

# SELLING YOUR RETIRED STAMPIN' UP! PRODUCTS ON EBAY

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June 2021

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## **PART I: PERSONAL THOUGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### Selling on eBay vs. selling elsewhere.

1. When I'm talking about selling, I'm not talking about an ISO situation. That's a one-on-one situation. I'm talking about a situation where you have a bunch of stuff to sell and want to find the best place to sell it.
2. Among your choices for selling lots of retired product are (and there are certainly more):
  - a. eBay (a place for selling through auctions and store-front type listings)
  - b. Etsy (a place for selling crafts that you've made as well as other things)
  - c. Facebook (well over a dozen groups on FB have buy/sell/iso listings. Some are country specific)
  - d. Garage Sales
  - e. Community Rummage Sales
3. I prefer eBay for the following reasons:
  - a. eBay provides a confidential way for you and your buyers to communicate. You don't have to give out your personal e-mail address to anyone.
  - b. eBay collects funds from your buyer and will not let you print a label until they have received the funds.
  - c. You can take care of all aspects of the sale on eBay, including generating and printing a USPS mailing label (probably other types of mailing labels, too. But USPS is what I use.)
  - d. eBay deposits funds directly into your bank account. There are no checks flying around that you have to go deposit at your bank or credit union.
  - e. eBay allows you to have up to a dozen photos for your listing. The FB groups that I'm in do not allow albums to be created (deleting albums is a PITA for group admins).
  - f. eBay will work with the buyer and seller if there is a problem. I haven't had one this year. But I did have one in the past where a punch arrived broken. I could handle all of the communication and refund to the buyer through eBay.
4. The downsides. The biggest perceived downside to selling on eBay is the price for completing a sale. For what I'm selling and the way I'm selling it it's about 14%. But I like that price for all of the positives that eBay provides.

### Selling products individually or in a bundle (called 'Lots' on eBay)

1. There are several ways to sell individual items on eBay. On occasion, when I have something that is rare or valuable, I will sell an item individually. The closest I've gotten to that is when I recently sold a bundle of the Large Alphabet and Large Numbers dies, with the alphabet set that went with it. But for the most part, I just want to get my stuff sold and be done with it. I don't have time to be listing a couple of dozen stamp sets, even with the coordinating dies and punches and then packing them up when they sell and have to be shipped.
2. When I sell in a bundle, I can gather products together into a bundle (more about that later) and see what kind of a USPS Flat Rate Box they will fit into. I pack them in the box, seal it up and then list it. It sells, I get the money, I ship it and it's done.

### Selling known valuable items.

1. Sometimes you have something that's become somewhat "rare" because of circumstances. As you look around eBay and other sites you may find that it's selling for a really good price. In that case, you may wish to sell that by itself.
2. I did that with the Large Alphabet and Numbers Dies, with the Alphabet stamp set. That in itself sold for as much as some of my lots.

### Packing USPS Flat Rate Boxes before writing the listing.

1. When I gather items to sell, I make sure that they fit in a USPS Flat Rate Box. Then I pack the box or boxes. That's the bundle (Lot) that I sell and I do not in any situation break that bundle up.
2. I've had people ask if they couldn't just have a few of the stamp sets. My answer is always, "Sorry, the box is all packed." I also note that in my listing. That doesn't keep people from trying, though.

### Putting things together that make sense.

1. My current sales include 'Christmas,' 'Animals,' 'Floral,' and 'Sentiments.' On the other hand, as I'm putting things into USPS Flat Rate Boxes, some boxes have much more than others. So I work to regroup things, but again to try to make sense together.
2. When I can't construct a theme for my Lots, I just says that it's a Lot.

### Starting an auction with a reasonable price.

1. I see many auctions that start with something like a \$2.50 minimum bid for something that should sell for \$75. Most of them end up selling at decent prices. But I don't have the stomach for that. I'd rather list my opening price as one that I think is just a bit below fair. If it doesn't sell, I like to try one more time. Then in subsequent auctions, I reduce the price.

### Setting a Buy It Now price

1. When you set a starting price for an item, you can also state a "Buy It Now" price. That means that someone can just say, in essence, "Auction's over. I'll buy it at this price that you've stated."
2. I think of the Buy It Now price as what you'd like to get in your wildest dreams, minus about 10 or 15%.
3. OK, that's too complicated. But set it at something that you could see yourself bidding in the best of situations.

### Dealing with "Best Offers."

1. If you do not state a "Buy It Now" price, buyers are invited to "Make an Offer." You can accept it, reject it, or make a counter offer. I've done all three, and have more details later on.

2. How I deal with an offer depends a lot on what the item is, how confident I am that I've set the price correctly, and where the item is in the auction. If I get a low-ball bid right after something's been listed, I either decline it or counteroffer a price higher than my starting price.
3. If the item gets relisted, that's an opportunity to go back to someone who has made an offer and make them an offer.

Selling items you really, really, really don't want to get rid of.

1. As much as I'd like to keep everything, I don't have the space for it. But every so often, I have something that I really don't want to let go. So I set the minimum price much higher than I think someone will bid for it.
2. If someone does bid that price, I figure that at least I got a little something extra for my pain.

## **PART II: PROCEDURE FOR LISTING ON EBAY**

### **General**

First and foremost, follow eBay's rules. Whether you are a buyer or a seller, the rules are there for your protection. I have had people try to get me to sell to them directly after the auction is over "so I can avoid the fees." You are not going to be protected when they send you a bad check and you've already sent them the product. Pay the fees. The protection is worth it. If you don't need that protection, sell it in a Facebook group.

It used to be that eBay and PayPal were joined at the hip for eBay auctions. eBay listed and sold stuff, and the payments went through PayPal. Any \$\$\$ you received from your sale went to PayPal and then you had to get your \$\$\$ from PayPal. Today, eBay accepts any type of payment from buyers. Then eBay takes its 14+% and sends the rest to your bank account. They do it pretty quickly, too.

### **Before you write your listing**

Research what others are selling.

- Look for the exact item you're selling on eBay and note if there have been bids.
- If you can't find your item on eBay, do a Google search. There may be some that have sold on other sites such as Etsy.
- Look at listings that have already sold. You won't get much of the detail, but you'll see the selling price. Note that the actual selling price may be different if an offer was made and accepted before the auction closed.
- Check out how people are describing what they're selling.

Know the complete, correct name of your product. Some people are going to look it up in various places before deciding whether to buy your item.

Know the condition of your product. Don't put a stamp set up for auction until you've opened the box and examined it. If it's been heavily used, if it's stained, if there's a stamp missing, note that in the listing. I take photographs of stamp sets that have stains on even one of the stamps. I saw one listing recently where the title of the listing included "\*\*\*\*\*READ LISTING\*\*\*\*\*." In the listing it said a stamp was missing. The set still sold at a decent price.

### **Creating your listing**

1. Before you do anything else, take photos of your items.
  - a. If you're just selling one stamp set with or without the dies/punches, take several pictures. One of the cover, one of the stamps themselves (especially the rubber) and one of any accessories going with it. Two or three photos is better than one.

- b. When you have photos, you have the choice as to which one will be the main photo. That's the picture people will see if they're looking through a bunch of listings. Once they click on your listing, then can go look at the other photos.
  - c. You're limited to a dozen photos. So if I'm selling a "lot," I only take photos of individual stamp sets if they have stains. I make sure I mention that some sets have stains and give them the photos of the stains. If I have more than the maximum number of sets with stains (or other problems), I combine two or more sets in one photo.
2. Write the title of your listing (you can change it later). eBay will automatically put your item in a particular section of its site, which is usually stamps if you use the name, 'Stampin' Up!.' (And you definitely want to use Stampin' Up! everywhere you can!). The maximum number of characters in your title is 80, including spaces. *Sample listing: Lot of 14 Stampin' Up! Stamp Sets, 3 of which have a coordinating die set.*
3. eBay will then show you a bunch of drop-down boxes for type, material, condition, and a whole bunch of other things. Just go right past all that to your listing description.
4. Write your listing.
  - a. Start with a simple description. *Sample listing: This lot consists of stamp sets with seasonal or non-Christmas holiday themes.*
  - b. Add some general information about the product. In this case, I'm selling 11 or 12 boxes of stamps with dies and punches, so I have boilerplate language that I copy and put in all my listings. Sample listing:
    - i. *Stamps are made either of Photopolymer (PP) or Rubber. The rubber stamps have labels that are designated Clear Mount (CM), which is the original Stampin' Up! non-Wood Mount rubber stamp label coating; or (Cling), which is the current Stampin' Up! non-Wood Mount rubber stamp label coating. Some Cling stamps have labels with a small piece cut off to make it easier to remove from acrylic blocks or the plastic box. Some clear mount and cling stamps that have never been used do not yet have their labels affixed. But all labels are in the box with the stamps.*
    - ii. *Most die sets are mounted onto light cardboard with double-sided tape. Some are mounted on magnet board.*
    - iii. *If any stamps are noted as having stains, there are photographs of those stamp sets in the listing.*
  - c. State any limitations of your listing. I include that I will not break up a Lot and that I only sell within the United States (that's a Stampin' Up! rule for demonstrators). Especially if you're selling ribbons or papers, state that you are in a non-smoking or pet-free home (as applicable).

5. Decide on the minimum price for the auction. This process can be as objective or subjective as you want it to be. I have some thoughts on this in the “Personal Thoughts and Recommendations” section, below. Besides setting the minimum price, you may also set a “Buy it Now” price. That price has to be at least 30% higher than the minimum bid price. So an item with an opening bid of \$50 would have to have a \$65 Buy It Now price. You can also choose to allow “offers.” If you do that, customers can “offer” a price for your item. That usually happens when there have been no bids. There’s a section below that explains what to do with an offer. An offer cannot be placed if there is a “Buy It Now” price.
6. Decide on your shipping price and add that. eBay automatically puts in a price, but you’re not stuck with that. I do not accept their price, but add in the price of the USPS Flat Rate Box I’ve packed up to the next dollar. I print my labels at home and go to the post office a lot, so I don’t add in any extra charge for that. If you have to travel to ship, you may want to add to that price. I have had people ask me to use a different kind of box as they’re sure it will be cheaper. I tell them that’s how I’m selling it.
7. eBay will automatically renew your listing if your product doesn’t sell in 7 days. They also add as a default that they will reduce the price by 5% each renewed listing until it gets down to a particular price. That saves a little bit of work on the seller’s part. But I like to keep the listing at the same price for at least two runs of the auction, especially when I’m selling stamp sets.
8. If this is your first listing, you will be asked to provide eBay with your bank account information as they will deposit any funds from the sale (minus their fee) directly into your bank.

### **While your item is in the bidding process**

1. eBay will let you know when there is at least a minimum bid, advising you that your item will definitely sell. After that the next e-mails from eBay will be after the bidding is over.
2. You may receive e-mails from potential buyers asking questions. If an e-mail asks for some favor, such as permitting a delayed payment if the person wins the auction, I always reply politely, letting them know I’m glad they’re interested in my item, but stating that I follow the process that eBay has set up.

### **Receiving an “Offer.”**

1. When you receive an offer, you have three choices. You have to make a choice within 24 hours. You may accept the offer. You may decline the offer. Or you may make a counteroffer.
2. If you accept the offer, eBay will send you a notice that your item has sold. The next section discusses what to do then.
3. If you decline the offer, you may still receive other offers, even from the same buyer.

4. If you make a counteroffer, the buyer will have 24 hours to act on that counteroffer.

### **How the Bidding Works**

1. Theoretically, if you set a starting price, the first bid would be the starting price. Sometimes that's the way it happens.
2. More often than not, unless someone wants your item enough to make you an offer, they will sit back and "watch" the auction. Actually, it may not be them doing the sitting and watching. There are programs that people can buy that will watch the auction for them and that will bid automatically at times or events that you set. The most common happens in the last second of an auction's listing. Within a flash, these competing programs will be adding as much as a few cents to the last bid to outbid it. So the final price that you'll get may be a really odd number.

### **After the bidding has ended and your item has sold**

1. eBay's e-mails
  - a. eBay's First e-mail: eBay will send you an e-mail stating that the item has sold and the amount. That e-mail will have 3 links in it.
    - The first is a link to communicate with the buyer. That is optional, though a nice touch.
    - The second is a link to send an invoice. Click and you will be shown an invoice. CHECK IT CAREFULLY! Verify that, not only is the winning bid correct but that the postage is correct.
    - The third is a link back to eBay to "sell another item."
  - b. eBay's Second e-mail: eBay will send you an e-mail telling you that payment has been received. At that point, you are given the choice either to have eBay generate a mailing label for you or to get a QR Code that you can use to generate the mailing label outside of eBay. I have never done the latter, so do not know how that works. I've been quite happy with the eBay mailing labels.
  - c. eBay's Third e-mail: eBay will tell you that your eBay label is ready to print. You have two ways of paying for your labels. The default method is to charge it to your PayPal account. If you want to pay for the labels by using the money you've received as payment for your listing, there's a box all the way down at the bottom of the labels page where you can make that choice.
2. If someone has bought more than one item and you combine the invoices for those items. First of all, it will be easier if you invoice each item separately. Then you will have a link to print a label for each item. However, if you do combine the invoices, it will look like



you will have only one chance to print a label for the whole invoice that's been paid. To print additional labels:

- a. Click on the "My eBay" link at the top right of the page.
- b. Go to the left side of the page. You will see in the list down the left side, "Selling." Go down the list under "Selling" and click on "Shipping Labels." For the label that you just printed, you'll see a button with "Actions" on the right. Click on that and choose "Print another label." Then continue as you did for the first label.
- c. If the second/succeeding labels are a different kind of box (e.g., Large Flat Rate USPS box instead of a Medium Flat Rate box), make sure that you change that. Click on USPS (if you're in the USA) or whatever other service you're using and choose the correct kind of package for your second/succeeding label.
- d. When you look at the labels to be printed on eBay, ALL of the labels will have the title of the first listing. But they'll all have separate USPS payments/tracking numbers. But I check it each time just in case. So far, no problem.

**After the bidding has ended and your item has NOT sold.**

1. eBay automatically relists items that don't sell. This can be done 6 or 7 times and it does not count against your sales limits.
2. eBay has a process that you can use that automatically decreases the minimum bid by 5% each time it rolls over. I've used that for a few of my listings. One thing that does not automatically decrease is the Buy It Now price.
3. If you go through all the automatic listings and your item still has not sold, you can start all over again. eBay has a limit on the number of items you can auction in a month. For purposes of selling retired Stampin' Up! product, that limit will likely never come into play.