



## Follow up Your eBay Auction

You've set up your auction. Your masterful salesmanship has turned a white elephant into a sizzling auction seller. Still, that auction will soon end and your job isn't over when the ticker hits zero.

If, when you've finished this lesson, you feel you do not understand any of these concepts go back and review. Remember it never hurts to review all of the information in these lessons more than once!

### 1—Follow up after the Auction



After the conclusion of an auction, eBay's and PayPal's automated email systems will notify the winning bidder. However, to be a successful eBay business you should take the extra initiative and make your own contact.

This adds a note of professionalism as well as a personal touch to your transactions, building your positive feedback as well as your clientele. A buyer that has had a good experience with you is more likely to give you positive feedback and return to your future auctions.

#### LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Follow up after your auction.
2. Understand how to collect your payment once the auction is over.
3. Learn how to prepare your item for shipping.
4. Learn to continually build your business and business database.
5. Strategies for success.



### ***How to Contact the Buyer and Other Bidders***

The most straightforward way to contact your buyer is through email, and you have a few options:

- Login to My eBay—Click on “All Selling—Selling and View Item pages.” Click on the winner’s User ID to email the winner.
- Go to the bid history page. This displays all the bidders in your auction. Click on the winner’s User ID to email the buyer of your item.

### ***Your Email Contact to the Winner***

When you contact the buyer by email make sure to include the following:

- Congratulations
- The cost of the item
- Shipping information and charges
- Insurance information if applicable
- A thanks for doing business with you

If you have a problem getting a response from the winning bidder you can find additional contact information by clicking “Search,” then “Find Members” on the menu bar. In the contact section, type in the bidder’s User ID and the item number of your auction. The system will then email your contact information to the bidder so that they can contact you.

### ***Receiving Payment***

- Using PayPal—If you and the buyer of your item both have PayPal accounts then the buyer can pay through PayPal. This simplifies everything and provides security for both parties. In addition, if you have a business account through PayPal your customers can pay you through your PayPal account without having one of their own. PayPal charges a small fee for this option,

but if you intend to do a lot of business it is generally worth it. This is a helpful option for buyers that are hesitant to set up their own PayPal account but want to be part of your auction.

- Your Online Merchant Account—If you have an online merchant account you will need to direct your buyer to go to your website. Give the exact URL to complete the auction. You can include all of this in your courtesy email.

- If you need to you can use eBay invoicing, but this requires a wait time and is the least favorable of the options.

### ***Preparing Your Item for Shipment***

Once you receive payment it is your job to get the item to your buyer in the time frame and condition promised. It is always best to make sure that an item is shipped within 24-48 hours of having received payment. Keep in mind that you should not ship anything that was purchased with a personal check until that check has cleared. eBay buyers are usually well aware of this stipulation.

### ***Consider these details when planning to ship your item:***

- The size of the envelope or package required.
- The protection the package offers.
- Is more protection necessary?
- Sealing the package.
- Fragile or handle with care stamps.

### ***Include a Thank You Note***

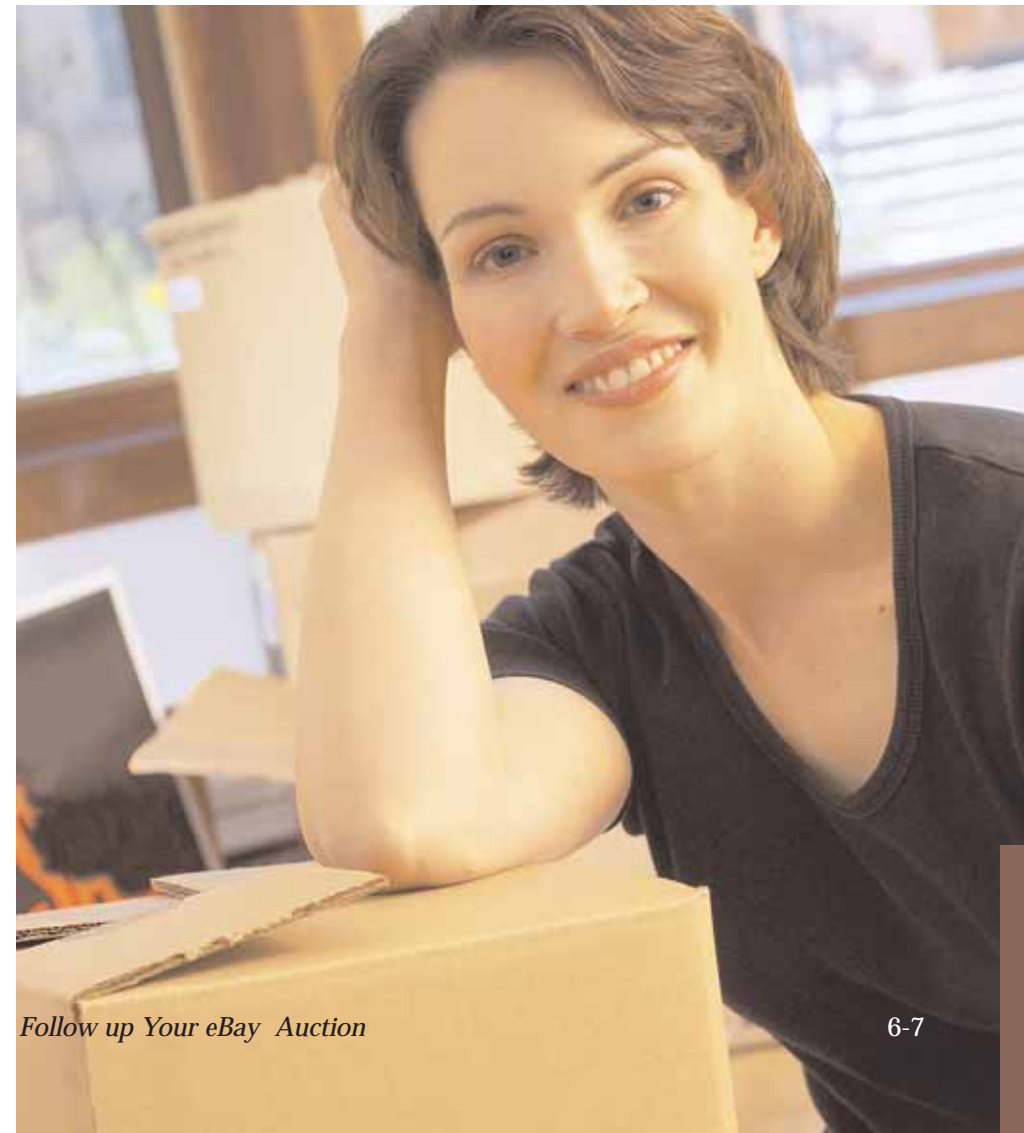
At its heart, eBay is a person-to-person business. While eBay itself is very large, the company simply facilitates buying and selling items online from person-to-person. This is still your business and how you run it is very important.

One of the great things about doing business on the Internet is that it relies on an old-fashioned way of doing business... personal touch.

Putting a little personal touch into your business will serve you well. It makes your buyer feel a connection with you as a person. Happy customers are return customers.

Include a friendly note in the shipment. If you have good hand writing write a brief thanks and state that you look forward to doing business with them again. Write your note on personalized stationery and put it in

*People need to know that I appreciate their business.*





*You can add a personal touch by emailing bidders who didn't win to thank them for their interest.*



an envelope with "Thank You" on the outside. You can find preprinted envelopes or you can handwrite it yourself.

If handwriting is not your strongest suit then get some nice stationery for your printer. Always sign the note by hand, and place it in an envelope where the buyer will find it.

### ***Notifying Bidders Who Did Not Win***

It's a good idea to email bidders who didn't win and thank them as well. It adds that personal touch. If you have multiples of the same item you can invite those bidders to a second chance offer. eBay has guidelines you should follow on doing a second chance offer you should review to make certain you are following their rules.

In your second chance offer it can help to include an incentive such as free or discounted shipping. Alternately, if you've already put another of the same item on auction you can direct these bidders there with a second chance offer. eBay even has a link on your now-completed auction that will direct buyers to your new listing where they can bid.

## **2—Building Your Business**

Now that you have begun auctioning on eBay it's time to begin managing what you have started. To that end here are some things you can begin planning and doing right away.

1. Build Your Business Database
2. Build Your Website
3. Create Your Own Newsletter

### ***Build Your Business Database***

Set up a database for yourself using the members' User Ids. Keep track of returning bidders and those who won auctions. You can do this by putting the User IDs in a word processing document. Make note of

the item and item number that member bid on as well as any other notes or information you might want in the future.

### ***Build Your Website***

Once you have a handle on doing eBay auctions, begin building your website. This is a good place to list other items and provide your contact information. Once you have your website set up you can put a link in your auctions that will direct buyers to your website.

Remember that you **cannot** make a link that says anything like, "check out my other items on my website." If you do this you can get kicked off of eBay! However, you can put a link in your auctions that directs buyers to your contact page, or to a product page where the visitor can find additional information or photos of your item.

### ***Create Your Own Newsletter***

If you create a Bright Builder website, you can use a function that allows you to set up a database. From here you can email a newsletter for everyone that has signed up through your website. Otherwise you can simply gather email addresses into another email generator program, or into a word processing document where you can sort them by name or the type of newsletter that they signed up for, etc.

A good way to legally gather email addresses is to send an individual invitation to join your newsletter to your eBay winners and bidders. You can do this through eBay. Remind the recipient they have bid on one or more of your auctions and now you are providing additional information about other great deals you can offer.

We suggest you do this only once for each auction on which an eBay member bids. More than that and you can annoy

*Your own newsletter is another way to generate interest in you, your site, and your products.*



the recipient and that could cause you trouble with eBay. Do not add email addresses to your list unless they have requested the newsletter. Unsolicited newsletters are spam and this doesn't cast your business in a good light. Make sure when you send your newsletter out you also include a way for the recipient to cancel their subscription.

### 3—Strategies for a Successful Business on eBay

Now that you've completed a full auction from beginning to end let's talk about some of the strategies for running a successful eBay business.

#### ***Create a Unique Way to Present Your Auction***

Try to create a unique way of presenting your auctions. An interesting writing style can build interest and even a following. For example J. Peterman used this technique to make his catalog, which sold clothing items, well known. It became so well known Jerry Seinfeld portrayed it in the comedy show *Seinfeld*. Think about how much advertising that created!

Here is a quote out of the J. Peterman catalog.

***"WHITEFISH POINT LIGHTHOUSE LINED, CORDUROY COAT, \$273*** *Storm clouds were moving in. We crossed behind the summer house; made our way across the slanting ground towards the lighthouse. At first I thought she was talking to somebody else. "The Edmund Fitzgerald slipped to the bottom just out there," she said, shading her eyes with delicate long fingers. I actually felt a chill, but she lowered her hand, and slipping her arm under mine, put the sap back into my veins."*

You can see how this approach comes across as novel and draws attention toward the coat.

Another example: There is an eBay member who posts items regularly on eBay, but much of what she writes is about her cats and what they are doing as she describes her items. This quirky approach has prompted many bidders to check her auctions to read her feline updates. Is it that surprising they sometimes stay to bid?

You must determine your own method of standing out in a crowd. It may take some time and some experimentation to see what works for you.

#### ***A Special Connection to Manufacturers***

Find out if there are manufactures in your area that have items suitable to put on eBay. Manufactures often have products that are blemished, damaged or marred in some minor way. These manufactures will occasionally sell these items to the public at a discounted price. Finding these manufactures in your area and getting an "in" with them could mean money to you in a turn around sale.

#### ***Become an Expert in Something***

There is an old saying that "knowledge is power" and nowhere is this truer than in business. This is especially true if you decide to focus your eBay auctions on particular items or types of items.

For example: A client took some time to learn about antique jewelry. She worked for a jeweler who specialized in this type of jewelry. She learned all she could, studying on her own and then went into business for herself.

She has setup a route of pawnshops in her area which she travels each week. The pawn shop owners know when to expect her.

*You need to determine your own way of standing out in a crowd. It may take some time and some experimentation to see what works for you.*

*If I am an expert,  
people trust that  
I know what I  
am doing.*



These owners rarely know which jewelry items they have that are valuable and which are not...but she does. She goes in, buys them all cheaply and walks away with a few valuable pieces that she sells for 3 to 10 times her purchase price.

Another example: A couple loves to go to yard sales and garage sales. They find great deals out there for their home, but

what they really look for are quilts to sell in their eBay business. They have books on antique quilts. They've studied and they know what to look for. At these sales they will purchase valuable quilts for \$15 to \$25 then turn around and sell them on eBay for \$150 to \$350 or more.

### ***Get into Collectibles!***

There are all kinds of hot collectibles on eBay. Research collectibles on eBay and in shops in your area. Combine this strategy with the one above and start a network of sellers and suppliers from which you can obtain items.

These can include:

- Antiques
- Artwork
- Books
- Clocks
- Clothing
- Coins
- Comic books
- Maps
- Postcards
- Pottery
- Prints
- Sport Memorabilia
- Stamps
- Stereo equipment
- Trading cards
- and much, much more

The above ideas are just to get you started: there are many more possibilities. Do some brainstorming and check things out. Make sure that you talk to friends and family and see what they'd be interested in collecting. You'll be amazed at the variety of answers. There are also websites, such as <http://www.42explore.com/collect2.htm>, that will give you a list of what people collect.

### ***Sources for Suppliers***

This list is a suggestion list of possible suppliers for your eBay business.

#### **Offline sources:**

- Garage and Yard Sales
- Second-hand shops
- Antique Shops
- Collectible Shops
- Pawn Shops
- Estate Sales
- Local Manufactures

#### **Online sources:**

- Drop Shippers
- Liquidators
- Closeouts
- Bulk Auctions
- Lost, Found and Confiscated

It is well worth your time to research what is available in your local area as well as online companies. When working with an online resource just make sure that the price you pay isn't more than what you can hope to make from the item at auction.

### ***Hot Items Selling on eBay***

Another approach to developing your market is to find out what is selling on eBay now. These are the "hot" items. You will find these by going to

<http://pages.ebay.com/sellercentral/hotitems.pdf>. Take notes on what is currently 'hot' and see where your intended market fits.

### ***Check out Your Online Warehouse***

Pricing and products from online warehouses may fluctuate as the inventory is possibly being sold by multiple websites. However, if you stay sharp and do your research you will find competitively priced items which you can auction profitably on eBay.



### ***Buying in Bulk***

Buying in bulk can save you time, money, and effort.

Obviously, whatever you decide to do your basic formula is to buy items cheaper than what you can sell them for on eBay.

A couple things to keep in mind when purchasing items to resell:

- Buy several items inexpensively enough that you can cover the cost in the shipping and handling in what you will make on the item. This works well for items you can buy for \$2.00 or less and sell for several dollars.

- Buy several items so inexpensively you know you can sell one item for three to six times or more than what you paid for all of them. This works well for electronics and other items you can find for \$5 or more.

There is also the concept of selling on consignment. For example, if you find an item in, say, an antique store that you think you can sell on eBay for more than its purchase price. Ask the owner if you can take a picture, or pictures, of the item with the idea of selling it to one of your clients. Then ask the owner if he or she would mind holding that item for a few days until you can try to make the sale. If the owner agrees, and they usually do, take the pictures and list the item on eBay. If it sells, you buy it from the dealer and resell it to your eBay client. If it doesn't sell you notify the shop owner that



you couldn't find a home for it. No harm, no foul. You are only out a little bit of time and a modest posting fee with eBay. The upside potential could, however, be substantial. This concept allows you to sell high-priced items without incurring the cost of establishing an inventory.

### ***Online Bulk Suppliers***

Where can you get these kinds of bulk items? Here are some links to get you started. There are also many other online resources you can find through a search engine:

[www.wholesalegopher.com](http://www.wholesalegopher.com)  
[www.liquidators.com](http://www.liquidators.com)  
[www.wholesale.com](http://www.wholesale.com)  
[www.wholesaler.com](http://www.wholesaler.com)  
[www.closeout.com](http://www.closeout.com)  
[www.policeauctions.com](http://www.policeauctions.com)  
[www.governmentauctions.org](http://www.governmentauctions.org)  
[www.stealitback.com](http://www.stealitback.com)  
[www.treas.gov/auctions](http://www.treas.gov/auctions)  
[www.worldwidebrands.com](http://www.worldwidebrands.com)  
[www.wholesalecentral.com](http://www.wholesalecentral.com)  
[www.closeoutcentral.com](http://www.closeoutcentral.com)

Some of these links show you items you can buy individually, others where you can buy items in bulk. Some are bulk auction sites. Whichever way you decide, ***do your homework before you buy*** to make sure you can cover your costs. You can't make money in your business if it is all tied up in inventory.

### ***Figuring Out Your Break-Even Cost***

Find out what your item(s) or bulk item(s) will cost. If you see a bulk item auction follow it until it closes. Take note of the final selling price. Make sure you include the cost of shipping and handling charges; they are usually kept as a separate cost for bulk auction closing prices.

Add together the closing price of the bulk auction and the shipping and handling fees, then divide by the total number of items to figure out your price per item. This, along with your eBay fees, is your break-even cost.

### ***Researching on eBay***

Next research the item on eBay. Check the current auctions, members' histories and the Completed Listings. In your research:

- Match your item as closely as you can to the other auctions.
- Check out who is selling successfully.
- Check out the successful members' auctions for the auction title, sales copy, pictures and presentation.

### ***Selecting Your Items***

With good research you'll find great items to market on eBay. You may have to research a number of products, but if you keep at it, you'll find items that can turn a profit. You'll have to judge how many items to bring in at a time and balance what you have on sale with how much you keep in inventory. Remember, if you have to rent a storage unit or fill the basement of your house with items, you must figure those costs into the final target price of your auctions.

### ***Setting Up Your Auctions***

Once you have made your decision, you know what to do. Get those auctions set up and go for it!

*With good research  
you'll find  
great items to  
market on eBay.*



## Lesson Wrap-Up

You have now completed this series. Be excited. This is a huge step forward! Now is the time to put everything you've learned into action. Make your contacts, learn about the items you want to sell, then get out there and reach your goals! Remember that you can always come back to these lessons and review them again for hints and clues. Sometimes, you'll be amazed at what you've forgotten. Remember why you're going into business: You want control of **your** life!

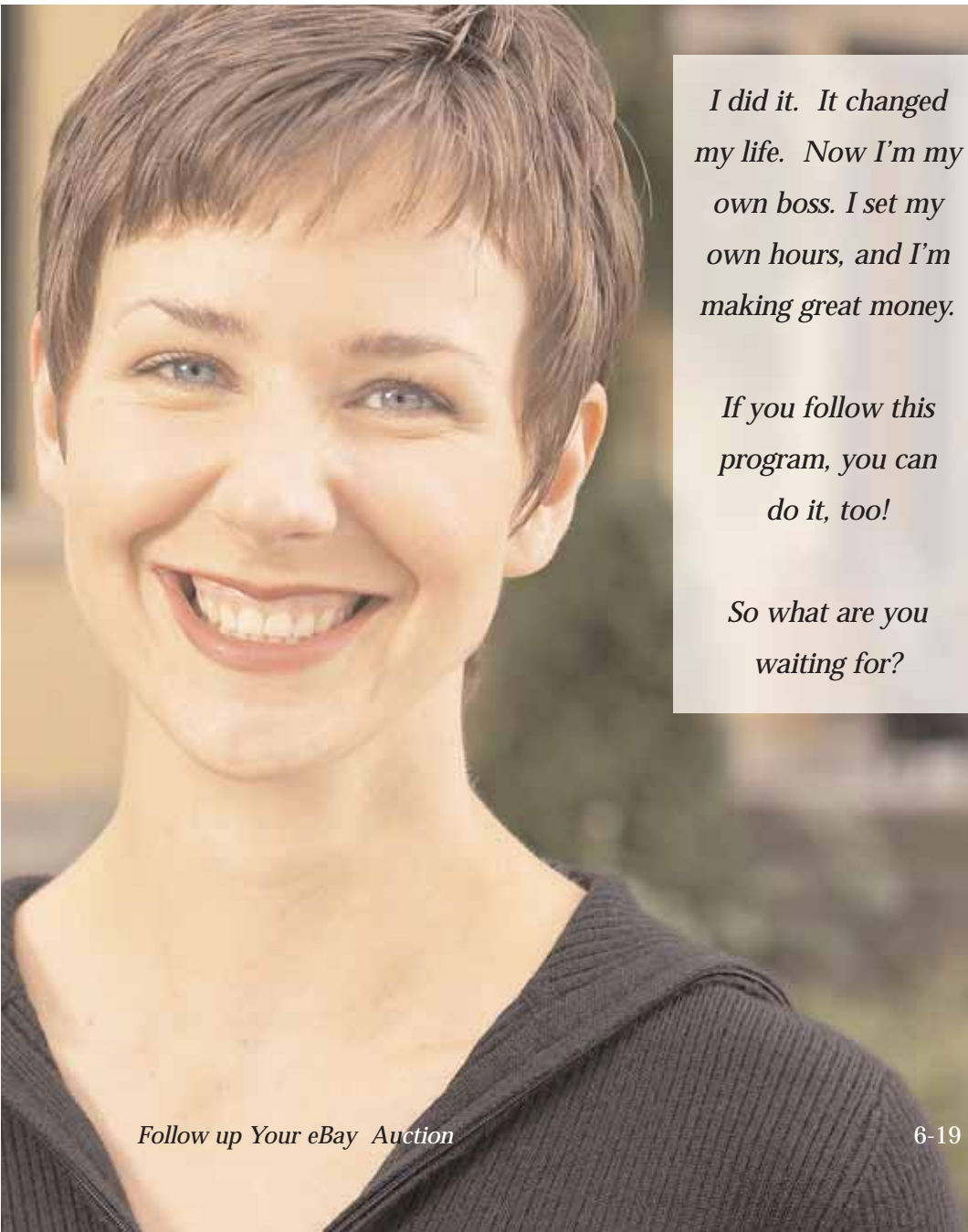
### 4—Tasks for Lesson 6

Use your Time Management Plan to schedule and complete the following tasks:

1. Complete your time management list for this week's tasks.
2. Write in your business journal.
3. Review your Business Vision Statement.
4. Follow up on your auction by emailing your buyer and making arrangements for payment and shipping. Don't forget thank you notes and emails to all bidders.
5. Prepare and ship your auctioned item(s).
6. Create your business database and begin gathering names.
7. Create your business website and direct buyers to it.
8. Create your business newsletter and begin gathering names.
9. Review strategies for your success and determine what item(s) or niches you want to use for your auction base.
10. Set up additional auctions using the things you've learned.

11. Review your Commitment Letter and reasons you are going into business for yourself.

Congratulations on completing all six lessons in this series! And from here, all the best to you!



*I did it. It changed my life. Now I'm my own boss. I set my own hours, and I'm making great money.*

*If you follow this program, you can do it, too!*

*So what are you waiting for?*