



Learn how to build
a successful eBay business and be your own boss

Starting a Business on eBay.co.uk

FOR DUMMIES®

Marsha Collier

eBay Power Seller and eBay University instructor

Dan Matthews

Online editor of Startups.co.uk



A Reference for the Rest of Us!®



UK Edition



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eBay.co.uk For Dummies[®]***

**by Dan Matthews and
Marsha Collier**



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About the Authors

Dan Matthews is online editor of Crimson Business Publishing, which specialises in magazines and websites supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses in the UK. Publications include startups.co.uk and mybusiness.co.uk as well as Growing Business Magazine, of which Dan is contributing editor. Dan is also founder of InfoZoo.co.uk, a website dedicated to helping small businesses and regional organisations spread their message.

Marsha Collier spends most of her time on eBay. She loves buying and selling - she's a PowerSeller - as well as meeting eBay users from around the world. As a columnist, and author of four best-selling books on eBay, a television and radio expert, and a lecturer, she shares her knowledge of eBay with millions of online shoppers. Thousands of eBay fans also read her monthly newsletter, *Cool eBay Tools*, to keep up with changes on the site.

Out of college, Marsha worked in fashion advertising for the *Miami Herald* and then as special projects manager for the *Los Angeles Daily News*. She also founded a home-based advertising and marketing business. Her successful business, the Collier Company, Inc., was featured in *Entrepreneur* magazine in 1985, and in 1990, Marsha's company received the Small Business of the Year award from her California State Assemblyman and the Northridge Chamber of Commerce.

More than anything, Marsha loves a great deal. That's what drew her to eBay in 1996, and that's what keeps her busy on the site now. She buys everything from light bulbs to parts for her vintage Corvette to designer dresses. Marsha knows how to apply her business acumen to eBay, and in this book, she shares that knowledge with you. In *Starting a Business on eBay.co.uk For Dummies*, Marsha and Dan combine their knowledge of business, marketing, and eBay savvy to help you make a smooth and quick transition from part-time seller to full-time moneymaker.

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Contents

Title

Introduction

About This Book

What You're Not to Read

Foolish Assumptions

How This Book Is Organised

Icons Used in This Book

Where to Go from Here

Part I : Getting Serious About eBay.co.uk

Chapter 1: Using eBay.co.uk to Launch Your Business

Getting Down to Business

Deciding What to Sell

Getting Ready to Sell

Making Your Auctions Run More Smoothly

Chapter 2: eBay.co.uk Business Basics

Choosing Where to Position Your Stuff

Fixed-Price Sales on eBay.co.uk

Types of eBay Auctions

Running Your Auction

Listing Violations

Chapter 3: Essential eBay.co.uk Tools

My eBay

[The About Me Page](#)

[eBay.co.uk Seller Services](#)

[Chapter 4: Practising Safe Selling](#)

[Is What You Want to Sell Legal?](#)

[Trading Violations](#)

[Taking Action: What to Do When Someone Breaks the Rules](#)

[Chapter 5: Opening a Shop, Virtually](#)

[Online Shops Galore](#)

[Choosing Your eBay.co.uk Shop Name](#)

[Setting Up Shop](#)

[Improving Your Offering](#)

[Marketing Your Wares](#)

[eBay.co.uk Shops versus Auctions](#)

[Part II : Setting Up Shop](#)

[Chapter 6: Stocking Your Shop](#)

[Sourcing on a Budget](#)

[Salvage: Liquidation Items, Unclaimed Freight, and Returns](#)

[Wholesale Merchandise by the Case](#)

[Resale Items on eBay.co.uk](#)

[Consignment Selling](#)

[Chapter 7: Knowing Your Merchandise](#)

[Benchmarking eBay.co.uk Rivals](#)

[Useful Publications](#)

[Online Sources of Information](#)

[Authentication Services](#)

[Chapter 8: Establishing a Base: Your Web Site](#)

[Free Web Space - a Good Place to Start](#)

[Paying for Your Web Space](#)

[What's in a Web Site Name: Naming Your Baby](#)

[Registering Your Domain Name \(Before Someone Else Takes It\)](#)

[Marketing Your Web Site \(More Visitors = More Business\)](#)

[Part III : Serious Business!](#)

[Chapter 9: Software Built for Online Auctions](#)

[Considering Tasks for Automation](#)

[Managing Your Business with Online Resources and Software](#)

[Chapter 10: Money and Sense: Budgeting and Marketing Your Auctions](#)

[Listing Your Items](#)

[eBay.co.uk's Optional Listing Features](#)

[eBay.co.uk's Cut of the Action](#)

[Chapter 11: Jazzing Up Your Auctions](#)

[Writing Winning Text](#)

[Setting Up Your eBay.co.uk Photo Studio](#)

[Taking Good Pictures](#)

[Using a Scanner](#)

[Image-Editing Software](#)

[A Home for Your Images](#)

[HTML Made Easy](#)

[Chapter 12: Providing Excellent Customer Service](#)

[Providing a Homely Touch](#)

[Communicating with Your Customers](#)

[Chapter 13: Money Matters](#)

[Big Deals Only: Banker's Draft](#)

[Sign on the Line: Cheque and Postal Order](#)

[Hold This for Me: Escrow Service](#)

[I Take Plastic: Credit Cards](#)

[An Easy Way to Pay: PayPal](#)

[Chapter 14: Delivering on Your Promise](#)

[Finding the Perfect Shipping Carrier](#)

[Part IV : Your eBay.co.uk Admin](#)

[Chapter 15: Going Legit](#)

[Types of Businesses](#)

[Taking Care of Regulatory Details](#)

[Chapter 16: Practising Safe and Smart Record-Keeping](#)

[Keeping the Books: Basics That Get You Started](#)

[Records Her Majesty May Want to See](#)

[Bookkeeping Software](#)

[QuickBooks: Making Bookkeeping Simple](#)

[Chapter 17: Building an eBay.co.uk Back Office](#)

[The Warehouse: Organising Your Space](#)

[Inventory: Keeping Track of What You Have and Where You Keep It](#)

[The Shipping Department: Packin' It Up](#)

[The Post Room: Sendin' It Out](#)

[Part V : The Part of Tens](#)

[Chapter 18: Ten Successful \(and Happy\) eBay Sellers and Their Stories](#)

[Rockem Music](#)

[Abovethemall](#)

[Incentive](#)

[Bubblefast](#)

[iPosters](#)

[McMedia DVD](#)

[Melrose_Stamp](#)

[Noblespirit](#)

[PreservationPublishing](#)

[Vinyl Tap](#)

[Chapter 19: Ten Strategies to Sell Your Stuff Successfully](#)

[Take Great Pictures](#)

[Assessing Your Market - Will It Sell?](#)

[Assessing Yourself \(Can You Do It?\)](#)

[Setting Perfect Pricing](#)

[Describing Your Items](#)

[Anything to Add?](#)

[Making 'em Pay Up](#)

[Packaging Precious Products](#)

[Keep Communicating](#)

[Sell Everything for £1](#)

[Appendix A: Glossary](#)

[Appendix B: The Hows and Whys of a Home Network](#)

[Variations of a Home Network](#)

[Internet Security and Your Home Network](#)

[: Further Reading](#)

Introduction

Thank you for taking a look at *Starting a Business on eBay.co.uk For Dummies*. We've written this book to serve as a manual to get you organised and get your eBay.co.uk business off the ground. From handling your selling time on eBay.co.uk more efficiently to stocking your shop to the *real* way to set up your books and daily operations, we give you all the details about running a successful eBay business. From our own years of experience and numerous interactions with hundreds of eBay sellers, we offer countless time-saving and money-saving tips and secret eBay.co.uk hints along the way.

One thing that we can't guarantee is how much money you can earn selling on eBay. We've discovered - perhaps the hard way - that running a business from home takes a good deal of discipline. Time and devotion dedicated to your business will boost your success.

About This Book

Success awaits you! If you've read *eBay.co.uk For Dummies*, you know just how profitable eBay can be. You've probably picked up this book because you've heard lots of stories about people making big money online, and you're interested in getting your slice of the

action. If you have a retail business, establishing an eBay.co.uk shop can be a profitable extension of it.

Is selling on eBay.co.uk something that you'd like to do more of? Do you have a full-time job, but you'd like to sell on eBay part time? eBay can easily supplement your income for the better things in life - such as holidays or even private school for the kids. Perhaps you're looking to make a career change, and jumping into an eBay.co.uk business with both feet is just what you have in mind - if so, *Starting a Business on eBay.co.uk For Dummies* is the book for you.

We've watched eBay change from a homey community of friendly collectors to a behemoth Web site with tens of thousands of categories of items and more than 100 million registered users. We bet you've been buying and selling with positive results, and you can see the benefits of taking this a bit more seriously. What are you waiting for? Get started on your new career right now.

Thousands of people across the world are setting up businesses online, and now is your time to take the leap of faith to begin a profitable enterprise. eBay.co.uk gives you the tools, the customers, and the venue to market your wares - all you need is a bit of direction.

Starting a Business on eBay.co.uk For Dummies includes tips to give you the opportunity to improve your eBay money-making ability and just might turn you from an eBay novice into a professional running a booming eBay business. We also show the experienced user the prudent

way to turn haphazard sales into an organised business. This book has all the information you need! We combine the fine points of eBay.co.uk with real business and marketing tools to help you complete the journey from part-time seller to online entrepreneur.

In this book, you can find the answers to some important questions as I take you through the following points:

- ✓ Reviewing what you know and introducing some of the finer points of eBay.co.uk auctions
- ✓ Sprucing up your auctions to attract more bidders
- ✓ Dealing with customers
- ✓ Setting up your business in a professional manner
- ✓ Deciding how to handle inventory (and where to find it)
- ✓ Looking at what you need to be in an eBay business . . . for *real*

What You're Not to Read

If you use *Starting a Business on eBay.co.uk For Dummies* like a cookery book, jumping around from recipe to recipe (or chapter to chapter), you can find the answers to your particular questions all at once. Or you can read the book from beginning to end and keep it handy to look up future questions as they come to you. You don't have to memorise a thing; the information you need is at arm's length.

Foolish Assumptions

Because you're reading this, we assume you're serious about selling on eBay.co.uk and want to find out the fine points of just how to do that. Or perhaps you want to know how much is involved in an eBay business so that you can make the decision whether to give it a go.

If we've worked you out and you've decided that it's time to get serious, here are some other foolish assumptions we've made about you:

- ✔ You have a computer and an Internet connection.
- ✔ You've bought and sold on eBay and are fairly familiar with how it works.
- ✔ You have an existing small business or you'd like to start one.
- ✔ You like the idea of not having to work set hours.
- ✔ You feel that working from home in jeans and a t-shirt is a great idea.

If you can say yes to my foolish assumptions, you're off and running! Take a few moments to read the following section to get a feel for how we've put together this book.

How This Book Is Organised

This book has five parts. The parts stand on their own, which means that you can read Chapter 12 after reading Chapter 8 and maybe skip Chapter 13 altogether (but we know you won't because that's where we discuss the money!).

Part I: Getting Serious About eBay.co.uk

Reviewing what you know is always a great place to start. Considering the way eBay constantly changes, you'll probably find a little review worthwhile. So in this part, we delve into the finer points of eBay.co.uk. Perhaps you'll discover a thing or two you didn't know - or had forgotten.

Setting up your eBay shop is important, and in this part we show you step by step the best way to do it - and give you tips to work out when the timing is right for you to open your shop.

Part II: Setting Up Shop

You need to decide what type of business you plan to run and what type of inventory you'll sell. In this part, we discuss how to find merchandise and the best way to sell it. We also give you the low-down on eBay Motors UK, property, and some of the unusual areas where you can sell.

In this part, you'll also find out how to research items - before you buy them to sell - so you'll know for how much (or whether) they'll sell on eBay.co.uk.

We also discuss the importance of your own Web site for online shopping and how to set one up quickly and economically.

Part III: Serious Business!

In Part III, we discuss exactly how to use available online and offline tools, implement auction management software, jazz up your auctions, and handle shipping efficiently and effectively. Because working with customers and collecting payments is important too, you can find that information here as well.

Most importantly, you also find out how to obtain free shipping material for your business delivered to your door, get your postal carrier to pick up your boxes at no charge, and insure your packages without standing in line at the post office.

Part IV: Your eBay.co.uk Admin

Setting up your business as a real business entity involves some nasty paperwork and red tape. We try to fill in the blanks here, as well as show you how to set up your bookkeeping. In this part you'll find a checklist of the items you need to run your online business.

You also need to know how to set up your home business space and how to store your stuff and we cover that here.

Part V: The Part of Tens

You can't write a *For Dummies* book without including the traditional Part of Tens. So here are ten real-life stories of successful (and happy) people selling on eBay.co.uk. We also include ten strategies that might help you sell your stuff.

We include a random collection of terms in Appendix A. You're probably already familiar with many of these words, but others will be new to you. Refer to this appendix often as you peruse other parts of the book. In Appendix B, we briefly discuss home networking, a perk you'll want to have when your eBay business grows.

Icons Used in This Book



If there's something I need to interject - okay, something we're jumping up and down to tell you but it doesn't fit directly into the text - we indicate it by placing this tip icon in front of the paragraph. You'll know the tip to follow will be right on target!



Do you really know people who tie string around their fingers to remember something? Me neither; but this icon gives me the opportunity to give you a brief reminder to note.



We like this picture of a petard - the round bomb device that Wile E. Coyote slam-dunks in the cartoons. If you don't heed the warning indicated by

this icon, you may be 'hoisted by your own petard', or made a victim of your own foolishness.



Here we share some of the interesting thoughts we've picked up from eBay sellers over the years. Because we believe that knowledge is enhanced through making your own choices based on understanding the successes and mistakes of others, we include these little auction factoids so you can gain some insight from them. If someone else has learned from a unique trick, you can benefit by taking heed.

Where to Go from Here

Time to hunker down and delve into the book. If you have time, just turn the page and start from the beginning. If you're anxious and already have some questions you want answered, check out the handy index at the end of the book and research your query.

Take the information offered in this book and study it. Being a success on eBay.co.uk awaits you.

Our goal is to help you reach your goals. Feel free to contact Marsha through her Web site and sign up for the free newsletter. That way you can stay up to date:

www.coolebaytools.com

Please e-mail with any suggestions, additions, and comments. We want to hear from you and hope to update

this book with your words of wisdom. (Humorous stories are also gratefully accepted!)