

How to Sell Your Crafts on eBay

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Artists, craftspeople and photographers are successfully selling their wares everyday on the online auction site, eBay. According to a recent analysis of eBay sales, a crafts-related item is sold every nine seconds, a scrapbook item is sold every minute, and 40 cross-stitch items sell in an hour on eBay. Sales of craft items on eBay have grown almost 60 percent in the past year, according to TheBidFloor.com.

But, at the same time, many would be sellers are listing their pieces for sale on auctions and getting no bids, concluding that eBay just doesn't work.

Here are some tips from James Dillehay, craft artist, eBay seller and author of the new book, "Sell Your Crafts on eBay" (Warm Snow Publishers), on how to profitably sell your wares online:

1. Anyone who can type and has access to the Internet can sell on eBay. But the creative person has an advantage on eBay when she turns that creativity toward researching overlooked opportunities.

For example, during the months before Christmas, more than 3,000 Christmas items are sold every 24 hours on eBay. Research methods outlined in Sell Your Crafts on eBay showed that between February 12 and March 12 of this year, 4,107 auctions with 'Christmas ornament' in the title completed successfully at an average price of \$17.34. Imagine how much more money a smart crafter can make all year long knowing how to ferret out this kind of information from eBay sales.

2. A word's spelling impacts an item's profitability. For example, the word 'handmade,' spelled as one word, was part of 2,233 auction titles with an average closing price of \$16.29. However, auction titles that included 'hand made' as two words were found in 1,358 listings, but with an average auction closing price higher, at \$27.81, or \$11.52 more profit per item.

3. Go to eBay.com and find the search box. Type in the word or phrase that describes your art or craft item. Then scroll down the links on the left side of the page and click on the link for "completed items." Here, you'll be able to see the demand for this type of product. Do searches for your items every two to three weeks to chart buying patterns.

4. Find out how much people are willing to pay for your wares. Click on the link that says "highest price." This will give you a list of completed auctions from highest priced items to lowest priced ones. You want to know what people are willing to pay for items like yours. If you can't make and sell your product for a profit, eBay might not be your marketplace.

5. Determine how much money you'll make on your product. To determine your profitability, use the cost of your materials plus the cost of your labor plus the cost of your selling price, which should be the minimum price to recover your expenses. If it takes you eight hours to make a piece of jewelry and the highest priced similar item sells on eBay for \$26, you won't make a profit.

6. Look at the elements of successful sellers of products that are similar to yours. Examine their winning auction titles. Observe how much detail they use to describe their item. See if the seller used any of eBay's special features such as gallery photos or a bold, featured listing. Evaluate the starting price, starting day of the week, and duration of winning auctions.

For more tips on how to sell your craft items on eBay, consult a resource book like "Sell Your Crafts on eBay," by James Dillehay. It offers more than 200 easy-to-learn tactics and tips that help sell art, craft and theme-related items for a profit on eBay and on other online auction Web sites.

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