

The Ten Commandments Of EBay: Side-Stepping Common Sell...

Author:
Resale Rights

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Rookie eBayers are prone to making certain mistakes that are detrimental to their businesses. CEO of Internet consulting company <http://InternetBusinessSkills.com>, Allison Hartsoe, shares her insights on avoiding the top ten mistakes eBay newcomers make:

See Yourself through Your Customers' Eyes

• Don't Start Off with a Feedback Rating of Zero.

No one wants to be your first buyer - they'd rather not be a guinea pig when their money's at stake. Go in and buy a few products, so you don't appear completely inexperienced.

• Don't Take Fuzzy Pictures.

Clean, quality photos are integral to giving your customers the right impression. You want them to perceive you as competent and professional, so make sure your listings look the part.

• Include Contact Info in Your Listing.

Knowing they can get a hold of you if any issues arise goes a long way towards making shoppers feel comfortable and safe buying from you. Always include an email address, and preferably a phone number where they can reach you as well.

• Respond to Customers' Questions Immediately.

People expect "instant" everything, including customer service. The quicker you answer your customers, the better chance you have of resolving their issues, and making that sale. Hartsoe points out, "If it takes you two days to respond, they've probably moved on."

Money-Matters

• Don't Accept Cash in the Mail.

You have no way of proving that a payment was or wasn't received, or that the amount was correct. Accept credit card payments or PayPal - they're faster and leave a convenient paper trail.

• Set Your Prices Based on the Market.

Use eBay's Completed Auctions feature, or try <http://HammerTap.com> or

<http://Terapeak.com>'s market research tools. You should have a good idea of the right price before listing your items.

• Don't Lower Your Item Prices by Artificially Inflating Your Shipping Costs.

If you charge fifty cents for an item, but piggyback six dollars in shipping fees, your buyers won't see the shipping charges until they checkout. At the very least, they'll be unhappy; and they may choose not to complete the sale at all.

What's in a Name?

• Have a User ID that Reflects Your Products.

An ID pertinent to your business, such as "RefillInk," provides more credibility than an ID like "2Cool4You."

• Don't Use Unknown Brand Names in Your Titles.

Of all items sold on eBay, sixty percent are found using the search function, which only searches main titles. You're given fifty-five characters to sell your item - don't waste them on terms for

which nobody's searching.

• Don't Use Misleading Brand Names in Your Titles.

In other words, don't put "Disney" in your listing title for a teddy bear, unless he's Winnie the Pooh, or another Disney creation. In addition to violating your customers' trust and garnering a bad reputation, you'll also end up in eBay's doghouse. Hartsoe warns, "They'll pull your listing; and if you don't rectify the situation, they'll pull your store and ID, and suspend you." For frequently searched keywords, relevant to your products, that you can use in your listings, check out <http://Pulse.EBay.com>.

Bypassing these seemingly obvious, but all too common mistakes, can spare you many headaches, and make your transition into the world of eBay-selling a much smoother ride.