



Selling On eBay: The Ultimate Guide



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Introduction

Whether you're the new kid on the block, switching from bricks-and-mortar, or already established as a highly ranked eBay seller, the biggest challenge for any online business is finding and growing a massive customer base.

In the age of new retail, consumers are everywhere; online, offline and across a number of marketplaces. This guide will show you how to attract more potential customers to your eBay store, and the retention tactics that will keep them coming back.

Why Ebay?

Definition: *Marketplace*

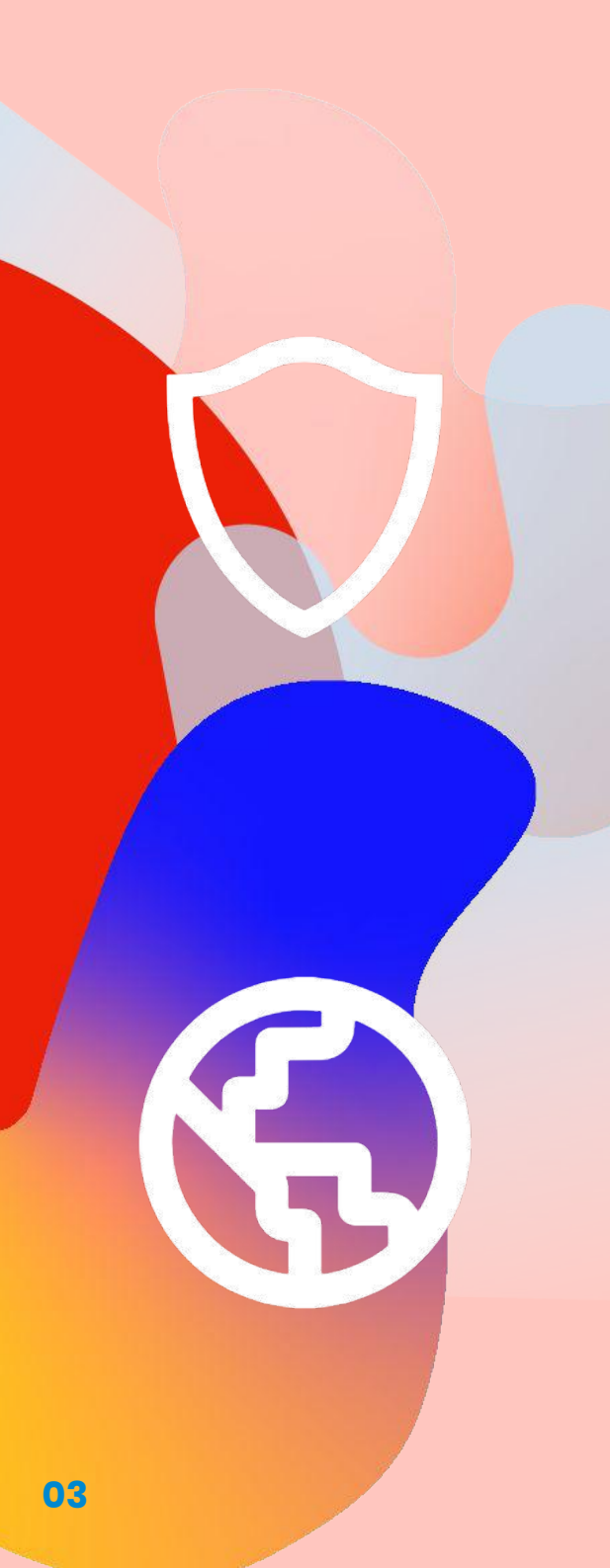
On online marketplace is a type of eCommerce site where products and services are sold by multiple third-party suppliers, and the transactions are managed by the site operators.

For most people asking why they should sell on eBay, the answer is simple: it's one of the biggest marketplaces, alongside Amazon, in the world.

Since eBay launched in 1995, it's accumulated 177 million active buyers and 6.7 million sellers. It's undoubtedly one of the best marketplaces for new business owners looking to build an empire.

Today, over 170 million shoppers peruse eBay's digital storefront per quarter across 190 countries, rendering eBay one of the biggest online marketplaces on the planet. With a focus on international eCommerce, eBay is often the first stepping stone for small businesses looking to grow and scale.

And it's not just the sheer amount of shoppers you have access to either. Marketplaces are fast becoming a go-to shopping destination for consumers that aren't offered free shipping in the checkout (we go into this more in chapter 6). This means that if a customer isn't given cheap or free shipping, the first place they'll go to is eBay or Amazon, because if they have to pay for shipping, why not get a few extra items at low, low prices?

The left side of the page features a decorative graphic with a vertical gradient from red at the top to orange at the bottom. Overlaid on this are several abstract shapes in shades of blue and grey. A white shield icon is positioned in the upper half, and a white dollar sign icon is in the lower half.

Whether or not you currently sell on eBay, there a variety of compelling reasons business owners should capitalise one, including:

Customers trust eBay

Since 1995, eBay's had over 20 years to make customers feel comfortable buying trinkets, phone accessories, and whatever their heart desires. eBay offers customers protection for both buyers and sellers, and it makes everyone feel safe.

eBay is well known and trusted because it doesn't tolerate scams or lousy service. Consumers know that when they purchase something on eBay, they're totally protected and will be refunded if anything goes awry.

eBay attracts an international market

eBay makes international shipping for new and growing businesses really, really easy. If an international buyer purchases one of your items, eBay takes care of the logistics challenges sending parcels across borders. This is referred to as their Global Shipping Program, and you can learn more about it [here](#).



Flexible pricing options

eBay became famous for its auction listings when they first entered the eCommerce scene. Today though, it offers new businesses owners the ability to set fixed prices, while also testing the water with auctions to gauge how much the market is willing to spend on certain items. Unsure how much to charge for new products? Test them out on eBay.

Flexible policies for sellers

For those new to the marketplace scene, it's common practice for third-party marketplaces to enforce policies on sellers. However, eBay is one of the few online markets that allows sellers to create their own return and shipping policies.

When To Know You *Should* Sell On Ebay

As much as we want our products to be available to everyone, anywhere they're shopping; you'll need to weigh the pros of being on eBay against other online marketplaces. So here's a few reasons why you should be on eBay:

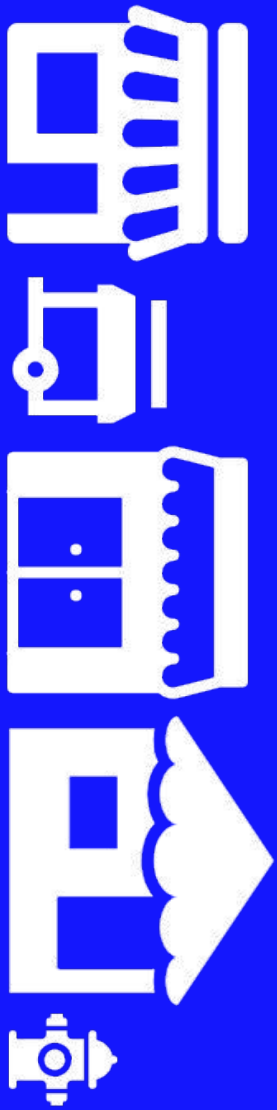
eBay helps small businesses get off the ground

Small businesses have a lot of expenses, and when you tally up rent, insurance, bill, supplier fees and shipping costs, it's a wonder so many businesses get off the ground running.

Sellers on eBay are provided with a digital shopfront which they can customise inline with any existing branding or marketing. This drastically reduces many of these upfront costs for small businesses. Although you need to pay seller fees, these are much more manageable when you're trying to build inventory levels and refine product features as you grow.

Even if you're selling from the spare bedroom in your inner city apartment, you can still make money from eBay shoppers without them ever needing to know you don't have a storefront. Sellers looking to test their ideas and products can see if they attract a reasonable market response without investing too heavily in infrastructure and business costs.

Another great perk for small businesses considering eBay is that you can list up to 40 items a month without listing fees - but you will pay fees for any items that sell.



eBay helps large businesses expand into new markets

Some of eBay's most prominent online sellers ship approximately 134,000 items a month, demonstrating that fact the popular online auction site supports all retailers from the smallest, garage, part-time seller, to some of the world's biggest retail powerhouses.

36% of eBay's top 1000 sellers are also serious cross-border sellers, and the figures of international buyers are steadily increasing. But it's not just the international opportunities that make eBay appealing to really large retailers, eBay is a great way to increase market share.

Being one to flout the rules, Coles started selling food on eBay in March 2019. Shoppers in metro Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane are now able to purchase both perishable and non-perishable items to offer more customers convenient access to their products. And why not? If you have a seamless logistics network already established, eBay is just another channel to grow revenue through.

When To Know You *Shouldn't* Sell On Ebay

Before we go into making you the greatest eBay seller in Australia, let's tick off a few of the reasons why you *shouldn't* sell on eBay:

You sell perishable items

If you sell perishable items like freshly baked goods, you should think about giving eBay a miss. Anything sealed or packaged that has a reasonable shelf-life can still work on eBay, but anything that can go stale or turn within a two-week time frame is best left off the virtual eBay shelf.

You sell really, really big things

Most furniture that's sold online is flat-packed, meaning the customer needs to assemble it once they receive it. If you sell anything that can't be picked up by standard courier services, give eBay a miss. Shipping really large items are not only pricey, but large items are hard to track, and redelivery can be a nightmare.

eBay is great for basically any sized business, but it still has its limitations.

CEO of GlamCorner Dean Jones believes that all eCommerce businesses are logistics businesses at their core: “*the logistics of picking and packing is highly underrated in eCommerce*”

You sell things that are illegal in some places

When you think of things that are illegal, we're not talking about the last and final season of Breaking Bad; we're talking about regular things that also happen to be illegal in some countries, but are totally legal in others. For example, in Australia, there are a range of cosmetic goods are illegal in Australia if they contain more than 250mg of lead acetate. Another great example are seeds as many sovereign states have many restrictions on the kinds of seeds you can bring into its borders.

You sell books

Selling books on eBay isn't necessary *unrecommended*, but it's a much better idea to list your items on Amazon if that's the industry you're in. If you can beat many on the prices on Amazon then by all means sell on eBay, but most people looking for books will generally search Amazon anyway, so maybe give eBay a miss in this case.

Now we could go on with more examples of what *not* to sell on eBay, but you catch our drift. If you fall into one of these categories then read no more! But if you're part of the 99% of retailers who aren't, here's how you can set your eBay store up for success.





Setting Up Your Store For Success

So if you're at this part of the book, you'll most likely have a product that's perfect for eBay and you're ready to give it a go. Now it's now time to make your profile sales-ready:

It's not personal; it's eBay

Depending on how much you're planning on selling, you will need a personal or a business eBay account. If you only use eBay casually then using a personal profile is enough, however, if you plan on selling large quantities, then you'll need to register for a business account.

Do create a business account. Start by signing up as a regular user and then edit your Account type to business. It's really simple but more instructions can be found [here](#).

The main difference between a personal and business account is that you'll be asked to provide more details when you switch to a business account, including business name, type, address, contact information.



Setting Up Your Store For Success

Putting your products out there

We won't lie. Creating product listing for eBay is one of the biggest hassles about using the platform.

There are a bunch of rules ([read here](#)), and you can either [list products quickly](#) or, if you want more advanced features like selling multiple items to one buyer in one listing, you'll need to use the [advanced listing form](#).

You can also [bulk upload listings](#), so all your stock is available at once, and there's also a range of [selling templates](#) available to make the selling process really easy.

Set up PayPal, it's your friend

PayPal offers sellers some protection against dodgy buyers in cases where there are stolen credit cards or false claims that the items were never sent.

Optimising Your Product Listing

Now that you know the basics of how to get your store up and running, and you've listed your products on the site, it's time to get them noticed. Here's how to create product listings that sell.

Write detailed, attention-grabbing product descriptions

There is a lot of noise on eBay, and a lot of competition, so you'll want your products to grab attention when potential customers are searching for particular items. To grab attention, make sure you:

- Write a short, snappy product title
- Include the brand, colour, size and material
- Highlight any special features, for example handmade, or limited edition
- Align the words in your description with what people are most likely to search for
- Leave out non-value add descriptors like "the best ever" or "totally amazing."

Don't overstate what your products do

We're not saying not to talk your products up, in the world of online retail a good sales pitch is everything. But if your items don't actually meet the hype, you'll notice a flood of negative reviews takeover your seller profile. In your product description, focus on what your products actually do, and what value they offer customers. We recommend finding a balance between hype and honesty.

Don't skimp on your product photos

Online shoppers have steadily decreasing attention spans, and one of the best ways to get their attention is to use high-quality photos of your products.

Remember: people are often window shopping when they're on eBay, so they want to be able to see your products from every different angle in high resolution.

Avoid posting low resolution and blurry images of your products on eBay. There are literally millions of other sellers on eBay so you're only pushing customers away if you don't give your product photos a bit of love.

Below, we look into the easiest ways you can start selling on the biggest eCommerce platform and Australia's most popular marketplaces, without any compromise.



Delivery Options That Increase Cart Conversions

You've now gone through all the work of setting up your account, creating product listings and images that grab attention, so how can you get customers to convert? Once customers land on your product page, their intent to buy from you is massive. But there is one barrier between your customers, and committing to buy: shipping costs.

Free shipping

Although in some circles this is a very controversial topic, you need to offer free shipping. Not only do the majority of customers expect free shipping by default, no-cost deliveries can also seriously contribute to the profitability of your business by increasing your cart conversions by 8%.

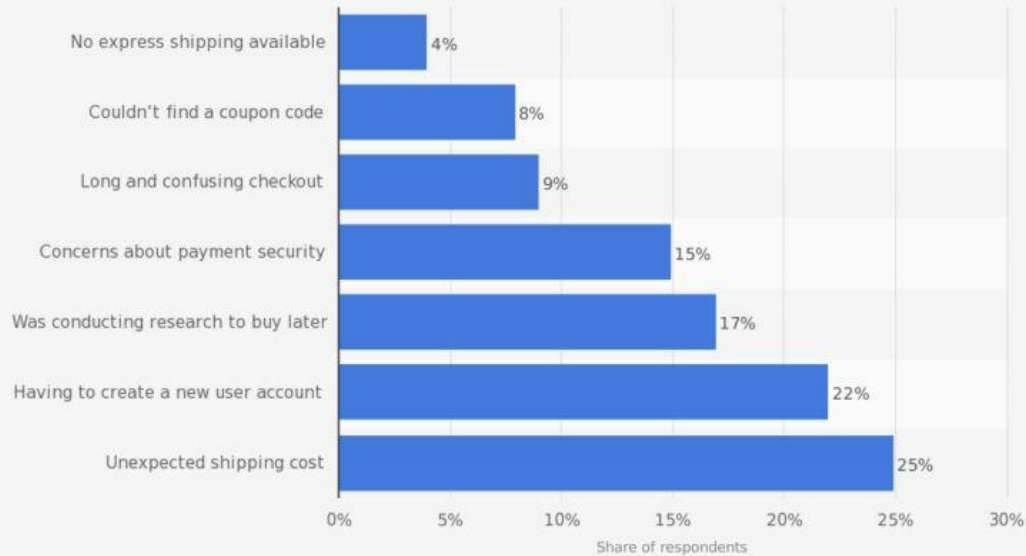
Including free shipping options at the checkout increases average order value by 8%.

There is a range of different ways you can do this; either by establishing a free shipping threshold or by offering free shipping on standard delivery services. Either way, free shipping is a must if you want to stand out.

Customers looking for free shipping at the checkout and are willing to wait longer to receive their order, meaning you can use an economic delivery service without having to worry about it being time sensitive.

**Did you know?
74% of
customers
expect free
shipping and
61% of
customers will
cancel an online
purchase if
they're not
offered it.**

Primary reason for digital buyers to abandon their carts in the United States as of 2015



Source:
Various sources (VWO)
© Statista 2016

Additional Information:
United States; Various sources; 2015; 1,000 Respondents; 18 years and older

statista

For 2015 and 2017, shipping cost related issues were the main reasons for cart abandonment.

Standard / flat rate international shipping

It's not always possible to offer every single customer free shipping, especially if you have a lot of international customers. If this is true for you, adding a flat rate international shipping option is the next best way to stop the great shipping cost checkout exodus.

eCommerce stores can lose 25% of sales from high shipping costs, making it critical for sellers to disclose shipping costs in a transparent and forthright way.

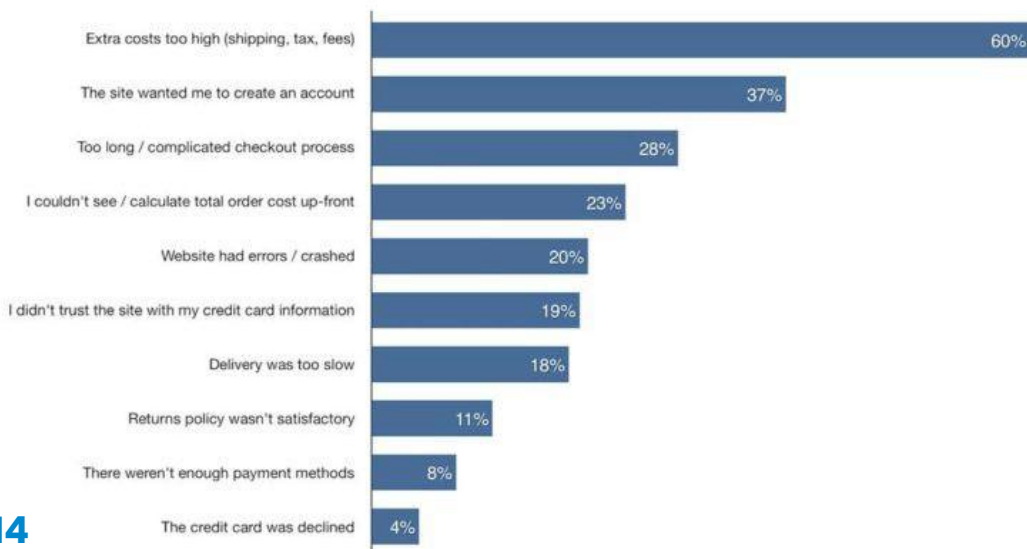
High shipping costs have remained the number one reason for cart abandonments since 2015, and it's not going to slow down anytime soon.

Flat rate shipping is the most cost-effective option for sellers because some of the cost is absorbed by the buyer. But it's also incredibly transparent; the buyer understands that no matter where they are, they can get fixed priced shipping without any shocks in the checkout.

Reasons for abandonments during checkout

1,799 responses · US adults · 2017 · © baymard.com/checkout-usability

"Have you abandoned any online purchases during the checkout process in the past 3 months? If so, for what reasons?"
Answers normalized without the "I was just browsing" option



Are you spending too much on shipping?

Get a free shipping audit to see how much money you can start saving today.



Compare Your Shipping Rates

[LEARN MORE](#)

Express shipping

49% of customers are willing to pay more to receive their items faster. In most cases, customers are happy to wait a little longer to receive free shipping, but in priority cases, a lot of people are willing to dip into their wallet to ensure speedy delivery. Combining a higher cost, express shipping option with free and standard shipping options will cover all your cart abandonment bases.

Booking And Tracking Deliveries

One challenge many eBay shippers face is the claim that the customer never received their items. Was it lost in transit? Or is your customer trying to swindle you? It's never 100% clear on what has occurred, but the best way to protect yourself against these claims is to use door-to-door tracking that is viewable online.

The best way to protect yourself against false delivery claims is to use door-to-door tracking that is viewable online.

Send transparent delivery notifications

eCommerce logistics is stressful for both you and your customers. Many consumers feel anxious when waiting for their online order, with 71% of customers expressing physical and emotional distress when awaiting on online delivery.

Although the main cause for failed deliveries is incorrect address information, many consumers will blame the courier or the retailer for late deliveries. Sending real-time tracking updates will keep your customers informed about their purchase, and will take away the anxiety they feel waiting for their items to arrive.



CASE STUDY

Outsourcing customer support for parcel deliveries




See how sustainable online fashion retailer A.BCH automated their customer delivery notifications and improved their customer service support for late courier pickups.

[See How](#)

Failed deliveries cost money

The average cost of failed deliveries is \$25, and 1 in every 20 online orders fails on the first attempt. If you ship 100 orders a month, you're losing \$125 every month just from failed deliveries.

Cost of failed deliveries by region

Average	Total			
Number of orders/year	227,834	278,109	228,524	176,345
% of failed deliveries	5.0%	4.7%	5.6%	4.6%
Cost per failed order	\$17.55	\$16.58	£14.33	€14.87
Total failed delivery costs/year	\$199,127	\$216,171	£183,132	€121,804

1 GBP = 1.34 USD; 1 EUR = 1.18 USD. Exchange rates correct as of 07/12/2017

Maintaining A High Seller Rating

Let's not beat around the bush: 90% of customers read online reviews before visiting a business and on top of that, reviews impact 67% of the purchasing decision. This means you'll need to maintain a high seller rating if you want to keep growing your eBay store. Let's look at a few ways you can do this:

90% of customers read online reviews before visiting a business.

Don't over promise and under deliver

When a customer posts an online review, they're trying to communicate to other buyers how they feel about your products. And whether it happens to be a good or bad experience, customers are in the PSA mindset when they're writing a review. So how can you ensure what they write about you is positive? It's actually very simple: under promise and over deliver.

Your customer experience strategy should be perfect, and if you put a bit of wow-factor into your unboxing experience, deliver your orders on time, and seek customer feedback, you'll be well on your way to a stream of five-star reviews.



Customers just want some love

70% of customers that complain about their shopping experience are actually just looking for a response and a little bit of TLC. If you get a bad review, look at it as an opportunity to reach out and ask them if there's anything you can do. Frustrated customers are looking for a solution to their problem, and bad reviews are their way of letting you know. Approach customers who've given you a negative review with care and empathy and ask them to give you another review if they're happy with their experience.

Customers hate bad delivery experiences

If your customers receive their shipment later than expected, then there is a 66% chance they won't shop from you again. Shocking, isn't it? Customer loyalty has well and truly gone down the drain in the age of eCommerce, as customers can easily open a new tab and get what they want from literally thousands of alternative sellers. But don't worry, if you use a shipping platform like Shippit to manage delivery delays and customer support for you, you'll be able to maintain your customer's trust.

Customers shop and tell

You may be getting the drift that nothing comes close to enraging consumers as much as late deliveries, but it doesn't stop at submitting irate reviews. Customers are more likely to tell their family and friends not to shop at retailers that don't deliver the goods on time! Keeping your existing customers happy is not only a tool for reducing negative reviews, but it's a sure fire way to grow and retain your customer base.

Sick of chasing couriers?

Book, ship and track your orders with Shippit and we'll take care of delivery support for you. Try it free for 30 days

[Signup now](#)



TAKEAWAYS

Selling on eBay is one of the best ways to grow your business in international markets, while also exposing your brand to literally millions of active buyers. Once you've set up your store and listed your products, remember to give a lot of love and attention to the shipping and tracking experience you give your customers.

Remember:

- Don't expose your customers to bad/late deliveries
- Don't give your customers a reason to ship and tell
- Don't lose customers to a complicated returns process
- Give your customers both free and fast shipping options

Ready to make the most out of eBay? Get in touch with our team to see how better shipping rates at the checkout, and seamless delivery tracking can grow your sales

[GROW MY STORE](#)