images**

Many sellers use picture services to host their photos because they think it is difficult to transfer pictures to their own space, or don't know they even have space. They are throwing away money because they won't spend a little time learning how to host their own images. Almost every internet service provider gives their customers free space to store pictures and create their own websites. You should use this space to store your pictures and then by putting a simple line of text in your auctions you will have big clear pictures like I use.

To host your own pictures you will need a File Transfer Program (FTP). Your internet company may have provided you with one on the CD you got when you signed up or you can download one at [www.zdnet.com/downloads](http://www.zdnet.com/downloads). I use WS/FTP-lite You can find a whole list of programs by searching for FTP on ZDnet. Ask your internet provider to recommend one- AOL users can log onto an AOL page to transfer files and photos easily. Call AOL to find out more, or use the AOL help menus.

A few minutes of time on the phone with your internet company will help you learn everything you need to know. Just call the tech support people, and tell them you want to store some pictures. When you are on the phone with tech support you will need to know what the URL is where you will put your pictures. You will also need your login name and password. This is the same login name and password you use to get online and get your e-mail. You'll need to keep your password in a safe place. Also get their recommendation about what FTP program you should use.

When you go to ZDnet to download a file transfer program keep in mind that shareware means you can try it for free, but will have to register and pay for it if you want to keep using it. Freeware means it is free, and fee ware or demo means you have to pay to use it. Once you have a program you'll need to learn to use it.

The best way to learn to use the program is by using it. I know that sounds stupid, but it is true. If you have problems call tech support and ask them. Some of the FTP programs can be set to open to the directories with your pictures so all you have to do is select the pictures and then click on an arrow to move them up to your server space. With WS/FTP this is done by clicking on the options button, then on Save Current Directories as Connection Directories on the Sessions tab.

When you write your action descriptions you will use your picture's address in the photo line for the first picture. Click on "Your Own Web Hosting" on page three of the eBay sell your item form to get the photo box to open. Always put a URL into the link to your picture box because this is how you get a photo icon next to your listing.

Add additional pictures to your auctions as needed by inserting this text into your description:

```
<img src=http://www.domain.com/folder/picturename.jpg>
```

In the line above, *domain* is the name of your web host, *folder* is the folder your images are in, and *picturename* is the name of your image. If you are unsure what domain name you should use call your Internet provider and ask.

Scroll down to the next page to continue reading . . .

## A Final Word Of Advice

eBay is just the beginning of your online opportunity. Let me tell you a dirty little secret eBay doesn't even try to hide. eBay considers your buyers and the people who look at your auctions eBay's customers. Not yours.

In fact, eBay has modified the system to make it more difficult for your customers to contact you. eBay doesn't want you talking directly to your customers because they don't get paid when you sell directly to a customer.

The problem is your customers are valuable. To maximize your income, you must be able to communicate with your past customers. You must leverage your auctions to capture all the possible profits.

In the Auction Revolution, you will learn how to get a majority of the people who view your auctions to give you their names and email addresses so you can offer them items directly. Let me be clear here. You'll get contact information from not only the people who bid or buy your items, but everyone who looks at your auctions.

In this section of the Auction Revolution you will discover:

How to force people who look at your auctions to go to your website.

A step by step system to get people to come to your website and give you their valuable contact information.

You will learn how to profitably use the contact information.

You will learn how to use eBay to prospect for new customers.

You will learn how to communicate with your contacts and maximize the money they spend.

But, the Auction Revolution doesn't stop there. In the Auction Revolution, you will learn a step-by-step system to convert your eBay business into a highly profitable online business. No matter what you want to do on eBay - from selling a few unwanted items from around your home, to building a profitable automated online business, the [Auction-Revolution](#) will help you accomplish your goals. The [Auction Revolution](#) is your blueprint to success.

Terry Gibbs  
August 16, 2004.

PS. Much of the material within this book was originally published in my Collector Strategies Newsletter. Every month, I write about antiques, collectibles and eBay in the free emailed newsletter. You can sign up from any page on my collectibles website:

[www.IWantCollectibles.com](http://www.IWantCollectibles.com)