

PLUGIN AUCTION PROFITS

From eBay to E-Commerce in 3 Easy Steps

A Special Report By Robert Corrigan

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Written and Published by Robert Corrigan

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PLUGIN AUCTION PROFITS

Hi and welcome to Plugin In Auction Profits, I have created this home study course to show how it is possible to build a business on eBay, Amazon and progress to using e-commerce websites to sell your products. I reveal in this report the exact methods I have used and still use today to build my business. These methods work so let's get it right straight from the start.

EBAY

WHY SELL ON EBAY?

The answer for most people is very simple, eBay is a well known brand, a phenomena, there will be few people who have not heard of eBay even if they have never used it. It has public awareness, we all "know" that virtually any product can be bought on eBay and for a knock down price. It is the primary reason why most people use it.

For many others it is a means of supplementing their primary income by selling items on the site, for a smaller number it is their primary source of income. Most people will start using eBay to dispose of items that they no longer want and in so doing recouping the cash invested in the items they no longer have a use for, a few, the minority use that cash to reinvest in stock that they can resell back on the site. It is how many businesses start and that is how I started mine.

I started to make a little bit of money buying and selling on eBay but nothing major, some people are very lucky or just hit a winning formula very quickly but for the majority of us it is a learning curve which is littered with pot holes along the way.

But for starting off it is very easy to set up an account and be selling your own items within just a few minutes. There are at the time of writing 30 eBay sites throughout the world you can access them from any country's eBay home page. The following links will take you to the more popular eBay sites where you can set up an account if you do not have one.

www.ebay.com

www.ebay.co.uk

You will also need a PayPal account to take payments, you can sign up to PayPal at the same time you sign up for an eBay account.

The first question that come to mind is where do I list the items I want to sell? It has been said that eBay has several thousand categories and sub categories(I must admit that I have never counted) but for most items it should be fairly obvious where to list. If in doubt think like a buyer and use the search facility to look for the same or similar items you wish to sell.

By clicking Visit all categories we can then access the sub categories

An example of a popular category clicking the more button will show all the subcategories you can list in. You can also use the eBay search facility at the top of the page to see how many similar items are for sale and the categories they have been listed in.

THE 10 MOST COMMON MISTAKES

Why Can't I Make Money On Ebay? The 10 Most Common Mistakes Made By Newbie's.

This often amounts to classic errors and misconceptions. eBay with its clever advertising and it's high media profile has lead too many people to believe (incorrectly) that all you have to do is to list an item on eBay to make money from it. Well I don't want to burst any bubbles but this is simply not true, it does not work like that.

To give an example, a shop opened very close to me over a year ago part of the eBay partner network; it was approved by eBay, and proudly displayed the eBay logo as the partners had gained sanction from eBay and had done the training and gained the accreditation required.

I dropped in to the shop incognito to suss out the competition so to speak. The way it works is this; the company list your item for you and take a percentage of the selling price. As a customer you agree not to sell the item in the interim. Does it work as a business model? Again it depends on what is being sold. If it is an auction, unless you have set a reserve price the item may well sell at the starting price no matter how low this may be.

The simple formula put it on eBay, sell it make, money, does not work unless you have a desirable item. I am sorry to report that the business did not succeed it closed within 3 months, due to the low quality of items presented for resale and the ability to sell the item on eBay yourself.

This should be a warning about buying into the eBay mythos. So what are the 10 classic errors about eBay selling and how can we avoid them. Well they are:

1. Making money instantly: Not everything will sell remember that. Now that's ok when you are selling your own possessions to make a few dollars here and there. We are often just recouping money we have already spent and would otherwise be money that would have remained dormant. My own eBay business took 8 month before it showed a clear profit. So do not expect instant results from each product you try to sell.
2. Thinking any old rubbish will sell: Think of the example earlier, or this example. I visited an open market recently; one of the stalls was selling old fashioned second hand watches at \$40-\$50. As I looked at them the seller told me that they sold on eBay at \$75-\$100 each. Now why was he selling these at the market?
3. Poor titles: The point of the title is to grab the attention of a prospective buyer. Have a look at on eBay in any category, how many of the titles fail to do this? Answer lots, use keywords in your title, look at the other seller's titles who are selling the same or similar items to yourself. Use the same keywords, but do not, repeat do not copy the title. Rewrite the title of a particularly successful listing.
4. Poor picture: Your pictures are the second big opportunity to sell your item (some would say the first). So make the picture as good as it can be. Digital cameras are very affordable these days and most cell phone have an excellent camera as standard so getting a good picture should not be a problem. There are a number of free image manipulation packages to crop your photo and improve its presentation. Make sure that the item is in focus and that the lighting is good, the whole purpose of the picture is to show off the item for sale to its best advantage. Would you buy an item from a listing in which you could not see the item clearly?
5. Poor description: The length of your description will vary depending on the item you are selling. Look for similar items that have sold using the eBay completed listings function and adapt the description for successful listings.
6. Expecting items to sell the first time: This is again part of the eBay mythos, put it up, it will sell. If you use the advanced search facility for your item you may well be shocked at how many similar items you are listing fail to sell. This could be down to a number of factors, such as the as the starting price, the time it

was listed, the type of listing used and the category it was listed in. You may have to list it several times before it sells. Always use the relist facility on eBay.

7. Choosing the best time to list: This is a bit nebulous as it depends on what it is that is selling. If you are selling into a big market with lots of sellers, then listing several times a day with the auction ending at different times is probably the correct strategy. If you are working in much smaller niche areas (which I recommend) then having your listing finishing at 8-9 in the evening may well be the key to success. Choosing the best time to list is crucial to your auction success but it can only be gained by experience.
8. Research: If you want to make a business from eBay then the most important thing is to research what you intend to sell, this may seem obvious but it's great to have a fantastic idea of what it is you want to sell and then go about trying to sell it. The three most important tasks are RESEARCH, RESEARCH and RESEARCH. It is only through research that we can find out what is truly selling. From that we can work out if our idea is worth a punt, so research your ideas first, second and third.
9. Obtain your stock at the right price: If you wish to make a business of your eBaying then you will need to obtain stock on a consistent basis at the right price to make a profit. Local wholesalers are a good start for finding stock to make a start, they are very good for sourcing non branded stock. You can also find stock that is similar to branded stock, your buy in should be quite modest but your margins should be excellent.
10. Lack of persistence: This is the biggest killer bar none. How often have you heard "I tried it once but it didn't work". It took me nearly a year for my business to kick in; it was 8 months before I gained Powerseller status and make real profits. Only 5% of eBayers obtain Powerseller status. The ones that have persistence will find the rewards.

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT TO SELL?

During the credit crunch there are many markets that are unscathed. Examples are that of the Skin Care Market, all manner of private label goods as these are considerably cheaper than branded items. To give another example, that of the baby clothes market. This is a high volume HOT market. It's a market that I have little experience in. Ok I know where they come from (I think) but after that what I know about babies I could write on a postage stamp.

One thing I do know is that they grow, fast. So there is a hot market for quality baby ware at a budget price. Brand names always draw a

premium price, but in most cases you are recouping money that can be spent on lots of other items such as bigger baby clothes. I have some friends who constantly resell baby clothes that are too small and use the money to purchase replacement items.

What about selling new non branded clothing. Firstly obtain a reliable source of supply. My preference would be a local wholesaler a search using yell.com will give you a wide range of choice within a reasonable travelling distance. Using a local supplier has the advantage of being able to inspect the merchandise at close quarters. You can also build up a personal relationship with the trader. Traders will let you know their hottest selling lines, or what new merchandise they will soon have for sale. You should be able to buy very small numbers of specific sizes. Most wholesalers these days have very small minimum spend levels (typically \$100).

If the wholesaler has a website you can use the website to select possible purchases, and then use the eBay advanced search to find similar items. The advanced search tool will allow you to see all the items sold in the past 30 days, the final price, postage price etc. By using this tool you can make more informed choices on possible purchases.

This is just one example, the great thing about eBay is its transparency you can see what is selling so you can source similar items.

HOW TO FIND A MARKET

I thought it may be worth giving a few examples that I personally know about of people making a secondary income in niche markets.

A work colleague of mine sells towels to hair dressers, tanning studios and beauty parlours. His wife noticed the poor quality of the towels used at her local hair dressers. This started her thinking that if she could provide a better quality product at a cheaper rate they could make a very respectable second income.

They started by sourcing good quality towels from a local wholesaler, visiting local salons and offering a better product at a competitive price. They soon started making a second income. They then expanded this idea by visiting salons further a field.

Just by using Yellow Pages or yell.com they were able to find a huge amount of business within a 20 mile radius. They now have a turnover in excess of \$5000 a month.

They have started to import directly from China which allows them to offer better discounts whilst still improving margins. With literally scores of businesses within a 20 mile radius of home, even if only fractions want to purchase from them it's still a considerable customer base.

As towels are disposable items they will need to be replaced at regular intervals. They offer outstanding value and service. However one simple mistake has cost them a few thousand pounds. They had an e-commerce website built to sell these items further a field. It was disaster with very poor sales conversions. This is a great example of where the face to face approach is much better than the anonymity of a website.

I'm sure you will agree that this very simple idea has been very effective. Often its a question of thinking outside the box, your business does not have to be glamorous just profitable. Again use the advanced search facility to look for potential market and products to sell into those markets. Don't try to compete with the big powersellers they will have considerable advantages over you, look for the smaller niche markets to sell into, quite a considerable business can be built up selling into these markets, you can start to compete with the powersellers once you gain that coveted status.

HOW TO OBTAIN STOCK

Why Most Wholesale Lists Are Rubbish!

Why are most wholesale lists rubbish? Here's why. Ok, let's make some quick money, let's feed the appetite of all those eBayers or potential eBayers and show them where they can find products for resale.

Here's the recipe on how to do it:

1. Look at the main categories on eBay, look at the "hot markets" in each category (a few hours work).
2. Find suppliers in these categories by using Google.
3. Select a dozen or so suppliers in each market then copy and paste their URL into a word document.
4. Repeat process for each "hot" market (a few hours)
5. Decide you have so many wholesalers you can produce several lists. More money!
6. Write a listing or sales page saying you are about to reveal all the "Secret Suppliers".

7. Sell all the lists on eBay as “The Best Wholesale List 2009” or “Secret Sources Revealed At Last” or “The Sources Other Traders Don’t Want You To Know About”. Pretty nifty titles?

Great recipe, you can update this several times a years and still keep on selling the same stuff, titles do not a wholesale list make.

So buying a list and expecting to make decent money from it may not be the solution, in most cases you will find it a waste of your money. The wider internet is also awash with dubious lists, so how do you go about obtaining legitimate sources of product that can be resold at a profit? Here are some starters for 10:

1. Yell.com will bring up your local suppliers; most large cities have wholesale districts, so you will never be too far away from a source of supply.
2. Use Google or Yahoo to search for wholesalers, result approx 26,000,000, so we can take a look at some of these in more detail.
3. You can obtain a list of wholesale suppliers through magazines such as The Trader or similar available at news agents.

WHATS YOUR IMAGE LIKE

Having a good eye catching image and title is the first step in getting prospective buyers to look at your eBay listing. In this case a picture is worth more than a thousand words.

Lots of digital cameras come with bundle image manipulation software that allows you do manipulate and enhance digital images. You will find this very useful to crop and edit your listing pictures. You won’t need anything sophisticated such as Photoshop or similar. I have for many years used Paint Shop Pro 5 which was given away as a cover disk, but there are many free packages such as Serif, Irfan view etc. Try out a few and see what suits you best. Good lighting is essential as a poor picture will not attract prospective buyers to open them.

Look at the titles that have caught your eye when doing your research make a swipe file in a work document. Re-write the title DONT COPY IT use these successful titles as a basis for your titles. Many people forget there is extensive advice available by using eBay's help files, so many people forget about this.

How you package your items will say a lot about you, this is the first opportunity your buyer has to assess you as a seller, so use proper packaging, you can obtain jiffy or similar bags very cheaply, as well as all manner of boxes and mailing sacks through eBay itself. Include a packing or compliments slip with each item and a return label on the reverse of the packet.

Your feedback the measure of how people view your service is important it is much easier to get it right than get it wrong. Buyer will grade your service on 4 important criteria these are called detailed seller ratings.

1. Item as described
2. Communication
3. Dispatch time
4. Postage and Packing Charges

These are graded on a scale of 1-5.

Always offer a guarantee on each item state this in the listings and stick to it. Show you have confidence in your product. The returns policy makes it very plain what your terms are, the buyer agreed to this when they bought the product.

If in doubt just refund or replace it won't happen often but how you deal with it will set the tone for your future dealings.

Answer all messages, question and e-mails promptly and courteously. Never repeat never react even if the sender is rude and never allow your follow up comments on negative feedback to get personal. Keep it factual and professional, these comments are public and posted for all to see. Protect your feedback by offering great service your feedback will reflect this, a few negatives with a high feedback score will count for nothing it is well known that there are some people you simply cannot please.

WORK SMARTER NOT HARDER

Automating as much of the day to day business will pay massive dividends in the amount of time you save; it really is true that I run my eBay and other businesses on less than an hour a day. How do I manage to do this? Simple I have automated as many of the mundane tasks as I can. Whilst it takes a bit of time to set this up initially, it pays massive dividends in saving time in the long run.

Here are your starters, the simply must do's:

With all your listings include a FAQ section, this avoids me having to answer any questions about this product. Try to anticipate all the common questions you are likely to be asked and answer them as fully as possible. You will still be asked questions, but when you do you can make them visible on the listing together with your answer.

Upgrade to Selling Manager or Selling Manager Pro these are very powerful tools that you can use to help automate your business. Selling Manager is free to download and use (there is a monthly subscription for the use of the pro version). These are a must if you are selling any degree of volume as it allows you to more easily manage your sales.

You can also set up e-mail templates such as dispatch notices, reminders etc. These simple ideas free up an enormous amount of time.

Use Turbo Lister to manage your bulk listings, again this is a free tool provided by eBay, you can list an entire inventory in just minutes using Turbo Lister.

Just another little timesaver, use PayPal to print out your postage stamps and labels, so instead of queuing at the post office, weighing everything you can just drop your parcels off. Get yourself a set of accurate scales so that you are printing postage to the right value.

Just some simple strategies to save time, when used together it is unbelievable the amount of time you can save.

BECOMING A POWERSELLER

This should be the aim of anyone who wishes to build a real business on eBay. You cannot apply for Powerseller status you are invited to join the program. Only 5% of eBays make Powerseller status you need to maintain a feedback rating of 98% or better, to sell a minimum number of items a month or make the required level of money (in the UK at the

time of writing these are respectively 100 items or £750 per month) there are different Powerseller levels each with their own level of rewards. Check it out on you country's eBay website. My advice on attaining Powerseller status would be to open an eBay shop, this will give your business a real professional feel and look about it. This is a subscription service but I regard it as an absolute must. Check out some other sellers shops in your niche area(s) to get a feel for the market.

AMAZON

WHY TRADE ON AMAZON?

How many times have you logged onto Amazon and seen the following message, sell you old purchases from Amazon and make..... Have you ever done this? Amazons market place is where you can sell products in several different categories so you can list your entire eBay inventory and sell it on Amazon.

There are two different kinds of accounts:

Individual trading account as its name suggests and Pro seller account which is for sellers selling more than 35 items per month

There are several advantages to selling on Amazon; firstly you ally yourself with one of the best known global brands, Amazon does not have the flea market image that eBay has. You do not have to pay to list an item you only pay a fee when the item sells, and your postal charges are worked out by Amazon for you. Now you are unlikely to make money from your paperback collection so we need to look at a niche market that gives us more potential.

WHAT ITEMS CAN YOU SELL ON AMAZON?

Well it may surprise you to know that virtually anything you can sell on eBay you can sell on Amazon. Look at the categories in the Amazon market place and you can see the similarity of product.

One of the things that I am always amazed about is that so many people consider eBay is the only way to make money or sell products on line. So why would that be the case? Simple eBay is in everyone psyche there have been TV ads for eBay, and probably millions of articles have been written about it many appearing in high profile

publications such as newspapers and magazines. So the thought of using any other medium to sell does not occur to most people.

Here's another idea to stimulate your entrepreneurial muscles. Amazon's core business is still books CD's and DVD's you can obtain excellent bargains using Amazon's market place often much better than eBay's pricing, so let's use that to our advantage. I sell as a side line (in fact a very profitable side line) academic, hobby and specialist books only, repeat only on Amazon. Here's why, if you ever wanted to buy a book online where would you go to get it? Amazon of course, if it is an academic specialist or hobby book you will find it and also the lowest price it is being offered at.

Now for most specialist books the price will be quite high, are you starting to get my drift? There are literally loads of these types of books being donated to charity shops on a daily basis. Now due to the nature of these books they are not likely to sell for very much. Because they do not sell the price will be much lower than the popular paperbacks that fill the shelves and command a higher price. How do we make money from this? Simple take the ISBN number and use the Amazon search facility to see the current selling price from Amazon and other book sellers selling into Amazon market place.

Now it may take you some time to see a return, obviously the market for these books is much smaller than Dan Brown's readership, but it will not cost you anything to list these items. So where does this effect your eBaying? Use the search facility to find the Specialist books on sale on eBay that are attracting no or very few bids, use the ISBN number to search for the possible resale value on Amazon. Conversely many items on Amazon have a greater resale value on eBay (not books CD's or DVD's) a few hours research could well end up paying dividends.

You can also sell the majority of your eBay inventory on Amazon, Amazon has many advantages you pay no fees until you sell the item. A seller account is very easily set up and Amazon will pay you directly into your bank account on its payment cycle.

EXPANDING BEYOND EBAY AND AMAZON

E-COMMERCE IS NOT SCARY!

There are plenty of reasons why starting an e-commerce site for your eBay business makes a great deal of sense for both you, your prospects and customers. There never has been a better time than right

now. While there are some perceived problems in dealing with the global marketplace – arranging delivery, accepting online payments and things of that nature – these problems are far less troublesome nowadays than they were even a couple of years ago.

Online security is better than ever, so whereas accepting secure online payments for transactions conducted online might have given you cause for concern in the past, it should no longer do so because online payment systems have improved since those times. Added to this is the fact that global markets are becoming inherently more open, meaning that it is becoming normal for people to trade across borders.

As we have seen with PayPal, most businesses that sell their product on-line get paid very quickly. All businesses that operate online are playing on an absolutely level playing field as well. Whether you are the biggest multinational or a small, one person operation makes no difference as far as your customers are concerned.

Your buyers cannot have any concept of how big your operation is from your website (as long as it is constructed professionally), and as long as you operate professionally, the size of your business is irrelevant.

This is the potentially scary part of expanding your business, the easy part of setting up on eBay or Amazon was that all the listing information was inputted on a listing form or template where we had to fill in the required information. Building an e-commerce website with little or no experience can seem like a Herculean task.

There are of course alternatives; we could use the services of a dedicated web design company. These should be very easy to find by a simple web search, but this solution can be very costly depending on what options you choose for your e-commerce package.

You could use the services of a freelancer through such sites as eLance or studentgems or peopleperhour. Check out their satisfaction rating and agree a price before work begins. This can often be a cost effective solution but remember you will also need to pay for a hosting package for your website.

You can also use a template driven e-commerce website available through a whole range of hosting companies, many of these are superb and you can alter the level of functionality to take account of growth in your business. They also enable you to take online payments with credit and debit cards though your PayPal account, many also offer alternative payment methods that you can use.

The first thing you need to do is to buy a domain name, this is simply the address that you type into your browsers address bar, this will be the address of your website

Choice of domain name is very important so you should spend some time to think about it, it needs to be memorable, easy to type into the address bar, also consider if the domain name should identify the company, product or service being offered.

Any internet hosting company will sell you a domain here is the one that I use for all my websites.



The image shows a screenshot of a domain registration interface. On the left, a panel titled 'Domain Check' contains instructions to check domain availability, a text input field with 'www.pluginactionprofits', a 'Check' button, and a list of domain extensions (.co.uk, .com, .net, .me.uk, .org, .info, .org.uk, .eu, .mobi) with checkboxes. Below this is a link 'Show more Top Level Domains'. On the right, a panel titled 'Not today, thank you!' explains that users can choose a domain later in their 1&1 Control Panel, with a note that there is no time limit. It features an image of a woman at a laptop and a red button labeled 'Choose a domain later'.

1&1 Hosting

You simply type in the name of the domain you have thought of and click check the search will reveal if the domain is available to purchase. These are very inexpensive, go for a .com extension in preference to any other. If you are exclusively trading in your own country it may be an idea to buy that extension. You will also need to buy a hosting package. All this means is you need some storage space to host your websites, all the hosting companies I deal with offer this service which is very simple using FTP software. (not scary honest!). The cost is very modest approx \$100 a year. You can easily upload your website using FTP software which is available free.

MINI AND SINGLE PRODUCT WEBSITES

Whether you are creating a simple one page/product website or a full blown e-commerce solution the following considerations should apply equally.

The easiest way of getting a simple website up and running (such as the one you bought this course from) is to use a template which you

would then need to modify and alter to suit your own requirements. Doing this is not as difficult or time-consuming as designing the whole thing from scratch. Furthermore, as long as you have an easy to use, visual WYSIWYG ('What you see is what you get') HTML editor like the free Page Breeze or Coffee Cup HTML editor you will be able to edit the template itself, which saves the design fees.

There are dozens of places where you can find free templates, just using a search on the internet should throw up thousands of possibilities, or you could buy a collection of templates from eBay itself.

Using templates in this way makes creating your site a whole lot easier, but there is a one disadvantage. You are not the first person to have chosen the template that you are going to use to promote your business, so there may well be other businesses in your market that have an e-commerce site that looks like yours.

Why not make the look of your website totally unique and have a custom template designed that fits with your products? By spending a few dollars you can get something tailored exactly to your own specification. Here is an example of a single product website, this was built by a professional designer for only \$89.



You simply add your sales copy to the template using an HTML editor, there are plenty of free ones available or you could buy a commercial product.

HOW DO I FIND THE BEST SOLUTION FOR ME?

Well this really boils down to what product(s) you want the site to sell. If it is a simple one or two product website you can simply link the pay

button to your PayPal account using the instructions found under the merchant services tab.

If you want a more sophisticated web site selling multiple products with different options, you can check out the main hosting companies these all offer template driven e-commerce packages at very modest rates. Er on the side of caution until you have some idea of how the website and your business will develop. You can integrate PayPal and other payment options such as Nochex and other merchant services. You can always upgrade to a package with more functionality as and when you require this.

There are several ways of finding a suitable e-commerce hosting company, a simple Google search will return many options. I would personally choose a host service in my own country for one simple reason, if you need support then there is no time delay waiting for the start of business in another country to place a call or waiting several hours for email support.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LIST

This is the cardinal rule of any seller, build a list of buyers or subscribers, the old saying the money is in the list IS TRUE. Look for every opportunity to capture your customers email address. Do this and you potentially have a customer for life, you can follow up the sale with special offers, free gifts, offer great information.

It is really easy to do if you have an e-commerce website set it up so that new buyers need to log on to make a purchase, there will be an option for this in the control panel of the package. You can from there customise the emails you can send out and the frequency you send them.

If you run a mini site you can capture visitors email addresses by offering a free gift or a mini course related to the product. May be a report such as this. You can do this via an "Optin" box. The example shown below is mine for my product Plugin Auction Profits.



When you sign up you will receive a part of my mini course eBay to e-commerce for 8 days.

The big mistake that marketers make is to continually try to sell, sell, sell. This will have the opposite effect and switch people off no matter how good your products are. Use them wisely and offer quality information in the niche product area for free, make sure the content is excellent.

As you can see it is not difficult to build your own business with eBay, Amazon and beyond [Plugin Auction Profits](#) will show you how you can copy my system and build your own business. To see some real world example of products I have created go and check out [Plugin Auction Profits](#).

To Your Success!

Robert Corrigan