

How to Sell Online



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How to Sell Online

Selling products and services online has become easier and more profitable than ever. Easy to use, eCommerce software has made it possible for anyone to realize their financial goals and begin living out their dreams, simply by becoming part of the ever-growing world of online sales.

Starting an online business is somewhat easier if you have already established a business offline but a well-known offline business is definitely not required for online success. If you're starting from square one don't be put off. It doesn't necessarily take a large amount of capital to start a business and quite often you can do it in your free time, at a relatively low cost.

One of the key factors in a person's decision to run an online business is that it gives them the freedom to work for themselves, as well as the opportunity to set their own hours. Below is a list of services that are typically used by online businesses. We'd like to take some time to discuss each one and how they can assist you in your online business venture.

eBay

eBay is one of the best places to start your internet business. Some people begin selling on eBay and later incorporate other online sales venues into their business, while others find that eBay is enough for them and don't feel the need to sell anywhere else. Let's talk a little bit about how you can get started on eBay.

The first and most important thing to do is to create an eBay account. This step is imperative and must be done before anything else. Because you are dealing with private individuals (there is no mediator or broker for business exchanges), you need to input accurate personal information and keep in mind that this information will need to be verified. eBay is under constant software development to improve their security and stability. They have an excellent track record because of their ability to filter out bad users and people trying to abuse their software.

Another reason for eBay's pristine track record is their feedback system. This is an extremely valuable feature because it is a unique system that allows you to rate the people you do business with. The feedback system allows you to use stars to rate a seller. The highest rating a seller can have is 5 stars. If you buy something from someone on eBay you will be able to rate the seller (in stars) in several categories.

These categories are:

- [Item as Described](#)
- [Communication](#)
- [Shipping Time](#)
- [Shipping and Handling Charges](#)

In addition to rating the seller on the above criteria, you will have the opportunity to rate the overall experience as positive, neutral, or negative. You will also have the opportunity to leave a short comment and the entire review can be viewed by everyone on eBay. We highly recommend contacting the seller prior to leaving any sort of negative or neutral feedback because it is very detrimental to get such a rating on eBay. In fact, the most common reason for negative feedback is due to the buyer not contacting the seller with any issues he or she has and instead just leaving bad feedback. This is not fair to the seller. Most sellers are more than willing to work with the buyer if the buyer feels that the transaction was sub-par. As a seller you will only have the option to leave positive feedback for the buyer. If you have no positive feedback for the buyer, you are strongly encouraged to "report a problem" by following the link stating just that or you may choose not to leave feedback.

After you've signed up, it's highly recommended that you don't attempt to sell items immediately. eBay is considered something of an online community and eBay users tend to be wary of new people that have 0 for feedback ratings. If you try to sell an item without having any feedback, a significant amount of people will skip your item based on that fact alone. It is for this reason that we suggest you buy a few things off eBay before you start selling.

This will allow your reputation to build and eBay users will be more likely to look at and buy your items. It is your personal choice to skip this step if you feel you're ready to start selling but you should know that eBay sometimes puts caps and limits on new sellers until they have a decent reputation on the site.

Now that you've started building a reputation you can begin researching what products you want to sell, how much you can sell them for, and whether or not it will be a good business venture for you. Make sure to read listings on eBay for items that are similar to what you want to sell. Make notes on what is included in the ads, what is missing from the ad and what they've taken pictures of. This can be used as a guideline for creating your own ad.

Another way to research products you would like to sell on eBay is to search for completed auctions on similar products. Once you've searched for an item scroll down the page and look at the left hand side of your screen. There is a section called "Preferences". Below that section there's a subheading called "Show only". In this section, you will see a checkbox with the words, "Completed listings" beside it. Click on this, and it will refresh the page and show you completed listings only. You will be able to see which items sold and which didn't, the final sale value and how active the bidding for those items was. Green means the item was sold, red means it did not.

We're almost ready to start listing!! First, let's make sure that you have everything you need. You should have all the data for your ad, including the price you will list it at, shipping costs, etc. It's a good idea to weigh the package and put it in a box so you can use a shipping calculator to get an accurate shipping cost for the package.

Buyers sometimes prefer to pick the shipping service they would like to use. One of the most important parts about this step is making sure you have pictures for your listing ready and available.

Providing photos is an integral part of selling anything through online auctions. Buyers feel better about purchasing from sellers who provide pictures of the item they are selling. This is especially true on eBay. A lot of buyers will not buy from a user who has no pictures of their items. There are sellers who feel that one photo of each item is enough but it should be noted that in most cases, more than one photograph is highly recommended.

It's also a good idea to make the picture as attractive as possible. This can be achieved by having a clutter-free photo area that includes nothing but the item you wish to photograph and sell. Adding a backdrop or blank background (a plain sheet or piece of paper will usually do perfectly), can drastically improve how the item looks. It takes the focus off everything else in the image so that your potential buyers know exactly what you're selling. Some sellers also take extra pictures in the event that an interested buyer requests additional photos.

Now you're all set to compose your ad. Let's sign into eBay and click on the SELL link at the top of the screen. You will now be brought to where you will input a title for your listing. You have limited space, so please make sure that you describe the item using the most important keywords and have indicated the product's manufacturer, model number and any other pertinent information. This will ensure that your item will be found in the search results.

You will now be brought to the screen where you will input all the relevant information about to your item and to your preferences for the auction or listing of this item. Please fill in all the information accurately and make sure you pick and set the options based on your needs. Be sure to give the text a warm, friendly tone and check for spelling and grammar once you've finished writing. Choose a reasonable price that is based on the research you did on the item. Once everything has been filled out, be sure to double and triple check the ad before listing the item.

Once everything is finalized, list the auction!

Congratulations, you've now listed your first item! Make sure to keep an eye on the auction in the "My eBay" section. If any buyers ask you a question, be sure to respond to them promptly. If you don't answer the inquiry in a timely fashion, the buyer may not bid on the item, let alone buy it. We would also like to mention that business management software, which is used in conjunction with eBay, can be purchased from third parties.

This type of business software can save you time and money as well as boost the likelihood of sales and allow your items to sell for higher values.

Selling on Amazon

Amazon is another great website for selling products. Unlike eBay, Amazon is not an auction website by any means. The most common method that people use to sell products on Amazon is by selling products that Amazon already carries or previously carried. If you are on eBay, each product will have its own unique advertisement that is never shared with others who are selling the same item. The Amazon Marketplace allows you to sell products that you can find ads for on Amazon's website. Therefore, if a customer chooses to buy a product from you they actually find it by searching for the product on Amazon and then there's a link to the "Used and New" marketplace inside of Amazon's own product listing.

There are major differences between eBay and Amazon. For instance, eBay charges fees that you will be responsible for regardless of whether or not your item or items are sold. Amazon only charges fees if your item or items are sold and if a customer purchases an item from you, they pay Amazon and Amazon pays you. Another difference between Amazon and eBay is that on Amazon, items are available to sell in a fixed-price format. This means that you set the price of the product and its sale depends on how the majority of the market feels about that price. On eBay you can let customers set the value for the item.

Having the customers set the value of the item in an auction format can be both beneficial and detrimental, depending on various factors.

Now we'll take a bit of time to explain exactly how to sell on Amazon. It's a much simpler process than on eBay because there are less variables and no room for manipulating or changing ads.

You can sign up for an account from the main page. You must register with Amazon in order to sell on their site. Once you've finished the signup process, we're ready to start searching for products to sell.

Amazon has a search field at the top of every single page. This makes it easy to begin your search for the item you'd like to sell! In order to sell on Amazon you must search for the item you will be selling in Amazon's database. It's not necessary for Amazon to have available quantities of the item however it is a prerequisite for Amazon to have a listing for the item you are trying to sell.

When you are searching for the item listing in Amazon make sure that it's the same version. Many products have several releases or versions. For instance, one movie might have over 5 separate DVD releases, which can include special versions, re-pressings, or re-releases of a movie that has been re-manufactured. If you include the wrong details, it will result in a separate listing on Amazon. Make sure to check and double check the data using version numbers, catalog numbers, and any other product specific features, that this is the right product for the Amazon ad.

Once you've found the right item and version number, click on the **"Sell Yours Here"** link from the right side of the screen. Once you click on this link Amazon will reiterate how important it is that you have chosen the precise version of the product by displaying the following message. **"Please verify that this is the exact product item you want to sell. To list your item in Amazon Marketplace, it must exactly match the item you are listing against. Listing a different format or edition of an item, and noting the difference in your seller comments, is not permitted as per our Community Rules. If your item does not exactly match the item below, please try searching for your item again or learn more about creating a page for your item"**

Next, you'll need to describe your product. You should make sure to describe your item as accurately as possible. If you don't there could be problems when the item is purchased. No customer wants to order a specific item only to find out that they didn't get what they were looking for or that the item is not in the condition that it should be in. There is also a "Comments" section here, which will allow you to describe the condition of the item.

Providing as much detail as possible can only benefit you so feel free to utilize this section to its fullest. Unless the item is brand new, sealed and in still the box, there is always something you can write to describe the item in this field. Once you're positive that your description contains enough information, please continue.

The next page is where you will set your item's price. When setting the price, keep in mind that Amazon currently has a \$2500 USD limit set for pricing. On this page you will also find a spot for inputting the available quantity and specifying shipping methods. The Standard shipping option is mandatory. Once you've finished with this screen, please click on **"continue"** and fill out the remaining information.

Now that you've completed this process, sign into your Amazon account. If this is your first time selling on Amazon you will be shown the following message. **"Before we can list this product for sale, you need to sign up to sell with Amazon."** Here you will need to input a display name, or screen name, as well as your credit card information. Credit card information is mandatory because it is used to verify your identity and prevent unauthorized access to your account.

After clicking **"continue"** you will be brought to the "Identity Verification" Screen. At this point you should see the following message **"Identity Verification by telephone. Simple identity verification by telephone is required to complete the registration process. Please follow the steps below. If you are using a telephone dial-up internet connection, please click here for special instructions about what you need to do at this time."** When you are ready, click on the **"Call me now" link to continue.** A PIN number will now be displayed on your screen and you'll receive a phone call at the telephone number you specified in the registration. The automated voice on your telephone will request the PIN number. When prompted for this, please input the PIN on your telephone's keypad to finalize the verification process.

Continue on to the next page. This page is for verifying and confirming what you have already inputted. Review this information and continue scrolling down the page.

About halfway down the page, you will find a section for inputting your bank information. You will also see the following message, **"Your bank account information can be added later and is not required for registration. Note that we can only deposit your earnings into a U.S. bank account. After you add or update your bank account information, for security purposes we will not deposit funds for 14 days."** Please make sure you fill this in. It takes 14 days before they will allow you to receive a payment so the earlier you can fill this in the better

Scrolling down the current page will bring you to the grand finale of your registration and first listing on Amazon. The terms and conditions can be found at the bottom of the page and it is important that you read them over thoroughly. Reading this document will give you a full and complete understanding of Amazon's policies, what you can and cannot do, what you are entitled to and what you are not entitled to do and any other rules or policies that you are required to adhere to.

Not all of these will affect you, however it's certain that there will be many that will, so it is a wise idea to review this information prior to agreeing.

The next page is the absolute last page you will need to go over before your product goes live! This is the **"Review and Sell Your Product"** page. Here, you will review and verify the information that you've inputted on previous pages. If everything is correct, then click on **"Submit your Listing"**. Congratulations, you've listed your first item on Amazon!

How to sell online with ecommerce

Running an ecommerce website is a natural progression for any business that is selling online through the above described methods. However, some companies prefer to start with an ecommerce site. An ecommerce site is a website where purchases are made directly from the site. Amazon is an example of an ecommerce site. At one point, other sellers couldn't sell on Amazon, you could only buy direct from them.

Ecommerce sites are great because they tend to be self-sustaining, which means that they require minimal upkeep. You do have to make sure the site is updated regularly to keep it relevant but typically you will have an inventory system where you can add new items that are for sale. This system will be equipped with an automated feature that will then add the items to the website. After the items are listed, you simply wait for notification of an order and for payment to clear and you fulfill the order.

The next section will encompass a lot of information and might be a little difficult to understand. The information in the next section can be applied to a small business that is run from your home and has the potential to make you rich or could be applied to a global corporation that has multiple locations around the world. For the sake of this document, I'm going to apply the information to a small business scenario.

Once you've decided on a new business idea or have decided to turn an offline business into an online business, it's time to get started. The first thing you will need is a domain name. This is going to be your address on the web.

It's important to make sure that this domain name is relevant to your business. Sometimes businesses choose a domain name that differs from their business name but is similar or has some relation to the business. It's relatively inexpensive to register your domain name, depending on which suffix you pick. The most common suffix is ".com" and is usually around \$10 for a yearly registration. One of the sites we recommend for domain name registration is <http://www.godaddy.com>

Now that you have a domain name, the next step is to get hosting for your website. Registration of a domain name only covers the name of your website. What you need now is somewhere to put your website. This is where hosting comes in. Your monthly bandwidth depends on many factors such as how many visitors you get per month, how graphically intensive your site is or how many videos you have on the site. You should review all the plans available from a hosting provider and choose the one that best suits your business. A hosting provider's package might include several other bonuses such as software to make management of the website a lot easier and (about %100 of the time) will include e-mail.

These are staple features of all established providers. Remember that good hosting providers will allow you room to grow. If your business grows out of its current package, a good hosting provider will seamlessly allow upgradeable service with no downtime.

Now that we've got both your hosting and domain name registration taken care of, it's time to get down to business. You need a website. Unfortunately, there's a bit more to making a website than just paying for the hosting and domain.

With today's software being what it is, anyone can design something to share with friends and family but unfortunately, consumers tend to be much less forgiving when shopping online. Most people cannot design websites, which is where a graphic design firms come in. Graphic design or website design companies thrive off of the business world and you're bound to find many companies that are capable of interpreting your vision.

Your website needs to be easy to use, organized and customers should be able to find any kind of information they are looking for. If your website does not have these characteristics, the customer will leave your site and is unlikely to come back. Professional web design can range from inexpensive to very expensive, depending on who you choose and where they work. It also depends on how much work they need to do to accomplish what you are asking for.

Once your site has been made you should make sure that the method for tracking your inventory is simple and can be integrated into your website so you can add new products to your inventory and website at the same time.

A lot of ecommerce solutions providers and software companies offer this feature, which will definitely save you a lot of time.

Now you've got your website, your domain name and your inventory listed on your website. What's left? Bringing visitors to your website and receiving orders! Bringing visitors to your website can sometimes be a tricky process. If you have a webpage but nobody knows about it, how will anyone know where to find it? You need to advertise and promote your site.

Below is a list of ways you can advertise your site for free

- Registering your site with a search engine (although simply registering with a search engine will not mean your company shows up at the top of search results).
- Viewing forums for similar topics and informing the visitors of your website
- Using local classified ads
- Exchanging links with other websites that are similar to yours
- Shipping a business card or flyer with shipments for products you're already selling on Amazon or eBay

The above methods are all free and can work great but require a lot of patience.

Some of the most effective ways of promoting your website is through paid methods. There are numerous types of paid website marketing. Many websites will sell or rent small portions of their website for links.

Where the link is on the page, the relevancy to the current page and the size of the link can help to determine costs. A website, whose content is related to your business and has a really high visitor rate, would be a perfect location to advertise. Other ways of online advertising is through paid click advertising. Google is a perfect example of pay per click advertising. If you choose to pay for specific Google services, you will get search preferences when people search for key words that you've specified. A search preference is when your listing will be viewed closer to the top of the page than other websites. This feature is almost always reserved for people who pay for each individual click to their website.

Email campaigns can also be an effective yet frustrating form of marketing. Make sure you are doing this type of online marketing LEGALLY if you choose this method. There are laws that govern how people send email and how individuals obtain client lists of email addresses.

The ways to market your website are limitless! There are many forms of paid and non-paid advertising but don't limit yourself. You are only limited by your creativity. Try to come up with new and innovative ways to market your business.

Once the marketing and promotions has been decided on, you will have to make a choice as to how you will receive payments. Online businesses typically take one of two possible forms of payment: credit card or online payment system. If you want to take credit cards directly you can take payments a few different ways. You can either have an Interac debit machine in your office that manually processes credit card payments, or you can register with an online credit card payments system. PayPal is currently one of the most popular services for online payments. It handles both credit card payments as well as payments through online check or direct banking debit. There are other services such as Authorize.net, Google Payments, etc. Please look into them all carefully before you choose the method you will use.

When you are taking payments online, it's also important to protect your clients' security and personal information. SSL certificates can do just that and the leading provider of SSL certificates is VeriSign. VeriSign is one of the oldest and most used services for credit cards. The company also has some of the strongest security on their SSL certificates. (Meaning that when using their service for credit card payments, the payment method is extremely secure and there low risk of compromising customers' information.)

After you have taken these steps, it's just a matter of fulfilling orders as they come in! Make sure to always keep restocking items as needed.

Online payments

The number one source for online payments currently is PayPal. It's a subsidiary of eBay that allows you to transfer money, make payments from ecommerce sites, pay for auctions, and make online payments directly from your bank account. You can even make payments from a check.

Recently they offered a professional merchant software package that allows ecommerce sites to take credit card payments from people that don't have a PayPal account. When receiving payments through PayPal you can either choose to directly deposit payments into an attached bank account or you can have a check mailed out to you.

Depending on which PayPal service you choose to go with, there are a few requirements to keep in mind when creating a PayPal account. If you are creating a personal account, which can be upgraded to a business account at any time, you must provide your name, address, phone number, and email address. You will need to provide security questions and a password as well. However, if you wish to make payments from your bank account or a credit card, that information must be added and verified first. Once you have a personal PayPal account you can make and receive payments! Please keep in mind that currently this account would be a personal account, and there are restrictions for receiving payments. You cannot receive too much too quickly or it will register with PayPal's security team as possible fraud.

There is another two types of accounts. One step above the personal account is the Premier account. This type of account is for account holders with a higher transaction volume and for people who might need to accept credit card or debit card direct payments. This type of account is a free upgrade and it prevents your account from getting flagged due to high transactions.

The last account type is the Business account. Business accounts carry all the features of the above listed accounts. It also gives you the ability to register the account under a company name instead of a person. You will also get full access to their merchant services and streamlined eBay tools, as well as the ability to give multiple users their own specified levels of access to the PayPal account.

There are small fees associated with PayPal so please check into these beforehand. It is a well-established company that can be found on the websites of many major retailers and has recently become the only form of payment accepted on eBay.

Authorize.net

Authorize.net is another method of making online payments. Authorize.net is widely used by online merchants' websites and provides something of a payment gateway for customers to take direct payments on their own websites. They have two current structures for receiving payments. One is very similar to PayPal and actually takes the customer away from the ecommerce site and brings them to a page on Authorize.net to make a payment. Unlike PayPal, however no account is required with Authorize.net to make a payment.

The other method that Authorize.net sells is the API version. This means that your website can communicate with Authorize.net securely and without the customer actually leaving your website. This is the preferred method for many large retailers because it allows them to maintain their reputation and present themselves in a professional manner. Authorize.net is currently the largest payment gateway on the Internet. One requirement of Authorize.net is that you must already have a merchant account or the legal access to accept credit card payments.

This access must be obtained from a third party.

There are many features for both security and convenience that come with your Authorize.net account. One feature is their virtual terminal, which lets you process credit card orders over the phone, as well as batch processing of credit card orders. They also offer fraud prevention tools such as Card Code Verification and Address Verification Services. You can also upgrade to their Fraud Detection Suite, which is software that tracks, orders and flags any suspicious purchases.

Google Checkout

Another major payment processing service is Google Checkout. It is a relatively new company that has been offering its services in the US since June 28, 2006. It is similar to PayPal in that it requires buyers who are making a purchase from a Google Checkout retailer to have a Google account as well as their credit or debit card information stored on their Google Checkout account. Google Checkout focuses heavily on making one-time payments easy whereas PayPal does not focus heavily on one-time payments.

Google Checkout has fees are very low, which makes it an ideal solution for a new eCommerce business or an existing business looking to keep overhead costs low.

Like PayPal and Authorize.net, Google Checkout is positioned in the market as an eCommerce payment solution. It can be used to purchase products and services online but unlike PayPal, Google Checkout does not allow users to send funds to any other users based on e-mail address and functions on immediate processing of payments instead. One final note about Google Checkout: If you use AdWords for pay-per-click advertising, Google will give you a little bit of a break on some of your fees. Please view Google Checkout's website to find out current and accurate details.

Shipping

There are several shipping companies you can go with and each one has its pros and cons. You will need to think about the product you're selling in terms of weight and size and you will also need to determine where most of your shipments will go. Some shipping companies offer lower prices for large packages but can be expensive for smaller parcels and international shipments. If you are located in Canada, Canada Post is the cheapest option and they have various levels of service available. You can obtain tracking, delivery confirmation and signature information if needed.

In the US the cheapest method would be USPS for most shipments. It also offers numerous service levels and excellent customer support. Just like Canada Post, UPS offers all the options you would need for packages. You can also get insurance for the package as well as tracking information and prepaid shipping envelopes and boxes.

Shipping couriers can be used as well. Most online businesses ship through UPS or FedEx or DHL. These shipping companies usually have slightly higher fees but their services include everything from worldwide ground shipping to guaranteed next day delivery anywhere in the world.

Shipping is something that is hard to discuss because each of your needs and choices will be different. We cannot say any one shipping company is better than another because each one has its pros and cons. Make sure to investigate each company prior to making a decision.