

Advice Column For Newbie Booksellers Suggestions On What NOT To Do

casadejunque (1241 )(view author's auctions)

07/28/03 10:35 PM

I thought maybe some of you old timers (as in book sales experience, that is!) could toss out your best quick advice for new booksellers on what NOT to do/sell on Ebay.

Here's my two cents:

Readers Digest Condensed books are worthless . Zero. Zip. Zilch. Nada.

Book Club Editions are usually worthless, but there are some exceptions. The more experienced booksellers can probably explain this better than I could.

There are several good, free used book sites on the internet where you can check to see what your book might be worth.

Next?

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mindelec (2646 )(view author's auctions)

07/28/03 10:42 PM (# 1 of 90)

"Readers Digest Condensed books are worthless . Zero. Zip. Zilch. Nada. "

mostly, but several months ago there was one that went for several hundred dollars. i believe it was one of the first ones published.

my advice "for every bookselling rule there \*is\* an exception"

;-)

robert

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midoridrunK (0 )(view author's auctions)

07/28/03 11:02 PM (# 2 of 90)

my advice "for every bookselling rule there \*is\* an exception"

;-)

robert

So true. :)

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mrs\_bees\_treasures (0 )(view author's auctions)

07/29/03 12:02 AM (# 3 of 90)

My advice on what not to do could apply to any category or item, not just books.

Don't do the following:

Negative / Harsh / Limited options for TOS.

Blurry or no Photo.

Keyword spamming or saying it is like another name brand or author.

Music, Gifs, moving cursors, or anything else that's annoying and/or takes forever to download.

Unreasonable TOS such as only giving 3 or 5 days to pay with money orders being the only accepted payment.

Giving only a one line description of item.

Not mentioning condition or flaws.

Not being honest about the item, TOS, or anything else.

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tomato\_sloop (174 )(view author's auctions)

07/29/03 2:39 AM (# 4 of 90)

Yet another exception:Blurry or no Photo.

From personal experience: I was very interested in a particularly hard to find author's signed book - and lo and behold, there it is, up for auction, but \*gasp\* not a single pic, with the advisement, that none are available! Two people bid, one successfully(?),for \$61. Not I. So there is that for an exception.

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satnrose (4065 )(view author's auctions)

07/29/03 2:54 AM (# 5 of 90)

The biggest problem every usedbookdealer faces, whether a one-person operation or a megachain, is what to do with the bottom level books. Don't let yourself be buried under a sea of carp. Know when to give up on a book and toss it to the FOL. Know when to trade it up. Know when not to buy it in the first place. Know when not to even try to eBay it. Life's too short to sell bad books.

But if you have to think twice, buy it. The one time you are right will make up for all the times you are wrong.

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fiziwig (38 )(view author's auctions)

07/29/03 10:25 AM (# 6 of 90)

satnrose, Amen to that. When I opened my very first brick and mortar used bookstore many years ago it took about a year for the customers to cherry-pick my inventory and I was left with nothing but junk. It was a costly lesson.

Now that I have a better idea what to look for I go cherry picking in other people's bookstores. :)

One big no-no is to not specify shipping costs in the auction listing. I have an auction I won a week ago and so far three emails to the seller asking for shipping costs have gone unanswered. It's just a book, how hard can it be to mention the shipping cost. And his listing says pay with PayPal and get it sooner. Yeah, right! How can I get it

sooner if the seller takes forever to answer a simple request for the shipping cost? Very annoying. I think that from now on I won't even bid on auctions that don't list shipping cost up front.

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ctbooks@starcomm.net (820 )(view author's auctions)  
07/29/03 10:38 AM (# 7 of 90)

1. Spelling counts.
  2. Punctuation counts.
  3. ALL UPPER-CASE LETTERS ARE BAD.
  4. all lower-case letters are bad.
  5. runtogetherwordsarebad
  6. Music, too cute cartoons, flashing neon signs, and busy backgrounds are bad.
  7. L@@K and other overdone words are bad. RARE is overdone.
  8. Really big pictures of the item are bad.
- 

thebabyhawk (78 )(view author's auctions)  
07/29/03 11:22 AM (# 8 of 90)

9. failure to list any condition
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readytorumble (733 )(view author's auctions)  
07/29/03 7:50 PM (# 9 of 90)

Please say more about "really big pictures are bad". I don't understand. If possible, please show an example.

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mmishaps (1385 )(view author's auctions)  
07/29/03 8:14 PM (# 10 of 90)

My husband just told me that someone had asked me to look for a book--gave me the title, and there's only one presently listed, ends in 6 hours, and there is absolutely no description. Lots of TOS, but not one word of description about the book. Fortunately, it's not a collectible, it's only wanted for reading, and I'll gamble--since there's little chance of getting a response from the seller before I head to bed. This is NOT the way to sell a book. The seller has feedback in the 800's, has been an eBay member for over 2 years, and has listed almost 900 auctions, many of which were books, all starting at \$1 in the last month. Most ended without bids. Wonder why?

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gardenofbooks (1036 )(view author's auctions)  
07/29/03 8:21 PM (# 11 of 90)

Really big pictures take too long to load. A lot of your bidders will just hit the back button.

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boodust (0 )(view author's auctions)  
07/29/03 8:39 PM (# 12 of 90)

Do not under~value / devalue your offerings.

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brokerc (326 )(view author's auctions)  
07/29/03 9:04 PM (# 13 of 90)

No book should ever see a dumpster.

Give away what you cannot sell.

Take a tax deduction for the charitable donation of your unsalable books.

Someone, somewhere wants the books you can't move. Find them a home, or at least an appropriate conduit to further use.

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kookidz (415 )(view author's auctions)  
07/29/03 9:18 PM (# 14 of 90)

Don't just list the book without researching it first.

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keziak (4714 )(view author's auctions)  
07/29/03 9:19 PM (# 15 of 90)

I would add to that, as long as they are still in good condition. Speaking as one involved in the receiving end of the charitable donation thing.

keziak

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kookidz (415 )(view author's auctions)  
07/29/03 9:25 PM (# 16 of 90)

Don't sit on the book for weeks after payment. Send it as quickly as possible.

Don't wrap the book carelessly or send it in an unpadding envelope.

Don't forget to add an invoice or some other identification that the book was sent to x by you.

Don't forget to use delivery confirmation--only .13 if printed online.

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derekcraven (371 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 3:06 AM (# 17 of 90)

If you can find the time, always let the bidder know the plot of the book.

Historical Romance Novels that come from Bookclubs editions are worth \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ if you can find the right titles. I've personally been in many bidding wars over a few books. lol

If you a nonsmoker, or you don't own a pet let your bidders know in your listing. < This will seal the deal for many bidders.. well if they want to avoid cig smells.

Use delivery conformation on all of your books!

Good Luck !

Dori >^..^<

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oldbaileybooks (514 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 4:16 AM (# 18 of 90)

RULE NUMBER ONE: BE GRACIOUS.

An example: If someone wants to return a book for at least a semi-legitimate reasons, don't respond with defensiveness; or reasons they should've known to ask questions about the disputed flaw first; or how you only copied what was on ABEbooks; or how you won't return their shipping; or how you're only selling the book for someone else and will now have to contact them to see what they might be willing to do; etc.

BE GRACIOUS.

Take the book back, relist it correctly, and move on.

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keziak (4714 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 4:38 AM (# 19 of 90)

Oldbaileybooks:

I couldn't agree more. I can't remember how many times an irate buyer has been miraculously transformed into a friendly, relaxed customer simply because I reacted to their complaint with humility and a willingness to meet them halfway, or more. I try to keep in mind that I am an ambassador, of sorts, for eBay: if my transaction with a buyer is a positive one, they will be back. This helps everyone.

keziak

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garjaybooks (5742 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 5:46 AM (# 20 of 90)

NEVER, ever, use the phrase "Very good condition for its age" .....It's either very good condition or it isn't. Age shouldn't enter in to it. You can't qualify condition by how old a book is.

Unfortunately, even the Big Guys occasionally do it. I once saw C-Span covering a book auction at one of the big auction houses and the auction house rep held up a leatherbound book that was on the verge of falling apart and referred to as being "ver y good condition for its age". Evidently someone must have agreed with him, though. It later sold in the auction at a huge price...

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devils-posting-id (0 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 6:25 AM (# 21 of 90)

The customer is not always right but you as a seller must make them think so.

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ziggysbookshop (2732 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 6:30 AM (# 22 of 90)

Don't buy a book that smells musty or is moldy thinking you can fix it -- you can't.

Remember that condition is everything -- don't be tempted to buy a bunch of 'reading copies' because their cheap.

Know what a First Edition is. Book of the Month club titles that have full number strings are not firsts -- it's the price on the DJ, or the lack thereof, that lets you know. There are many exceptions to the First Edition rule (such as Random House dropping their 1) -- know them before you list.

Before you spend a lot of money on a bunch of nothing - RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH. Go thru the completed listings and then search by highest price. Know what can sell, this way your not wasting your money on just listing fees. Unless a title is a collectible edition - don't sit on it. Books have flavors of the month too, but what's hot today may not be hot 6 months down the road.

If you want to really sell and are not just selling one or two titles for a quick buck, understand that this is WORK.

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ctbooks@starcomm.net (820 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 6:31 AM (# 23 of 90)

If the buyer is attempting to prove a point at your expense such as receiving a bargain on a book or shipping, either ignore it or reply that costs remain as stated.

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keziak (4714 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 7:30 AM (# 24 of 90)

As your volume grows, evaluate products and services that will increase your productivity. One of my favorites is a program to run my FB for me. I used to get SO far behind with it because I always had other work to do first.

keziak

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fiziwig (38 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 8:23 AM (# 25 of 90)

Start out by knowing what kind of bookseller you plan to be.

Are you selling collectables or are you selling content?

The distinction is important because some advice that applies to one type of bookseller is the opposite of the advice applied to the other kind. For example, a collectables seller will tell you "book club editions are worthless", while a content seller will tell you that certain science fiction or fantasy authors are very much in demand and even book club editions fetch good money.

Collectable sellers will put a lot of emphasis on condition and very little on content because it is presumed that if a person is in the market for a nice first edition H.G. Wells War of the Worlds he doesn't need to be told what the story is about. The content buyer, on the other hand, might be looking for "any spy thriller" in reasonably good reading condition. Coffee mug ring on the back cover? Who cares! Sellers of content mention condition, but focus on content by providing a good description of the content of the book, whether fiction or non-fiction.

Of course you can sell both kinds of books, but be clear on each listing what you're selling. If a particular book would appeal to both markets be sure to give adequate details about condition for the collector AND a good summary of the plot for the reader.

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chihuahuarat (0 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 8:32 AM (# 26 of 90)

NEVER list a book or anything else for that matter unless you know beforehand how you are going to ship it and you have the appropriate packing materials available.

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tomato\_sloop (174 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 12:11 PM (# 27 of 90)

What's this?

Thirteen cents (\$0.13) for delivery confirmation if printed on-line?

Please tell me where to find this. I'm assuming this is not UPS, but USPS? Help, please.

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teachjoep (168 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 3:15 PM (# 28 of 90)

tomato\_sloop: "Thirteen cents for delivery confirmation if printed online?" If you visit USPS.gov and download

their "Shipping assistant" you can save \$ by printing out the label for Media Mail, First Class, etc. It is so easy, and the address labels are clear as day. Just don't tape over the barcode. (One piece below, two above works well to hold the label in place.)

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b\_o\_o\_k (157 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 3:25 PM (# 29 of 90)

The number one piece of advice I can give is don't assume anything and don't state anything that you are not sure of.

If you don't know, find out and if you can't find out then let the buyer know that you are not sure...

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satnrose (4065 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 4:09 PM (# 30 of 90)

Most new books that look like they ought to be valuable, are not.  
Big picture books are a glut on the market. Avoid them unless they're by major photographers like Edward Weston or Slim Aarons or Eugene Smith or Ansel Adams. And even some Ansel Adams titles are dead common.

There are many very good books that are unsuitable for selling on eBay because there are just too many of them out there available. I once had a nice copy of a WWII book on Naval intelligence ops in the Pacific, but there were 212 copies on ABE! psthomas says, if it's by a major publisher in NY, fuggedaboutit!

Most old books that look like they ought to be valuable, are.

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satnrose (4065 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 4:12 PM (# 31 of 90)

Can I erase that last sentence? Too broad.....

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house\_of\_hansell (24 )(view author's auctions)  
07/30/03 11:36 PM (# 32 of 90)

Do NOT forget to leave feedback. If you don't leave feedback, don't expect someone else to.

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third\_girl (23 )(view author's auctions)  
07/31/03 5:38 AM (# 33 of 90)

Do not follow grading examples set by some bookdealers on Abe..

Book - heavy foxing,serious spine slant,water damage to rear board, Pages 1-23 missing..

DJ - 2" chip to spine base, various chipping,creasing, price-clipped, insect damage, rear flap long gone, book looks like it was run over by a truck...

"otherwise" VG..

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fiziwig (38 )(view author's auctions)

07/31/03 8:58 AM (# 34 of 90)

Make sure to clearly state shipping costs. I once bought a paperback book that listed no shipping cost. Eventually the seller informed me that he was going to take the book to the post office to weigh it and would let me know how much the shipping would be. Four days later (8 days after the end of auction) the seller finally got back to me with the shipping cost. which was (DOH!) \$1.84.

Make your shipping cost reasonable. I almost bid on a lot of 4 scifi paperbacks once until I noticed the shipping cost was listed as \$25.00. That's just nuts, and it looses you sales.

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ctbooks@starcomm.net (820 )(view author's auctions)

07/31/03 10:16 AM (# 35 of 90)

Working with humans is hard.

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casadejunque (1241 )(view author's auctions)

07/31/03 11:43 AM (# 36 of 90)

I think I just picked up a few new good ideas from all of you. :)

This is my "off" listing week. What makes it an "on" week and what makes it an "off" week? Well, every other Wednesday, by the clock or by the calendar, my damned cat goes into heat. (She is going to the vet this week FINALLY). So for an entire 7 day span of time, I have a horny, moody, bi\*\*chy kitten attached to my leg, LOL. I rescued her out of a dumpster so she thinks I can fix everything. :)

The joys of working from home... in Entrepreneur magazine, they left out the part about dealing with a horny kitten... such as how to conduct telephone business with clients when your cat is wrapped around your leg and howling at the top of her lungs...

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tradervic4u (545 )(view author's auctions)

08/01/03 1:27 AM (# 37 of 90)

I have Been Sellin Used Books Only a Short Time. My Main Menu is Primarily What i Call My "Meat n Potatos" Books! Mostly all Non-Fiction How-tos,Bios,Etc With Very very little Fiction.I Have Noticed a Few Things that stuck in my Mind ..Any Book can Sell.A Book Club Edition can sell If its the right topic in Good Shape IE "Civil War" ...Also The MAjority of Buyers Arent Knowledge-able Bibliophiles But Folks Who Know What They Like But couldnt tell a Folio from a Bumped Cover!! If i See a HUGE book i usually get it if in Good Shape! My Huge Book Of Paintings By a Great Artist went for 60\$..Also Books Like Dogs can sometimes Best Be Sold in "packs" like My Box-o 7 or 11 Sci-Fi Editions! I could sell the entire Box for 10-20\$ and Still Be Way ahead. I Stay Away from These Books tho..Best Sellers,Gardening,Sewing,tho Hook Rugs are hot,,Sports Books,Sports Bios,Time-Life,Readers Digest,Fiction unless collectible ,,Romance,romance,and More romance NO-Thank-You! Any Book that is Not Up to Physical Spec unless extremely interesting Like My Flying Saucer Book from the 50s..I Try To Cull at the Source Before Purchase! My 500lbs of Books in My Garage Prove i dont cull good as yet! I Have Noticed that Books Listed Highly on Abe and in Guide Books generally Do well on Ebay -Probably cuz of Bibliophiles...I Use Electronic DC on Everything and Tape Over The Whole Label.And Use Media Mail For Everything With Plus4 Zipcode Added For Best Delivery times-My DC is Free to Buyers in USA.The More Questions you Answer in Auction -The Better The Bidding i think. Also Lots of Photos cant hurt. In General The Marketplace is Slow now on Common items Which gives us Time to Gear up for September,and Hopefully Some Great Sales!!

Lee

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satnrose (4065 )(view author's auctions)

09/25/03 3:11 PM (# 38 of 90)

bump

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quartzierose (88 )(view author's auctions)

09/25/03 4:39 PM (# 39 of 90)

Excellent idea. This thread should stay near the top.

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teleplex (96 )(view author's auctions)

09/25/03 8:10 PM (# 40 of 90)

ready to rumble - in my experience a photo 250 to 400 pixels wide (your photo editing program will tell you) is sufficient.

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happybookday (22 )(view author's auctions)

09/25/03 8:52 PM (# 41 of 90)

RDCB are evil.

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cornercube (0 )(view author's auctions)  
09/25/03 9:14 PM (# 42 of 90)

No, ebooks are evil.  
They rot your brain and make you smell bad.

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caro\*mormorio (0 )(view author's auctions)  
09/25/03 9:20 PM (# 43 of 90)

Don't forget to say "thank you" to your buyer.

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kboyzmom (349 )(view author's auctions)  
09/26/03 7:03 PM (# 44 of 90)

bump

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madorman (3117 )(view author's auctions)  
09/26/03 7:38 PM (# 45 of 90)

Always tell the truth.  
Admit when you're wrong.  
Say please and thank you.  
Do what you say you will do.  
Don't make excuses.  
Give folks the benefit of the doubt.  
Sit up straight.  
Don't talk with your mouth full.  
(oops, those last two were for  
my kids - you can ignore those...)

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tinhornewriter (22 )(view author's auctions)  
09/26/03 10:07 PM (# 46 of 90)

From the perspective of a relatively new book buyer - TELL ME what your shipping cost is! And if you expect to add considerable profit to your transaction by screwing me on shipping, please don't think I'll be stupid enough to bid.

Browsing through the listings tonight, I've seen shipping costs of \$11 to \$25 for ONE book! One seller "had" to charge \$30 for a set of three books because they were "heavy". Is there no accountability on this auction site?

Given this open acceptance of shipping charge fraud, do you think I'll bid on an item where I'm expected to inquire about shipping charges AFTER the auction ends?! Hahahahahahaha!

Pics are good, accurate descriptions are better. Let me know if it's illustrated; and if it's an old book I want to know if the illustrations are line art, photoengravings, or halftones.

Sometimes I'll take a chance on book purchases, so naturally I've been disappointed a few times on the content of the volume. But if I get what I've bid on, and in a timely fashion, I have no choice but to leave favorable feedback. And if you put a handwritten thank you sticky note on the book's plastic wrapping, like one of my sellers did, I'd have good feelings about YOU no matter what I thought of the book.

By the way, if I've purchased over a dozen books, and paid for each of them within 48 hours, why do I have a feedback rating of only 7?

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tonysid4posting (0 )(view author's auctions)  
09/26/03 11:20 PM (# 47 of 90)

By the way, if I've purchased over a dozen books, and paid for each of them within 48 hours, why do I have a feedback rating of only 7?

Many sellers will not leave feedback until you leave feedback for them. Feedback should reflect the entire transaction. Just because the buyer paid fast doesn't mean that he will not be a problem customer down the line. I wait until the buyer leaves FB for me, or 3 weeks after DC shows as being delivered if the buyer never says anything.

Browsing through the listings tonight, I've seen shipping costs of \$11 to \$25 for ONE book! One seller "had" to charge \$30 for a set of three books because they were "heavy". Is there no accountability on this auction site?

No, there is no accountability. You must use your brains to determine which are good sellers

Given this open acceptance of shipping charge fraud, do you think I'll bid on an item where I'm expected to inquire about shipping charges AFTER the auction ends?! Hahahahahahaha!

No, but apparently you're smarter than the average bear, b/c many a newbie have found out the hard way that they should ask first and sellers who practice this continue to thrive.

TONY

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bargainbookscanada (157 )(view author's auctions)  
09/27/03 2:23 AM (# 48 of 90)

Many sellers will not leave feedback until you leave feedback for the

You are entitled to your opinion, of course, but I believe that is the wrong thing to do. A buyer does not "owe" you feedback. This type of thing is why so many dishonest booksellers (or any category) still have good feedback, for fear of retaliatory feedback. Yes it can be abused, as some buyers are very picky. However, there are many situations where sellers warrant a neg.

Sellers leaving feedback first is recommended in Griff's Ebay guide.

In the real world, there's just no absolutely no company that has the opportunity, nor would even dare leave a feedback about its customers. You want to be treated like a "real store", charge for handling and all of that, than no way should you coerce customers into leaving good feedback for you.

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paperbackexchange (1695 )(view author's auctions)  
09/27/03 5:33 AM (# 49 of 90)

You never know what is going to sell.....(with exception of RDCB we give those away free in our shop).

Books I thought would never sell, eventually do.  
So try everything at least once, you never know what someone is looking for out there in cyber land.

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iainsdad (626 )(view author's auctions)  
09/27/03 5:43 AM (# 50 of 90)

bargainbookscanada If the seller has confirmed payment and that the item is in the mail, then does it not follow that the buyer should have the courtesy to confirm delivery, at which point feedback can be left

Neil

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tinhorthewriter (22 )(view author's auctions)  
09/27/03 6:45 AM (# 51 of 90)

In practice, I leave feedback when I unwrap the book, and my comments usually just mention the speed of delivery and quality of packaging. I guess I expected that the sellers' feedback for me would reflect the timeliness of my payment, not be a reward for feedback I leave.

But I'm still learning the ropes.

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ohbuckeye52 (322 )(view author's auctions)  
09/27/03 7:12 AM (# 52 of 90)

Fiziwig I'm sorry to hear that you won't be bidding on any of my auctions, if I ever post any (assuming I have something you might otherwise want). I very clearly state that I will email with proper postage upon closing of the auction. I generally have that email sent within 1/2 an hour of the closing of the auction. If I need to get to sleep that night, then it's the next morning. Postage is quoted media rate; as priority has an area dependency which significantly affects cost. (the penny or two for media rate isn't worth the hassle of waiting). I do quote shipping and handling costs.

Waiting three weeks for a congratulations you won email which should be canned in Notepad and waiting to

paste into the body of your email is just unconscionable. (Stated to keep my post on thread).

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tonysid4posting (0 )(view author's auctions)  
09/27/03 10:20 PM (# 53 of 90)

A buyer does not "owe" you feedback. This type of thing is why so many dishonest booksellers (or any category) still have good feedback, for fear of retaliatory feedback. Yes it can be abused, as some buyers are very picky. However, there are many situations where sellers warrant a neg.

I was not implying that a buyer "owes" anyone feedback. I am just saying that FB should reflect the entire transaction.

Some might remember my story from a while back, of a buyer who bought a signed book from me, asked to return it, and then returned to me a different copy with a fake signature. Should this buyer have gotten a pos for timely payment, or a neg b/c he attempted fraud later in the transaction?

(As it turns out I left no FB, as he was apologetic when I called him on it)

..and I hope that you are not implying that based entirely on my FB policy I am a dishonest bookseller.

Sellers leaving feedback first is recommended in Griff's Ebay guide.

And according to eBay, FB is voluntary, so anyone can leave it whenever they want or not at all.

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cambridgehouse (70 )(view author's auctions)  
09/28/03 6:32 AM (# 54 of 90)

Please check the condition of the spine. How a book looks on the shelf is extremely important to many buyers. For older books without jackets it is especially important that the lettering be clear and legible. I have several times bought books on auction that are supposed to be in nice shape only to find the spine is badly faded. If I am interested in a book I now have to email specifically to ask--and I should not have to do this. It should be stated in the auction description. A photo of the spine should be included as well. This is a pet peeve of mine when buying books from inexperienced sellers

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bargainbookscanada (157 )(view author's auctions)  
09/28/03 8:52 AM (# 55 of 90)

Should this buyer have gotten a pos for timely payment, or a neg b/c he attempted fraud later in the transaction?

But the pendulum swings both ways here. A seller could offer a 30 day money back guarantee on a electronic equipment. It works fine, buyer leaves feedback first, 20 days later it breaks down and the seller will not honor the warantee.

Overall, I believe your scenario is quite rare and your selling ID is probably quite extensive to find something like this. The majority of the time, a seller is using the threat of negative feedback to prevent negative feedback for legitimate reasons like condition not as described (very common), delayed shipping times, improper or no packaging etc.

..and I hope that you are not implying that based entirely on my FB policy I am a dishonest bookseller.

Not at all, but my personal situation has been that sellers that KNEW they were sending me poor product did not leave feedback first most of the time.

And according to eBay, FB is voluntary, so anyone can leave it whenever they want or not at all.

Feedback being voluntary is a red herring used throughout the feedback board. Feedback is very important and definitely has a value to it. If people really followed the "feedback is voluntary" idea and did not leave you any feedback for any transaction, then your 0 feedback would constantly cost you some bids.

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wordnerdbooks (2)(view author's auctions)  
09/28/03 8:54 AM (# 56 of 90)

bargainbookscanada There is no right or wrong time to leave feedback--- only the time that is right or wrong for each individual seller. Each seller has the right to run their business in the way that is most effective for that seller (as long as they work within ebay's tos and of course comply with all legal aspects of business).

I think you overstate buyers fear of leaving feedback for a bad seller. A negative hurts a seller FAR more than a buyer. SIMPLE FACT ONE is that only the BUYER knows when the transaction is completed.

SIMPLE FACT TWO Things happen after the payment is received. I'm currently holding a bounced check for an item that already shipped. Do you honestly think this buyer should have a glowing positive feedback that says "great ebayer paid fast".

SIMPLE FACT THREE There are as many dishonest buyers as dishonest sellers.

Ebay's feedback system is seriously flawed. Deadbeat bidders and scammers get to leave undeserved negs. Ebay claims that feedback extortion is tos offense--- by in the next sentence states they won't remove the neg if the buyer doesn't cave to the extortion. They claim that retaliatory feedback is a tos violation--- yet they won't remove a retaliatory neg.

These boards are full of stories of sellers who are being feedback extorted by problem buyers.

Two of the deadest horses on these boards

THERE IS A RIGHT AND WRONG TIME TO LEAVE FEEDBACK This is for each seller to decide whatever they decide that is the right time

SELLERS SHOULD ONLY CHARGE EXACT POSTAGE That too is the sellers decision and as long as the charges are detailed in the listing the buyer has no complaint. Some of us are professionals and have neither the

time nor desire to go dumpster diving for shipping supplies. Buyers have the right to NOT BID if the shipping charges are too high--- it really is that easy.

NEWBIE SELLERS RESEARCH RESEARCH RESEARCH look at closed auctions of successful sellers for ideas on formatting and to see what a good professional listing looks like DO NOT COPY THEIR LISTING AND DO NOT COPY AND USE THEIR IMAGES.

If the book is a former library book you absolutely MUST disclose that ----- and an exlibrary book can't be described as being in VERY GOOD or NEAR FINE condition HELLO it's got stamps and stickers all over it.

THINK LIKE A BUYER If you were looking for the Encyclopedia of left handed widgets what words would you search for???? Sadly ebay has made the default in search to search titles and descriptions only so for the vast majority of new users your title is your only hope of hooking the potential buyer. AMAZINGLY very few buyers search for terms like "L@@K" or WOW. Work as hard on your auction title as on your description.

Tell the potential buyer WHY they want this item. Have a CLEAR inviting picture if there is any way possible.

Use friendly and inviting terms of service---- PLEASE don't give me the list of the top ten reasons why you'll be leaving me a negative feedback. That doesn't mean that you shouldn't have terms of service or list them or stick with them in the face of a problem customers--- but try to keep them as simple as you possibly can and state them in a positive way.

Try not to limit yourself. By taking only money orders or only paypal or demanding payment arrive in five days you are cutting off your nose to spite your face. You have a perfect right to make those choices--- but they work against your goal to get the maximum price for your item.

Try not to limit yourself II You might limit yourself to US sales only in the beginning while you get your feet wet but once you find your groove sell internationally! It's not as daunting as it seems. All you need is a good scale (you really should have this even if you only sell domestically) and the USPS website. My experience is that non US buyers bid high and pay fast.

Learn good packing techniques--- there are numerous tutorials on packing books. Basically the book should be wrapped well in some sort of plastic-- taped securely to prevent damage to the jacket, then wrapped in protective padding--- I use bubblewrap--- a friend who sells on ebay has a source for rolls of foam--- but something to sufficiently pad the book particularly the corners. Include an invoice or something with the shipping address inside of the package. Next put it into either a bubble mailer padded mailer box or there is a link on the Big Blue Post on the ebay chat board that shows how to use bflute cardboard to wrap a package for mailing. If a book is particularly large and heavy after you've wrapped the book in the protective padding secure with large thick rubberbands or several bands of packing tape to prevent the spine from moving in transit.

Shipping charges. Find what works for you. If you have a lot of time and good sources then use salvaged materials. If you purchase shipping materials FACTOR that into your shipping charges. AGAIN it's your choice of how to structure your shipping charges. Find a balance between losing money on shipping and setting the price so high that you lose bidders. Try to offer a choice of media mail or Priority mail. We list the shipping charge for media mail in the listing then tell buyers that international and Priority mail are available email for prices.

COMMUNICATE with buyers. We have form letters in ebuild to tell the buyer their payment has arrived and the projected shipping date. CULTIVATE repeat buyers with friendly customer service.

CYA Think about how you will handle potential problems BEFORE they arise. Some sellers make insuring packages optional and try to disclaim liability for lost or damaged packages. Some require insurance on all packages, some self insure, there are various schools of thought. Keep in mind that if a buyer makes a purchase via Paypal and it doesn't arrive paypal will take the money from your account regardless of any disclaimers in

your tos.

If the item is costly insure it --- if the customer has been "strange" add delivery confirmation.

IF you stay with ebaying and ship a fair number of packages look into a third party insurer like U-Pic for easy affordable insurance for domestic and international packages.

TIMELY SHIPPING Ship packages asap after payment is received. We ship on MWF but made a special trip this past Saturday for a \$575.99 book (with complimentary upgrade to Priority mail).

Don't let a bad buyer get you down--- it's part of the business.

Come to the ebay boards with questions--- there are some great people here with great advice--- and some cranks with axes to grind you'll soon learn who is who.

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quartzierose (88 )(view author's auctions)  
09/28/03 9:09 AM (# 57 of 90)

Wordnerdbooks, well stated. Thank you. Your post is one to print out and tack to the bulletin board for that stay on your toes reminder.

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satnrose (4065 )(view author's auctions)  
09/28/03 11:33 AM (# 58 of 90)

For the record- I don't mind in the slightest if plagiarized or text stolen outright. Just don't use my pics.

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celticmuse (3213 )(view author's auctions)  
09/28/03 12:16 PM (# 59 of 90)

Joel--- you are FAR more generous than many sellers. Overall I'd agree with wordnerd in that new sellers need to learn to write their own listings and make their own images.

I've had other sellers email and compliment a listing then ask if they can use all or part of the description--- I always thank them for the compliment and say of course. I recently was researching closing prices for a box of mystery books that I somehow ended up with--- don't even ask--- and saw a nice overview synopsis of the series in one listing. I emailed the seller and asked if I could borrow it and they wrote right back and said they were flattered and of course.

But there are other sellers who simply "borrow" at will. It's dishonest and they will never learn to write a proper listing.

PS I still use one of your great hints for finding the text of jacket blurbs on the web --- cutting and pasting to

save the time typing. Though lately most of my newer stuff is going straight to the RIVER I still use it some-  
times for ebayables.

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iainsdad (626 )(view author's auctions)  
09/28/03 4:15 PM (# 60 of 90)

Wordnerdbooks, this was on one of the first threads I read when I found this board,

" if the customer has been "strange" add delivery confirmation. "

If it was you that posted it, then thank you, it has saved me some problems in the past.

Neil

---

bargainbookscanada (157 )(view author's auctions)  
09/28/03 8:40 PM (# 61 of 90)

Well, the shipping & handling issue is a seperate story covered to death on that board so I won't address it here.  
(same with feedback but it was already mentioned here).

Anyhow I do agree, that sellers "can" leave feedback second. But of course there is a huge difference between  
"can" and "should".

I think you overstate buyers fear of leaving feedback for a bad seller. A negative hurts a seller FAR more than a  
buyer.

There are many people (like me) that both buy and sell with the same user ID.

As you said, a negative hurts the seller more than the buyer. I agree. But this very fact means that buyers will use  
feedback extortion regardless as to whether or not they leave feedback first.

**SIMPLE FACT ONE** is that only the BUYER knows when the transaction is completed.

Nobody can define when a "transaction is completed". transactions can still go poorly after the buyer has posted  
positive feedback and vice versa. A buyer can still leave feedback first and then a seller, thinking, the deal is  
completed follow with feedback. Then 3 months later, the seller could get a notice that the buyer is contesting  
their CC purchase.

**SIMPLE FACT TWO** Things happen after the payment is received

yes they do, and they can happen to either buyer or seller.

**SIMPLE FACT THREE** There are as many dishonest buyers as dishonest sellers.

well perhaps true, nobody knows. However a seller can protect himself much more than a buyer for it is a seller  
that

- a) Designs the auction listing and TOS
- b) Receives the cash BEFORE send the item

c) Has control over the shipping process

A seller can protect himself by following PP's SPP (or not using it), describing their item properly, sending with delivery confirmation and secure shipping.

A buyer is in constant jeopardy. PP gives you some protection, Cheques and Money orders very little. Seller can send something underdescribed or take a month before shipping.

So no, I do not accept the idea that sellers are equally likely to do something dishonest, simply because they have more control.

Anyways, the key issue here is really "which policy is actually better for the seller?" Is it leaving feedback first or second?

All that leaving feedback second does is give the seller a sense of revenge if the buyer leaves negative feedback first or does something the seller does not like (like slow payment). It does not actually "Help" the seller. yes, it is nice to warn people about the buyer being a NPB, but that doesn't really help you. You are still out the listing fees.

Leaving feedback first is actually more practical. If you leave feedback first, the buyer will see it and then follow up with feedback of their own. You can not simply assume that the buyer will leave feedback first for you. If both parties have the expectation that the other party will leave feedback first, than NOBODY will receive it and the seller will be out the feedback (and we have concluded feedback is more important for the seller).

I admit it feels great to retaliate with negative feedback but it actually accomplishes nothing.

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celticmuse (3213 )(view author's auctions)  
09/29/03 6:57 AM (# 62 of 90)

bargainbookscanada I'm with Wordnerd--- there is no "should" involved here. Ebay supports each seller deciding their own feedback policy. There is no "right" way to do it. Feedback is totally voluntary as per ebay tos.

SERIOUSLY---- if the buyer receives the item and it's as listed and they are satisfied why would they have a problem leaving feedback? You seem to have a lot of emotion about this issue and don't seem to be thinking very logically.

You should leave feedback based on your own business plan--- please don't try to impinge on the right of others to do the same.

Each seller's policy of when to leave feedback is 100% right for them--plain and simple.

To the nerd's post I would add--- when you make a mistake step up to the plate , bite the bullet and fix it. IF it costs you some money chalk it up to a valuable lesson learned.

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drzilboorg (0)(view author's auctions)  
09/29/03 7:27 AM (# 63 of 90)

Wordnerd Great post. But I take umbrage at your implication that I'm unprofessional because I recycle most of the shipping supplies I use. I am not a professional book shipper, I admit. I make my living doing other things. I'd wager most here do more to make their living than ship books. That said, location is an important part of dumpster diving. My air bags and bubble wrap are deposited by others outside my office door; reducing the time and energy I spend on their collection to the extra 3-5 seconds it takes to pick them up, put them in my car, and then remove them to my shipping station. Call me lucky.

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bargainbookscanada (157)(view author's auctions)  
09/29/03 11:08 AM (# 64 of 90)

There is no "right" way to do it. Feedback is totally voluntary as per ebay tos.

Ok fist of all, Ebay does not have a TOS, it has a user agreement. Sellers have TOS. In that user agreement it does not address who is responsible for leaving feedback first. So in this situation, we contact Ebay, where Ebay's chief customer support rep. suggested sellers should leave feedback first.

SERIOUSLY---- if the buyer receives the item and it's as listed and they are satisfied why would they have a problem leaving feedback? You seem to have a lot of emotion about this issue and don't seem to be thinking very logically.

I'm not being illogical. It is illogical for a seller to leave feedback after the buyer leaves feedback because only 2 things can happen. One is that the buyer has already left positive feedback, in which case it is illogical to waste time waiting for the buyer to post it or receiving a buyer's email notice asking you to reciprocate. Second, the buyer may leave negative feedback, in which case there is nothing to be gained by leaving negative feedback. Sure it helps the next seller to come along, but you have already received the neg.

You should leave feedback based on your own business plan--- please don't try to impinge on the right of others to do the same.

I am giving an opinion I am not trying to impose my own business model on anyone. This is a discussion board, do you want everyone to agree with you?

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mickeysbooks (1774)(view author's auctions)  
09/29/03 12:44 PM (# 65 of 90)

Second, the buyer may leave negative feedback, in which case there is nothing to be gained by leaving negative feedback. Sure it helps the next seller to come along, but you have already received the neg.

I'm sorry, but have to totally disagree with this. I still think of Ebay as a community of sellers who help one another out. Last May I had a buyer not pay me for a \$10 book she won. After going through the Non-Paying Bidder process, I left her a Neutral for non-payment. Last week a seller from an auction she was bidding on sent me an email. This seller was auctioning off a huge lot of children's clothing. The current high bidder was my non-paying bidder and the current bid price was \$250. The seller was very nervous because she had spent a lot on listing fees for this auction included listing it as a featured auction. As you know, if you have a non-paying bidder, you can get your Final Value Fees back, but not those expensive listing fees. She wanted to know if this bidder ever paid me. I told her no, she canceled the bid and put her on her blocked bidder list. She sold her clothes for a nice sum to a great buyer.

I always leave feedback for every buyer, but I don't leave it immediately after payment. If you accept checks, checks can bounce. I've only had this happen to me once in 5 years and the buyer made good on the check, but it's still a risk that you run. If you accept Paypal, you run the risk of the buyer initiating a chargeback. This happened to me in August when a fraudulent buyer initiated chargebacks on dozens of books bought on Ebay. I got my money back because I shipped to a confirmed address with DC, but many of those booksellers that did not use DC lost their money. I'm really glad I didn't leave positive feedback for fast payment right away. I don't require a buyer leave me feedback first, I just wait a few weeks after purchase before I leave it.

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bargainbookscanada (157)(view author's auctions)  
09/29/03 3:47 PM (# 66 of 90)

That's cool Mickey, when I mention payment, I mean "cleared" payment. SO of course bouncing checks can mean NPB and negative feedback. However, once your check clears, it should be fine to leave feedback.

As for paypal, a buyer can initiate a paypal reversal any time up to 30 days. and he can do it regardless of whether or not any feedback has been left. He or she can also attempt a credit card chargeback up to 6 months after payment, past the timeframe for feedback.

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celticmuse (3213)(view author's auctions)  
09/29/03 5:40 PM (# 67 of 90)

bargainbookscanada "I'm not being illogical. It is illogical for a seller to leave feedback after the buyer leaves feedback because only 2 things can happen. One is that the buyer has already left positive feedback, in which case it is illogical to waste time waiting for the buyer to post it or receiving a buyer's email notice asking you to reciprocate."

Second, the buyer may leave negative feedback, in which case there is nothing to be gained by leaving negative feedback. Sure it helps the next seller to come along, but you have already received the neg.

Your logic here is flawed--- and to be honest the first of your suppositions doesn't make sense.

It makes perfect sense for a seller to wait until the buyer receives the item and is happy-- or finds out the buyer is not happy and the seller has an opportunity to correct the problem. We left feedback first for the first three

years on ebay---during a problem with a buyer who was using feedback extortion to get a refund and keep the book my Powerseller rep suggested that it would be better to leave feedback after the buyer since the transaction was really only completed after the buyer was satisfied with the item.

Sellers who leave feedback when payment is received are doing what is right for them. Sellers who leave feedback after the customer informs them that the merchandise has been received and is satisfactory are doing what is right for them. Read through some of our feedback---- we must be doing something right LOL.

This is a discussion board--- you seem bent on making this a "my way is the only right way" debate on an issue where there quite simply is no right or wrong way.

---

bargainbookscanada (157 )(view author's auctions)  
09/29/03 6:20 PM (# 68 of 90)

Previewing is your friend:)

It makes perfect sense for a seller to wait until the buyer receives the item and is happy-- or finds out the buyer is not happy and the seller has an opportunity to correct the problem. We left feedback first for the first three years on ebay---during a problem with a buyer who was using feedback extortion to get a refund and keep the book my Powerseller rep suggested that it would be better to leave feedback after the buyer since the transaction was really only completed after the buyer was satisfied with the item

A buyer of such loose moral fiber isn't going to care about whether or not he has been given feedback to decide if he is going to blackmail you.

Sellers who leave feedback when payment is received are doing what is right for them. Sellers who leave feedback after the customer informs them that the merchandise has been received and is satisfactory are doing what is right for them. Read through some of our feedback---- we must be doing something right LOL.

I have been very forgiving with feedback because I also use this account for selling. I have wanted to neg people many times but had not received feedback and I did not want to receive unfair retaliatory feedback.

As a seller I can control almost everything about my auction but as the buyer I can not. I have received damaged or improperly described goods, received goods mailed 30 days after payment, received little packaging for delicate items, etc.

It is relatively, very rare for a buyer that completes payment to do anything that warrants negative feedback. But very common for sellers to deserve it simply because, logically, it is the seller that controls most of the auction.

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bargainbookscanada (157 )(view author's auctions)  
09/29/03 6:28 PM (# 69 of 90)

Can you please tell me one thing?

Other than being a NPB or retaliatory feedback, what other examples are there for a buyer warranting negative feedback?

On the hand you can spend all day naming reasons why a seller may deserve negative feedback.

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bargainbookscanada (157 )(view author's auctions)  
09/29/03 6:39 PM (# 70 of 90)

I still think of Ebay as a community of sellers who help one another out. Last May I had a buyer not pay me for a \$10 book she won. After going through the Non-Paying Bidder process, I left her a Neutral for non-payment. Last week a seller from an auction she was bidding on sent me an email.

But you are forgetting something key. As a seller I have no control over bidders that bid on my items and when they bid. I can not stop a negative feedback buyer from placing a last minute snipe on my auctions.

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mickeysbooks (1774 )(view author's auctions)  
09/29/03 7:41 PM (# 71 of 90)

True, you have no control over who purchases your item at the last minute. But I do not think that negative or neutral feedback for a buyer, if warranted, is useless.

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bargainbookscanada (157 )(view author's auctions)  
09/29/03 10:31 PM (# 72 of 90)

But other than warning about a NPB or used as retaliation, why would you leave negative feedback?

The vast majority of buyer feedback, outside of NPB or retaliation is positive.

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mr3-2-1-go! (2154 )(view author's auctions)  
09/30/03 2:01 AM (# 73 of 90)

Here's 10 tips for you both do and don'ts in my own humble opinion of course.

1. Flip through a book and make sure no pages are creased.
2. Sometimes there is highlighting underlines - avoid.
3. Avoid outdated educational books, most are worthless.
4. Black marker marks on the bottom, names unless autographed.
5. Paperbacks are not worth as much as the hardbacks.
6. 1st editions are worth more.
7. Ex-library books are usually not worth much.
8. Soiled/water damaged are not worth much.
9. I found that non-fiction sells better than fiction on ebay that is.
10. Specialty non-fiction such as construction, real estate, how-to, self-help has sold well for me on ebay.

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celticmuse (3213 )(view author's auctions)  
09/30/03 6:40 AM (# 74 of 90)

bargainbookscanada Ebay's position is that the SELLER can leave or not leave feedback as they deem appropriate. There is no right time or wrong time to leave feedback. What the seller deems the right time for them is the right time. PERIOD. I can't believe we're still having this discussion LOL.

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bargainbookscanada (157 )(view author's auctions)  
09/30/03 10:54 AM (# 75 of 90)

That's not true celticmuse, show me where Ebay says the seller can leave feedback "when they deem appropriate". It is not covered under the user agreement. The only Ebay related source on the matter said sellers SHOULD leave feedback first. Granted he didn't use the word "must", but you won't see that word really anywhere on the site.

You have not answered my question. Other than NPB or retaliation, why would you give a buyer a negative?

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mickeysbooks (1774 )(view author's auctions)  
09/30/03 11:04 AM (# 76 of 90)

In addition to NPB and retaliatory negatives, others that would qualify are: bounced check, fraud (please see my Paypal story above), extortion (i.e. give me a refund, another copy, etc. or I will leave you a negative, file fraud charges, do a chargeback), threatening emails (had a buyer threaten me when media mail package did not arrive in 3 days from CA to NY).

I like the original topic of this thread and feel the feedback issue is taking away from it. I'm going to leave it at that.

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celticmuse (3213 )(view author's auctions)  
09/30/03 11:12 AM (# 77 of 90)

bargainbookscanada My ebay Powerseller representative suggested to me that feedback should be left AFTER the customer is satisfied with the purchase---- FEEDBACK is VOLUNTARY no seller every needs to leave feedback nor does any seller.

You are totally entitled to leave feedback at the time and in the matter that you deem appropriate---- but you aren't entitled to impinge on the rights of other sellers to make that decision for themselves. You are entitled to have an opinion on when feedback is left---- but it's just that an opinion.

BOTTOM LINE ebay supports each seller's decision about the appropriate time for them to choose to leave feedback---- sellers should decide that based on their own business plan.

Personally I think you've invested far too much emotion into this issue. Feel free to continue beating this dead horse as long as you feel the need. LOL

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bargainbookscanada (157 )(view author's auctions)  
09/30/03 7:46 PM (# 78 of 90)

Well, It's an ebay help forum. As I pointed out, Ebay sellers that don't leave feedback after cleared payment are doing themselves a disservice. I also point out the true reason why people wait to leave feedback and that is to use their feedback as a bargaining chip or to punish those that used negative feedback against them.

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quartzierose (88 )(view author's auctions)  
10/11/03 12:50 PM (# 79 of 90)

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quartzierose (88 )(view author's auctions)  
10/21/03 8:22 PM (# 80 of 90)

bump

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writegeniusatwork (318 )(view author's auctions)  
10/21/03 8:54 PM (# 81 of 90)

Do not pick up back issues of IDEALS magazine, not even if you get them for free.

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honey-teresa (197 )(view author's auctions)  
10/22/03 1:08 AM (# 82 of 90)

I have found that non-fiction books especially gardening, self-help, and how to books sell the best

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shiploadofbooks (33 )(view author's auctions)  
10/22/03 3:50 AM (# 83 of 90)

If you have the right book in your hand it does not matter what the condition is.Or its particular flaws.There is a willing buyer for it and usually they will leave positive feedback.

If you have an As-new book that no one cares about. Don't put it in your garage as eventually you'll realize that you have like a 1000 books out there.

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mizzcrowley (687 )(view author's auctions)  
10/22/03 6:59 AM (# 84 of 90)

Tomatoe-sloop

Hi, read your post on the booksellers forum. If you have not found out where the .13 DCs are on Non-Priority mail, it's thru stamps.com. It is a pay service, but if you do a lot of mailing it is worth it. The only thing NOT worth it and why I discontinued it is because it is not only a hassle, but often you can't get credit for misprinted postage. They require a printed record of the botched label & some printer errors mean NO printout. I can't take many of those losses. I loved everything else. Of course Priority Mail labels from USPS are absolutely FREE!

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mizzcrowley (687 )(view author's auctions)  
10/22/03 7:09 AM (# 85 of 90)

Buy more books like the ones you sold. Check what you bought first on the storefront venues of various sites Halfcom-amazon,etc. What books don't sell there or in auctions you can sell in lots. Buy as cheaply as possible. Cull books that won't sell. There are venues to make money on cull books. Yardsales. Book Stores that buy. Auction houses & flea markets. Stick up an ad on a bulletin board in a grocery store, wherever: "Two boxes of romance books, Make Offer." Donate what you can't sell, esp. textbooks that won't sell anywhere. Even these you can sell at a local auction house in a box just to get rid of it.

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cornercube (0 )(view author's auctions)  
10/22/03 7:16 AM (# 86 of 90)

My best advice is to look around for a venue that will deal with you honestly and fairly.