



The 37 Effective Ebay Ad Writing Secrets

by Ian Stables © 2005

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Introduction

The information you will find in this ebook is the product of 1000s of hours of research, testing and headaches.

The success of your eBay™ auction is not just the product but also the ad. Of course you may have a good product that people want, but until someone is inspired to buy it, no sale. Even free products are advertised.

If you think the ad is not that important just remember that companies are spending billions of pounds every year on advertising. Most of that money is paying advertising professionals to come up with the best ad campaign. It is also a fact that the cost of developing the most products is far less than the cost of advertising.

I have read just about everything on how to write ads. Try it yourself, you will find there is a lot of rubbish out there and be

prepared for a lot of reading, thinking and testing. It's almost as if others don't want you to know the best ways of doing this task.

The headline or title is the single most important thing you will ever write in order to sell. Not having an effective headline is like riding a bike without tyres. You won't get anywhere.

Your ad is also important but if no one reads it, then no sale. It's been proved that people read headlines 9 times more than ads. With a newspaper we scan the headlines only stopping when we see something that interests us enough.

Headline or Title

Secret 1

The Right Time to Write Your Title

The best time that I've found to come up with your headline/title is after writing your description.

It seems to make it a lot easier. After writing all the benefits down in your description the title seems to come as if by magic.

Try it you'll get much better results.

Secret 2

Discover Your Huge Benefit

When you, me or anyone else scans through the headlines, we stop only when we see anything that we think will be of benefit to us. We become **really**

interested when we think there will be a huge benefit. It is only when we find something that we want that the rest of the ad gets our attention. Another words, only our target audience will be interested.

The headline needs to **shout** the most attractive benefit the reader will gain. It needs to arouse serious desire and interest for the reader. It offers a promise of a great advantage if they purchase your product.

For example, my dad recently saw this advertisement.

The 'Flying Scotsman' Exclusive Edition
Model Only £1.99 inc. p&p

Now my dad loves good deals and also steam trains. He couldn't resist and sent away for it immediately.

What about this book I saw.....

'Search the Internet Like The Professionals'

Now, I'm not bad on the internet but I often become frustrated when I don't find something straight away. So the idea of finding out how the professionals did it was instantly appealing.

So make sure that your headline screams the biggest benefit that you give and you'll get sales.

Secret 3

How to Motivate People with Action Words

An excellent tip for your headline is beginning with an **action word**.

An action word is a doing word.
Examples are.....

Move, Wrestle, Dodge, Kick, Write, Shake, Avoid, etc.

By starting your headline in this way your doing a couple of things.

First, your describing the persons benefit in action. Second, the person sees a picture of himself doing it.

Seeing a picture is very appealing.

For example, imagine lying on a sun drenched beach, feeling the warmth of the sun on your body and hearing the sound of the waves crashing on the shore.

Did that sound appealing or what?

Of course that would make a very long headline. Too long for eBay. But if you add an action word at the beginning of your title it will help someone visualise the benefit of buying from you.

Just to help, here are some example headlines or titles.

'Beautify Your Home With This Quality Crystal Vase'

'Take Quality Pictures With Canon X50 Digital Camera'

'Stop Identity Fraud with Hewlett Packard Paper Shredder'

'Stop Being Ripped Off by Your Insurer'

'Search the Internet Like The Professionals'

'Do Your Housework The Easy Way'

Get the idea?

The plus with this is that it shows the benefit of owning your item.

Secret 4

The Powerful 'Why' Headline

We are all looking for answers, especially on the web. So having the

word 'Why' at the beginning of your headline is very powerful. It compels the reader to discover the answer. Heh presto, they click into your auction to read more.

Examples:

'Why this crystal vase is top quality'

'Why You Get Quality Pictures The Canon X50 Digital Camera'

'Why the Hewlett Packard Paper Shredder Stops Identity Fraud'

'Why you're paying too much motor insurance'

'Why ebook writing is the most profitable method'

Secret 5

How To Find A Benefit

1. List all the physical aspects of your item, such as size, colour, what its made of, information provided, etc, etc.
2. Next to each aspect write the words 'which means that'.
3. Finish the sentence in each case.

The benefit is what comes after the words 'which means that'.

Example:

Crystal Vase

Feature: Heavy

which means that

Benefit: it is quality crystal

Feature: Wide Base

which means that

Benefit: it is steady

Feature: 256 meg ram

which means that

Benefit: your programs run quicker

Secret 6

How to Find Your Most Attractive Benefit

1. List all the features your product has
2. List all the benefits your product gives
3. List all the problems or gains the customer wants next to each benefit
4. Pick the most attractive solution or gain the customer wants from the list

The benefit and feature associated with number 4 is the one recommended for your headline.

Example:

Benefits for digital camera:

Light to carry, takes pictures with one press, takes 100 pictures before full.

Top benefit: Takes pictures with one press

Of course in reality you'd try to come up with a lot more benefits than that.

Try it and see what headlines you can come up with.

Secret 7

Revealed! The 'Magic Wand' Technique for Finding Your Most Compelling Benefit

(My Personal Favourite Way)

1. Figure out which customers are likely to buy your product.
2. Think of what problems and hassles these people have.
3. Then imagine that you are a genie with limitless power to bestow any benefit imaginable on them.

4. Make a list and then figure out the most attractive one your product can fulfil.

Try it, you'll be amazed. Let your imagination run away with you.

This method is really just the reverse of an excellent sales technique I learned during my years of sales experience. It is known as 'The Magic Wand'. You simply asked the customer to tell you what they wanted if they could have anything they could imagine. Then, if the product you were selling could in some way fulfil this, in whole or in part, you had a sale.

Here's an example:

Your customers are housewives.

Main problems may be too much housework, not enough money, not enough time to relax.

The wishes you could grant could be housework without any effort, more

money to manage on, free relaxing moments every day.

If your item is a massager, you could grant relaxing moments. From that it doesn't take much to make a winning headline.

Secret 8

How to Use Questions to Create Your Auction Title

Very effective! Think for a moment the questions that you would like answered. I bet you're really interested anytime you see anything offering the answer. Imagine your question is 'Is there an easier way to get to work?'. You might express it as 'I wish there was an easier way to get to work'. But it means the same thing. You see a headline that says 'New Easy Way To Get To (where you work)'. Would you be curious? Of course you would.

So it makes sense to ask yourself what questions your target customer has which you can provide the answer. Then construct your headline as the answer.
Examples:

Customers question

'What can I buy for my wife's birthday present?'

Your item

A quality ladies wristwatch

Your headline

'Just What The Lady Wants - Quality Wrist Watch'

Customers question

'How can I study less and still remember?'

Your item

A new way to study faster and remember everything

Your headline

'New Way - Study Faster and Remember Everything'

Customers question

'What can I sell on Ebay?'

Your item

A guide on what to buy and where to find these items at car boot sales

Your headline

'What To Buy and Where To Find Saleable Ebay Items'

Customers question

'I'd write and sell ebooks but don't know how'

Your item

A simple way to write an ebook

Your headline

'The Easy Way To Write A Saleable Ebook'

Peoples questions often begin with How, Which, Who, Where, When, What and Why.

Secret 9

How to Use Headlines With 2 Benefits

When you've got 2 benefits you'd like to use in your headline I particularly recommend using the 'opposites approach'.

The benefit is that it makes each advantage look better in the shadow of the other.

Look at these examples:

'Highest Earnings, Lowest Cost'

'Hard on Muck, Soft on You'

'Maximum Recall, Minimum Study'

'Cheap Cost, Expensive Look'

You see the effect. Obviously you need to add what the item is to complete the

headline. This means others will know what you are selling.

The last example may be a nice crystal vase. The heading could be.....

'Lead Crystal Vase: Cheap Cost - Expensive Look'

When using this technique, try to always think of the complete opposite. Simple but effective.

Secret 10

The Word That Makes Your Product Different

Uniqueness is why people should buy from you and not someone else. It's what your item has that others don't have or **appear** to have.

There are different ways of showing uniqueness.

In my opinion this is the easiest way to add uniqueness.

Add this magic word to the beginning of your product name. You won't find this word in any list of selling words no matter how magical they're supposed to be.

It is the word **'The'**, defined in the dictionary as 'the definite article'.

Examples:

'Study Method'
becomes
'The Study Method'

'Profit Marketing Technique'
becomes
'The Profit Marketing Technique'

'Beautiful Crystal Vase'
becomes
'The Beautiful Crystal Vase'

'Way to Take Better Snaps'
becomes
'The Way to Take Better Snaps'

See the difference? Subtle but it does
make a difference to peoples
perceptions.

Secret 11

How to Get People Emotional About Your Item

You'll find the following list of emotion words to be extremely effective in a headline and also in the ad description as well. The reason is because they are everyone's emotions. We all identify with them and they conjure up feelings within us.

Anger
Convenience
Curiosity
Ego
Fear

Greed
Jealousy
Love
Lust
Mystery
Pain
Power
Pride
Shock
Sloth

Examples:

'Fear Loss of Money No More'

'Mystery of Millionaires Success'

'Create Lust in Your Partner'

'Love Your Skin With New Natural
Cream'

'Have the Power With the Canon X50
Digital Camera'

Secret 12

The Top Selling Words for Your Auctions

All these words are already imbedded in everyone's mind and have a powerful effect, especially when used together. Use them in your headlines and your ad descriptions for maximum effect.

Breakthrough

Cash

Discover

Discovery

Easy

Free

Guaranteed

Hidden

Incredible

Inside

Love

Master

Money

New

Power

Private

Profits
Proven
Results
Revealed
Scientific
Secret
Shocked
Shocking
Ultimate
Uncovered
You

Secret 13

How to Use Numbers to Sell

If you use a number in your headline it creates believability and shows the reader exactly what's in it for them. However, stay away from round numbers.

Odd numbers are more believable than round ones. What would you believe more? 100% Customer Retention or 99% Customer Retention.

Look at the next 2 headlines for a job and see which one you'd be more interested in.

'Warehouse Supervisor Excellent Salary & Benefits'

'Warehouse Supervisor 17k Per Annum + Company Car'

Examples:

'17 Carat Ladies Wrist Watch'

'60 Minute Study Method - 97% Information Recall'

Secret 14

How to Give Your Item 'High Profile'

To make sure people wanting what you have can find you, you need to include a word or words describing what it is you are offering. For example, "Study

Method" would let students know what it is and if they are looking for this then they've found you. Seeing this on it's own is quite often enough to get us to read more.

Also, it's important to remember that most people on eBay are searching using keywords. If your headline doesn't have their search word, they won't find you.

If your selling a Canon X50 digital camera then include these words.

Common sense really, but you'd be surprised how many people to follow this simple rule.

Products don't sell unless seen.

Secret 15

How Being Specific Sells

Instead of saying

'Earn Lots Of Money Every Week' say

'Earn Over £300 Every Week'.

Instead of saying

'Make Housework Easier'

say

'Hovering, Dusting and Cleaning Made Easier'.

Again the reason this works is that it makes it more believable and shows more advantages. Remember people buy to get advantages or benefits.

Secret 16

How to Target A Group

As seen from the above example specifics will always outdo generalities.

Targeting a group is another effective way of being specific. So if your item would be beneficial to gardeners then you could say so. If it benefits office executives then say so. It's not only more attractive to the group when they

see the headline but it also subconsciously says 'This is for you'.

Secret 17

The Method That Got 114 Bids

One auction which used the following method received 114 bids and over a thousand visitors.

Add words that most people search for on Ebay, examples are DVD, CD, etc. However, the words must make sense with the item that you are selling or else you'll be guilty of keyword spamming.

Example:

'How To Make Money To Buy CDs, DVDs, Etc'

The product your selling could be a 'how to' book on how to make money. However, anyone searching for 'DVD', 'CD' or 'money' will find your auction as well.

Think about it the more people see your auction the more interest.

Try it, you'll find it effective.

Secret 18

How to Make a Problem Sell

It is better to avoid a problem. However, most people only buy when they've got a problem.

So if your headline focuses on a problem you'll do a thousand times better with how to manage rather than how to avoid the problem. I bet there are a lot more books sold on how to manage with HIV than on how to avoid it.

Examples:

Wrong

'Avoid Bad Pictures with the Canon X50 Digital Camera'

Right

'Take Better Pictures with the Canon X50 Digital Camera'

Secret 19

The Magic Price

This is a tip for choosing the starting price of your auction. It has been proven to increase results by 22%.

Use the number 7 in your price, at least one at the right hand side. £1.77.

There is something about the number 7 that people like. The results show it seems to work. If it works, use it.

If you've seen any of my auctions you'd notice the starting price always end in 7.

Instead of putting £2.00 I'd have £1.97. Not only does it finish with 7 but also it follows the rule of being specific.

Secret 20

Using Picture Power

Any top ebay seller will confirm that including a picture with your auction dramatically increases results.

Your first picture is free on each listing, so you've got everything to gain.

If you have an ebook, then create an attractive ebook cover as your picture. There is software available for this purpose all over the web. It's worth the investment if you're selling ebooks.

A good tip for a tangible item is to get as close to the item as possible. People want to see what they're buying close up.

Here's an excellent tip about pictures.....

The best colour to include in pictures is blue. If you can use a blue background all to the good.

Through testing by website owners, blue backgrounds seem to generate more response.

Secret 21

How to Make Sure You've Got the Right Auction Title

This tip only applies if you are selling more than one of the same thing. An example would be an ebook.

Come up with as many headlines that you can think of and run auction with the top 5 choices. You may be surprised at which headline outperforms another. Top copywriters often create a list of over 100 headlines and then test the top 5 - 10.

When writing headlines, try just changing one word. Quite often it can just be one word that makes the difference to success.

I've often been surprised with the results. The best headline has been one that I didn't expect. Without testing I wouldn't have known.

Auction Description

Secret 22

The Right Length for Your Description

Remember quality is better than quantity. If someone gets bored reading they will click out of your auction. Avoid this by keeping to the point.

After you've written your auction description keep re-writing it, making it shorter each time. Try to re-word things making it shorter each time.

Secret 23

The Right Word Length

Another good tip is to always try to simplify words.

For example, the word accomplishment can be shortened to triumph.

Spectacular can be shortened to amazing and so on.

Use a thesaurus. If your using Word for Windows there's one available on the tools menu.

The purpose of your auction description is not to impress but to sell.

If you find yourself looking for the dictionary then you are using words that are too long. You must not make it difficult for someone to read your description.

Secret 24

How to Use The Power Of Authority to Sell

This is probably one of the most powerful tips in this book.

Everyone notices things more when someone they respect recommends it. Which book about back pain would you

buy the one written by John Smith or the one by Dr John Smith.

If someone, who everyone respects, has made a positive comment on what you're selling, that needs to be seen by the buyer. Does this work? If it didn't you wouldn't see large corporations seeking endorsements on their products. Also, think about how many products are advertised by famous people that we all like.

Of course you won't want to pay for a TV commercial but there is a way to get an endorsement.

If you are selling anything tangible, look on the web for any comments by respected people on the item or similar product. Then, if possible, email the person for their permission to quote them in your ad description.

If you're selling an ebook that you've written or anything you've made you

could ask for someone's' opinion. Send a draft of your ebook, they may even give you something extra to add. Then afterwards ask their permission to include their comments in your eBay item description.

Just think of the response you'd get if your book on cooking had good comments by Delia Smith in your description. In this example I would mention this in my headline or title.

Examples of people with authority can be doctors, lawyers, government officials, TV personalities, etc.

Secret 25

The Magic First Paragraph

The first paragraph should paint a picture of the person enjoying the main benefit promised in your headline.

The reason they are reading your ad is because the benefit promised by your headline. So it makes sense to expand on this to create more desire. The best way to do this is by painting a picture with a story.

Here's an example.....

Headline

'Quality One Press Pictures - Canon X50 Digital Camera'

'Imagine seeing something you want to snap quickly. What adjusting any settings on your camera you just point and click. And Wow, a perfect picture. The right brightness, no blurring and beautiful colour contrasts.'

Want to buy it. Yes and so will your customers.

Secret 26

How to Use the Power of Others

A statement of others using your product with success is very powerful. Nearly everyone concludes that if others are using it then it must be all right. Would you be interested if you saw a crowd of people looking in a shop window?

An easy way to state this would be to say that other people have benefited from this product in the past. If someone of authority has expressed a good opinion quote this in your description.

But stories are the best way to do this.

Spot the differences in the following.....

Example 1

'Perfect photos can be taken with this camera.'

Example 2

'All my friends take perfect photos with this camera'

I'm sure that you'll agree that the second example has more impact and is much more believable.

Secret 27

Your Sales Weapon - The Compelling List

The most effective internet sites list the benefits using bullet points in order of importance. It makes it more readable and a lot more compelling.

Let's face it which would you prefer for your money? 5 benefits or 20 benefits.

Most people often buy for one to three main reasons, so show all the reasons to avoid missing them.

When we go to the book shop we first scan the titles. The titles that interest you, you pull out and look at the back.

Why? Usually you find a list of main benefits.

If this satisfies you, you look at the list of contents.

You notice that the first 3 things were titles.

How about when we look at a magazine. First, the front cover to see if anything interests us. Then a look at the contents or a quick flick through at the headings. This also applies to goods. When deciding on a computer you would first check the spec.

What is the spec? Yes a LIST of capabilities.

I'm sure you now see why it makes sense to list the benefits in bullet form.

Avoid losing your customers. Have your strongest benefit at the top. Then, going down in importance, list all the other benefits.

A good tip is to think of each point as a headline. Headlines sell.

Begin each item with action words or 'how to' if an information product.

Action words get your customer to mentally test drive your product.

Example:

- Study in a lot less time
- Remember a lot more
- Study anywhere with just one notebook
- Use at any age or ability
- Avoid revising or cramming

Secret 28

How to Show Your Features

Again the bullet list makes it more readable.

The features are the physical characteristics of your item.

Example:

Cut glass
Silver edging
12" wide 5" high
Suitable for fruit
Weight 27 ounces

Secret 29

The Powerful Warning

People are more motivated to buy something for fear of loss than they are for gain.

Think of what would inspire you to action more. You can get £10 for helping someone look for his or her wallet OR you can find your wallet that you lost with £10 inside by looking around.

Therefore, include a short paragraph describing how they will manage if they decide against buying your product. This will stop people procrastinating. Many do and no sale is the result.

The best place for this is at the end of your auction description.

Here's an example.....

"Anyone without this method relies upon traditional learning methods. There are many around. However, nothing that I have seen before quite measures up to this. Without it I would have had to undertake hours of study each day and endured the horrible revision process as well."

When writing this part, try to think of them going about without the benefits you offer.

Secret 30

How to Agitate Them to Buy

Quite often, before someone is motivated enough to take action there has to be a strong reason. If they really feel they need to do something now, they will. However, most people are quite happy to manage with their problems. How do you motivate them to take action now?

Agitate their problem. You do this by expanding on the tip above. Instead of just outlining their problem you add what could or will happen if they don't change now. You paint a picture of what they're doing now and enlarge on it to show a bad outcome.

Example:

'You finally finish studying at 2:30am. You're very tired. You miss the alarm in the morning and are late for college. You've missed half the lesson and your

told to catch up in your own time. At night your friends are going to the pub, you're tired, you decide to catch up later. You get home feeling extremely tired. Next day you realize you need to catch up but now you've got even more homework. Stressed or what.'

Secret 31

How to Get Them to Take Action

A straightforward command telling them what they must do. You could simply say 'Bid and win!'

It has been proved, time and time again, that web sites have dramatically improved their sales by commanding customers to take the next step. People often need that final push to make their minds up.

Look around the internet and look at the order section. What do you see?

Buy now! Click here! Order Now!

Secret 32

How to Use the Friend Angle

An excellent way of writing your description or ad.

You sit down with your word-processor and type a letter to your best friend or family member telling them about your product. Let them know all the reasons why they should have it.

By writing to a friend you will be honest and use the most compelling words. Why? Because we would want the best for our friends or family and try to convince them in their best interests.

When the letter is finished just edit it by removing the name of your friend. Try it, it works.

Secret 33

How to Get Free Advertising

Advertise your auction like high street auctioneers do. You could write a post on a news forum, mentioning your auction, the benefits of your item and a link to the auction itself. Write a forum submission.....

See the next section

Forums

Secret 34

The Irresistible Ad Headline

Begin with 'How to', 'Secret' or make a news statement.

Examples:

How to Make a Working Model
Submarine on a Tight Budget

Secret of Getting Over 1,000 Visitors to
Your eBay Auction

'London Toilet Attendant Earned £1,577
in July Selling Ebooks on Ebay'

'How to', 'Secret' and News have and
always will be compelling headline
starters.

Remember the best selling book, 'How to Make Friends and Influence People'. That worked and still does.

Also, would you like to know a secret? Of course you would and so do others.

News will always get read especially if it's about a subject the reader is interested in.

Secret 35

How to Write the Easy and Fast Way

This will stop writers' block and give your article a professional look.

Begin by writing these words on a piece of paper.....

How, What, When, Where, Which, Who and Why.

Next compose as many questions about your subject as you can using these words.

After this begin writing the answer to each question and for every point you make answer the question why.

Example:

Your writing about stamp collecting, because of course your trying to promote your stamp auction.

Questions could be.....

What sort of stamps are the best to collect? Why?

Where do you find the best stamps?

When is the best time to start collecting? Why?

Which is the best book on the subject? Why?

Who should you ask for pricing of your stamps? Why?

How do I go about starting a collection? Why?

Just answering those questions alone will easily give you most of your article.

Secret 36

How to Use Stories to Sell

Your article could be a story of how you or other people have benefited from an idea or item. Then at some point further down you could mention it's available on ebay. It's as effective as word of mouth.

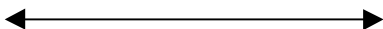
For example, you may have written an ebook describing a method of doing something better. So your newsletter starts off with what you used to do and the problems. Then about how you discovered a better way giving all the benefits. Of course you don't give your

idea away. At the end you mention how you are selling your idea on ebay with the headline.

Secret 37

What to Avoid When Advertising

A newsletter should never be seen as a sales pitch or else no one will read it. Please you might get flamed, which means other readers will ridicule you relentlessly. No one likes to be sold. Instead your newsletter should give useful information to the reader. However, in your letter you draw people's attention to the benefits to the item your auction offers on ebay.



All of the tips above have been gleaned from years of research of ad writing on the internet and media. Care has been taken in only selecting the ones which have been proven to work.

I wish you every success in your eBay auctions.