

The Fundamentals of Online Auction Selling

By Aaron Turpen

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Even the professionals often overlook the fundamentals of any business, sport, or endeavor. I am not really an auction expert. I am a computer guy. During my time with The Online Auction Academy, however, I have learned a lot about the business of online auctions.

After all, I've been surrounded by experts, read their articles, listened to their classes, and am continually exposed to their knowledge. I have seen people succeed in the business of online auctions and I've seen people fail. Those who fail are those who did not learn from their mistakes and especially those who did not learn what they should know before they got into the business. I am regularly asked what I think it takes to get into Web Design, Web Mastering, or Web Development as a business. I say the same thing that the trainers here at The Online Auction Academy tell their students: "You have to learn to run a business. You have to want to succeed. Most of all, you have to learn about the business you're getting into."

Think of it this way: a basketball player will get nowhere without the fundamentals of the game. If the player can't dribble, shoot, run with, or pass the ball, that player will never get on the court professionally. The same holds true for any business, especially online auctions. If you don't adhere to the fundamentals, you'll get passed by and your sales will be nonexistent. You will have failed to get off the bench to play the game!

Here are the basic fundamentals of a good auction – the kind of auction that denotes a successful and committed professional.

- 1 – Be professional about your listings, policies, and manner. Treat people professionally, write your listings professionally, and have clearly outlined policies for shipping and returns.
- 2 – Include photos and descriptions that give all of the "vitals" of the auction. Don't be too wordy, but be sure to hit every important point about the item – good and bad. Try to avoid overuse of marketing hype and exclamation points. A savvy or experienced buyer will skip your listing outright while others will wonder if it's a scam. Don't hide your policies or use rhetoric, just list them plainly, simply and be specific.
- 3 – Contact the winning bidder immediately after the auction is over. If you are a Powerseller and list a LOT of items at once, this can be overwhelming. The use of software (such as MyAuctionManager) will greatly ease that burden. Include the auction's title and number in EVERY correspondence so that the winner knows exactly who you are and what you're talking about.

4 – Answer questions and leave feedback. I'm surprised, when I go to purchase an item, how many sellers never return my email queries. If I don't find out what I want to know about the item, I won't bid on it. Be prompt in your replies and answer all questions truthfully and professionally. It's also a good idea, if you can, to update the listing with new information if the query has shown something lacking in the listing. When the auction is over, leave feedback EVERY TIME. Buyers appreciate this and are more likely to leave feedback for you as well.

5 – Ship multiple auctions in the same package if the same buyer has won them all. Not only will this reduce shipping costs, but it will also make the buyer happier and is more convenient for him or her. This means higher feedback and repeat business.

Generally, these five simple fundamentals are the backbone of a great auction seller. I think any of the experts would agree that without these fundamentals, you'll never leave the bench! Good luck and happy listing!

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