

LEARNING MADE EASY



4th Edition

eBay[®] Business

ALL-IN-ONE

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand



Marsha Collier

Bestselling author of *eBay
For Dummies*



eBay[®] Business

ALL-IN-ONE

4th Edition

by **Marsha Collier**

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dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand

eBay® Business All-in-One For Dummies®, 4th Edition

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

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Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2017962213

ISBN: 978-1-119-42771-1

ISBN: 978-1-119-42774-2 (ePDF)

ISBN: 978-1-119-42770-4 (ePub)

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Introduction

I've been selling on eBay for over two decades, since before it was eBay. My fascination with ecommerce made me realize that online sellers may not have business backgrounds, and a business book would help them set up their new business professionally. The Internet changes from year to year (as does the ecommerce market), and I am obsessive about keeping my advice for small businesses updated.

My books about eBay don't just give you the information you can find in help pages; they give you the ins and outs of selling and connecting online, based on my daily experience and research. I also stay on top of the current trends in online and social marketing, test them out, and pass the results back to you. This book gives you more information than even many longtime sellers know.

I am lucky enough to have watched eBay evolve since 1996, a charter member of the PowerSeller program, and now a Top Rated Plus Seller. Running a business online has given me the opportunity to spend more time with my loved ones and have better control of my life. I can make my own schedule and enjoy what I'm doing because my business makes money. Owning a small business is empowering — and profitable.

But those of us who run a small business (even part time) always seem to be doing *something*. Buying, selling, and communicating — even when going on a vacation, our businesses keep humming. There's no 9-to-5 schedule, no regular weekends or holidays. Our stores on eBay can always be open.

Alas, all that success and freedom takes some work. That's why you have this book.

About This Book

This book will give you the basics, the hows and whys of setting up a business selling on eBay and on your own website. I've authored several best-selling books about running a business and marketing online. This book gives you the information you need to get started in one nifty (albeit heavy) volume. You can get the info

found in several books about eBay all in one place. Here are some good-to-know features of this All-in-One:

- » There's no need to read straight through all the chapters and minibooks in order. Use the Table of Contents to find information you want to learn. When you have a question, use the Index to find your answer, as you might do with a Google search.
- » Within this book, you may note that some printed web addresses break across two lines of text. If you're reading this book in print and want to visit one of these web pages, simply type in the web address exactly as it's noted in the text, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist. If you're reading this as an ebook, you've got it easy — just click the web address to be taken directly to the web page.
- » When instructions in the book tell you exactly what to type on your keyboard, you'll see those letters, numbers, and symbols in **boldface** type. Of course, if the instruction itself is boldface, **you'll see what to type in non-bold type**.
- » I occasionally give you key combinations to use as keyboard shortcuts. For example, when you see something like *Ctrl+S*, that means to hold down the *Ctrl* key and press *S*.

Foolish Assumptions

While writing this book, I've made a few assumptions about you. Because you bought this book, naturally I assume you're an intelligent person with refined tastes. Kidding aside, that may well be true — but the main assumption I've really made about you is that you want to find out more about eBay and selling online.

I assume also that you

- » Have a computer and/or mobile device and an Internet connection
- » Are comfortable browsing the Internet
- » Are familiar with email
- » Are looking for a way to make some extra money
- » Have checked out eBay and bought more than a few items

You've probably also sold a few items and made a couple of dollars. Maybe you think eBay just might be a good place to earn a regular stream of extra income. It also helps if you've read my current edition of *eBay For Dummies* where you get familiar with the basics of eBay.

Note that eBay changes regularly, adding features and new layouts. This book keeps you focused on what's important rather than being written about the latest shiny promotions. The location of links changes regularly too. I've noted the important places you need to go to and what to look out for.

If you can accept that nothing comes without a bit of effort, you might just be on the track of a new career — or a very profitable side gig.

Icons Used in This Book

I've written quite a few books in the *For Dummies* series, and all the books have cute little icons to draw your attention to special comments. Following are the ones I use, along with what they mean.



AUTHOR
SAYS

This icon indicates a story about a real event. The story may come from one of my dealings or from a fellow eBay user. I hope you find the stories interesting and learn from another user's mistake (or dumb luck).



REMEMBER

When you see this icon, it's a friendly reminder to keep in mind the short fact that follows. No doubt it will come up again, and you'll be ahead of the game if you remember it.



TIP

Here are a few words from me to you, to help you do things the easy way. I've made the mistakes, but you don't have to make them too.



WARNING

This little bomb of a fact will keep you out of trouble. Often these facts are not generally known. Be sure to read them to avoid common pitfalls.

Also, you will see sidebars (with light gray behind the text); these are important things that I like to emphasize — so don't forget to read them.

Beyond the Book

Here, in one volume, are nine individual minibooks related to becoming an expert on eBay and online sales. Each book is broken down into individual chapters to give you more in-depth information on the subject at hand.

You will notice title pages at the beginning of each minibook (we call them *parts pages*) where you see what's included in the associated minibook, and where you can go online to find more.

And don't forget the book's related Cheat Sheet, which is another source of quick reference information. Find it online at www.dummies.com/business/online-business/ebay.

Where to Go from Here

It's time to open the book and dive in. For ongoing eBay-related adventures in cyberspace (the latest frontier), here are some handy destinations:

- » You can find current editions of my *For Dummies* books at www.dummies.com.
- » For updates on the topics I cover in this book, be sure to visit my website, <http://www.coolerbaytools.com>. You'll find articles about things going on at eBay, online business, and social media.
- » For time-sensitive and technology oriented posts, I have a blog at <http://mcollier.blogspot.com>.

If you'd like to ask me questions personally, you can find me active on the following social media sites:

- » **Twitter:** @MarshaCollier
<https://twitter.com/MarshaCollier>
- » **Facebook:** Marsha Collier
<https://www.facebook.com/MarshaCollierFanPage>
- » **Google+:** Marsha Collier Circle me?
<https://plus.google.com/101540468776840533944>
- » **YouTube:** DealingDiva (don't judge — I opened that account a long time ago). I post videos to answer many questions I receive.
<http://www.youtube.com/user/dealingdiva>

You can contact me directly from the Contact page on my website. I read all emails and try to answer as many as I can. But please remember that I'm just me. No giant staff, no big offices. I write books, research new products to help online citizens, consult with eBay sellers just like you, run an eBay business, and try to have a life.

Thank you for buying this book. Please email me and let me know about your eBay successes.

1

eBay Basics

Contents at a Glance

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IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Setting up your hardware
- » Going online without your own computer
- » Choosing an Internet service provider
- » Getting friendly with your browser

Chapter **1**

Connecting with Up-to-Date Technology

If the whole idea of *technology* gives you the creeps, don't back out now. I feel your pain. Every bit of new tech knowledge that's entered my brain has penetrated only after a great deal of mental whining. I suffered the pain so that you wouldn't have to.

Better yet, you don't need to know much technology (in the true sense of the word) to run a successful online business. Most online sellers have about as much knowledge as you will after you read this chapter.

Starting with the Right Device

You don't have to know a lot of fancy computer mumbo-jumbo to do well on eBay, but you must *have* a computing device. (Okay, if you have your heart set on using eBay from a mobile device, I give you tips for using them throughout the book.) If you're in the market for a computer, you can buy a new, used, or refurbished system, depending on your computing needs. Consider laptops or tablets for portability as well.

The absolute necessities

Although the following list is geared mainly toward the purchase of new PCs (which you can get for a few hundred bucks), you should read this info even if you're thinking of buying a used computer:

- » **Look for a computer with a good-size hard drive.** Remember how the classic movie *The Time Machine* sent a traveler thousands of years into the future? Imagine if each of those years was a computer file. The more time you spend using your computer, the more stuff you want to save on your hard drive. The more stuffed your drive, the bigger the timespan it represents — and the less you'd want to lose it. I recommend buying the biggest hard drive your budget affords you — because no matter how large your hard drive is, you'll find a way to fill it up. And while you're at it . . .
- » **Consider an external backup drive of at least 1.5TB.** Backing up your data on a regular basis can help save you from the many disasters that sometimes befall a computer that's active on the Internet. You can find new 1.5TB drives for sale on eBay for under \$50.
- » **Make sure you have a top-quality modem.** Your modem connects your computer to the Internet, normally using a broadband cable or (mostly in days of yore) a telephone line. Even if you have a high-speed connection (see later in this chapter), you need a modem that transfers lots of data quickly (we're talking many thousands of megabits per second, or *Mbps*). The fastest cable modem currently in use is DOCSIS 3.0 (backward-compatible with older standards). DOCSIS 3.0 has more channels than previous versions, and can bond multiple channels for higher speeds. If you rent your modem from your Internet provider, request an upgrade to the latest standards.
- » **Get a big screen.** An LCD or LED monitor that has at least a 23-inch screen with high resolution can make a huge difference after several hours of rabid listing, bidding, or proofreading your item descriptions. (If your monitor is smaller, you may have a hard time actually seeing the listings and images.)
- » **Make sure the computer's central processing unit (CPU) is fast.** A CPU (also known as a "chip") is your computer's brain. It should be the fastest you can afford. You can always opt for the top of the line, but even a slower 2 GHz (gigahertz) processor could suffice. One of my computers is an antique slowpoke, but it's still fast enough that it won't choke when I ask it to do some minor multitasking. If you want lightning-fast speed (imagine a Daytona 500 race car with jet assist), you have to move up to an octa-core processor.
- » **You must have a keyboard.** No keyboard, no typing. In the case of a tablet, if you're comfortable with an on screen keyboard, go for it, the basic keyboard is fine. They do make ingenious ergonomic models, but if the standard keyboard feels comfortable to you, stick with it.

Different keyboards have different feels. I like a keyboard with “clicky” keys, because their action lets my fingers know that the letters I type actually appear. Test out several keyboards prior to purchase and see which one suits your typing style.

- » **You need a pointing device, usually a mouse.** Some laptops come with touchpads or trackballs designed to do the same thing — give you a quick way to move the pointer around the screen so you can select options by clicking or tapping.

Buying a used computer

If you don't have much money to spend, you might want to investigate the used market. Thousands of perfectly good used machines are floating around looking for a caring home. You can pick up a model that's a few years old for a couple of hundred dollars, and it will serve your budding eBay needs just fine. The same holds true for used Macs. Make sure a monitor is included in the purchase price (or buy a new one). The good news: eBay's sellers sell their old computers when upgrading. You can get some great deals.

Buying a refurbished computer or device

If you don't feel comfortable buying a used machine, you may want to consider a factory-refurbished model. These are new machines that were returned to the manufacturer for one reason or another. The factory fixes them so they're just like new and then sweetens the deal with a warranty. Some companies even offer optional, extended, on-site repairs. What you're getting is a new computer at a deep discount because the machine can't be resold legally as new.



TIP

For the most part, refurbished computers are defined as returns, units with blemishes (scratches, dents, and so on), or evaluation units. The factories rebuild them to the original working condition, using new parts (or sometimes used parts that meet or exceed performance specs for new parts). They come with 60- to 90-day warranties that cover repairs and returns. Warranty information is available on the manufacturers' websites. Be sure to read it before you purchase a refurbished computer.

Major computer manufacturers such as Dell, Lenovo, Hewlett-Packard, and Apple provide refurbished computers. Check whether their websites have stores on eBay, or go direct to their sites. For example, you can visit, www.apple.com/shop/browse/home/specialdeals/mac, www.hp.com/go/refurbished, http://outlet.lenovo.com/outlet_us/, and www.dell.com/outlet, and check for closeouts and refurbished goods. I do it and have never been burned!



TIP

Because the inventory of refurbished computers changes daily (as do the prices), there's no way of telling exactly how much money you can save by buying refurbished instead of new. I suggest that you find a new computer you like (and can afford) in a store or a catalog, and then compare it with refurbished systems. If you're thinking about buying from the web or a catalog, don't forget to include the cost of shipping in the total price. Even with shipping costs, however, a refurbished computer may save you between 30 and 60 percent, depending on the deal you find.

Upgrading your devices with the help of eBay



TIP

I've seen eBay listings for workable, older PCs and laptops (a few years old), fully outfitted, for \$200. For that matter, you can get great deals on used tablets and smartphones to use for your listings.

You can also find on eBay all the bits and pieces you need to upgrade your computing system. The items you may find most useful include

- » Digital cameras and scanners
- » Flash drives and memory cards
- » Wireless routers
- » Monitors
- » Printers



TIP

Home wireless networks are becoming *de rigueur*; many people have them set up even if they don't have a business at home (Book 9 Chapter 5 shows you how to set up your own network). I have a wireless printer/scanner combination that allows me to send scans through my network from my scanner to any device located elsewhere in my home.

You may have to keep checking in and monitoring the different listings on eBay or manufacturers' sites; they change daily. On eBay, put in your best bid, and check back later to see whether you've won! (If you want to find out about the fine art of auction sniping — bidding at the last minute — skip to Chapter 6 in this mini-book. I won't be insulted if you leave me in Chapter 1 for a while now. Honest.)