



eBay Social Media  
Best Practices · April 2012

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# INTRODUCTION

# Introduction Best Practices



Social media networks provide ways for users to connect, share, and build relationships. While the online component is relatively new, word of mouth advertising has been used by businesses for a long time. With today's technology the number of people you can reach through these tactics is enormous. As of April 2012, Facebook had over 900 million users; Twitter had over 140 million and Pinterest had over 12 million. In addition, 1 in every 5 minutes spent online is now on social networks.

Social media savvy businesses can create strategies to tap into those audiences. We hope this document outlining best practices can offer some tips to help you enter or enhance your presence in each of these social channels to drive your eBay business.

These best practices were created in April 2012 with the intent to help share a bit of what we've learned. The Social Media space changes quickly and we know this document will become outdated before long. For the most up to date information, go to <http://ebay.com/socialselling> and follow @eBaySocial on Twitter.

Thanks and best of luck to you and your eBay business.



# SOCIAL SELLING

# Social Selling Best Practices



## First impressions matter; be friendly and authentic

Imagine attending a party and being introduced to someone. How would you feel if the first words out of their mouth were "would you like to buy some insurance?" Engage your audience with content that is important to them. And always remember you are representing your business online to current and future customers. People want to buy from businesses they identify with and like. Here is your opportunity to share your business' personality.

## Have a plan

The social media space adapts and evolves quickly. The best way to deal with the changes is to have a marketing plan for your brand. It should include which channels you plan to be on, how you plan on increasing reach, what content you will use to engage your fans, and how you will promote your business to them.

## Increase your reach

Without pressuring them, invite your existing customers to follow and like your business. There is a fine line between spamming your customers and informing them, and getting one more like is not worth losing a repeat customer. Include an invite with a **QR code** on your packing slip, or provide an insert. You can also add links to your communications with customers. The best strategy here is not to be aggressive with a whole page of links and follow requests.

An example of a QR code.  
A scan with a QR reader on most  
smartphones will take a user to  
<http://twitter.com/eBaySocial>



# Social Selling Best Practices



## Don't hard sell

Social Media has taken the role of "word of mouth advertising." A single connection can turn into a sale and turn someone into a promoter of your brand, so treat your fans and followers right. Interact with your fans and followers; don't just constantly ask them to buy something. If you are going to share an item or sale, share one by one, not in bulk.

## Consolidate your work

One of the biggest constraints for small business is time. Instead of logging into and out of each social media channel, consider using a distribution tool like **HootSuite**. Tools like this allow you to post to multiple channels at once, including Facebook pages, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+ and more.

## Measure your performance, learn and adjust

When using social media as a marketing tool, you will want to measure more than just Likes or follows. Use a combination of the available tools to measure your reach, engagement, traffic, and sales. Consider using **eBay Traffic Reports**, **eBay Sales Reports**, **Facebook insights**, **bit.ly** and any other services to measure the success of your campaigns. If something isn't working, don't be afraid to adjust and try it again. And don't forget to use the Share buttons when sharing any item from eBay.

Use the share buttons to create posts with tracking and pre-filled data from an eBay listing



# Social Selling Best Practices



## Use images and video

Users of social networks are attracted to great photos. Use the big, beautiful images from your listings to promote in your social media. The same applies to videos. Host your how to, review, and descriptive videos at YouTube, and embed them in your eBay listings and social media channels. Not only does this help your customer on their decision journey, it is also helpful for SEO.

An Instagram photo from eBay seller **themonkeykingnw**



## Register your business name on every network

The social space evolves rapidly, and you don't want to be left with a username that doesn't match your business. You can register your name now, and simply not use the network if it is not a focus. If possible, register either your eBay user ID, or your store name; whichever customers are most likely to search for you with. Always fill out your bio, and where possible and appropriate you can cross promote.

FACEBOOK

# Facebook Best Practices



## Secure a brand URL

Facebook allows pages to have a username as their URL, which makes it easier for your fans to find you, and helps with your branding. Go to <http://facebook.com/username> and set a username for your page. Try to select a username that matches either your eBay Store name or your eBay user ID. This will allow fans to quickly recognize your brand.

## Have a great cover photo and profile photo.

When setting up your page and content, always use bright, sharp images optimized for size, and remember these images tell a little more about your business as a brand.

- Cover photo: 851 pixels x 315 pixels, ideally less than 100 kilobytes
- Profile picture: 160 pixels x 160 pixels.

Keep in mind the Facebook guidelines on cover photos. Cover images may not contain:

- Price or purchase information, such as "40% off" or "Download it at our website"
- Contact information, such as web address, email, mailing address or other information intended for your Page's About section
- References to user interface elements, such as Like or Share, or any other Facebook site features
- Calls to action, such as "Get it now" or "Tell your friends"

eBay seller  
**themonkeykingnw**'s cover  
and profile picture on their  
Facebook page



# Facebook Best Practices



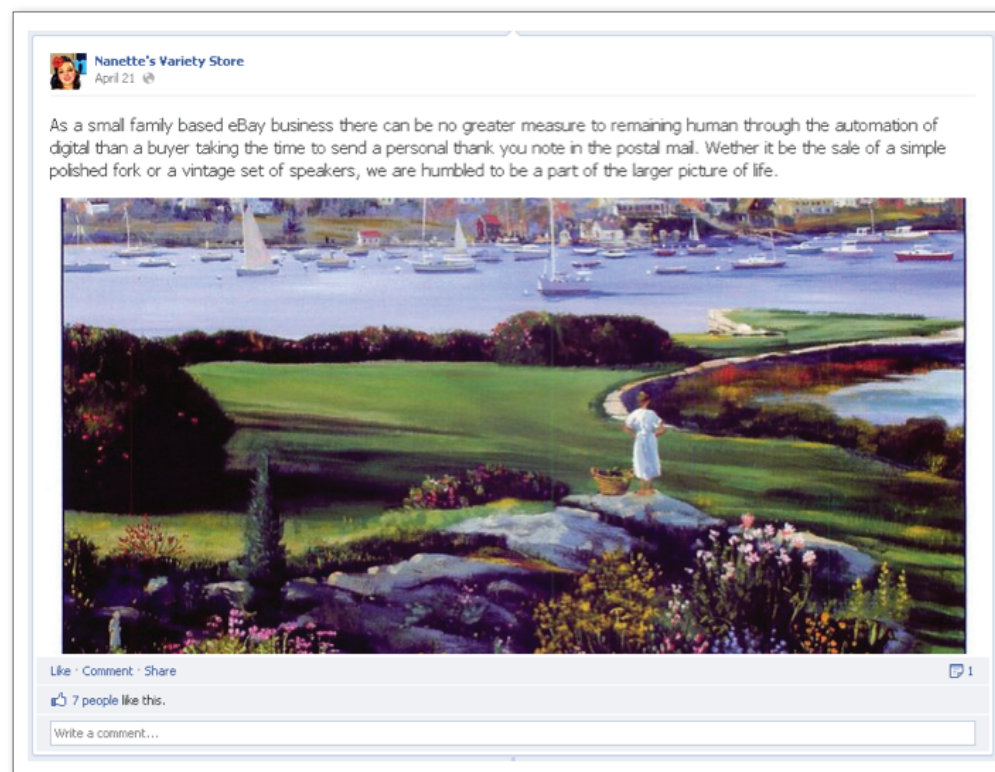
## Lead the community you create

The most successful pages on Facebook continuously produce content that fuels their fans' passions. Users are engaged, and your brand is top of mind when it comes to a purchasing decision. Encourage sharing of images and video of your products in use, and share exciting news about your business with your fans. While you should strive to give your business personality, remember this is not your personal profile, and your business page is public. It is a good idea to always read your posts twice before updating.

## Create Visual Posts

Visual posts, or posts with a photo or video are by far the most engaging posts on Facebook. Make sure the majority of your posts are visual. When adding an image or link, you can edit the description information. If you want the user to click a link, give them a reason to click.

eBay seller **nanettestore** with an image their fans can Like, comment on and share



# Facebook Best Practices



## Monitor your page and respond to messages or wall posts

Fans can now send your business direct messages, as well as post to your Wall. Make sure comments and inquiries are responded to promptly. Remember your page is public, and the way you respond will be viewed by potential and current customers.

## Don't just measure page Likes

When measuring the success of your Facebook page, Likes are important. But if you want your posts to be seen in users' News Feed (where the majority of Facebook viewing takes place) you will need to focus on engagement levels. Facebook measures fan activity including clicks, likes, shares, comments, and more to assign an Edgerank score. Simply put; the higher the Edgerank score, the more likely your post shows up on a user's News Feed. For the highest Edgerank, be sure that posts are relevant, thoughtful, and simple. Posts with the highest engagement will make answering, clicking, or sharing easy. For example, a business that sells coffee mugs could use a formula for Likes or Comments, with an image of a steaming cup of coffee, and text "Click Like if you drink a cup of coffee every morning" or "I take my morning coffee with \_\_\_\_\_"

## Promote your special events

When you have a special sale or promotion, let your fans know about it. Try to keep the ratio of engaging content to promotion posts around 8:1. Provide a link to fans that take them to a custom page in your eBay store describing the sale, or a custom search of your items, or a particular item.



TWITTER

# Twitter Best Practices



## Setup your profile

Add your business logo for your profile picture. The image should be square and the maximum file size is 700k. You can also brand and cross promote using the background of the page. Remember, across all of your networks to keep your colors, fonts, and names consistent. There is not a specific background size for twitter, but using a 66 pixel wide band for cross promotions or messaging will work for most Twitter users. For the background image, use an 800k or less .png format image for less picture loss and sharper characters. And of course, include your eBay Store URL in your bio.

## Know the terms

Every social network has its own vocabulary. The key terms on Twitter are:

- Tweet: An update or post from a user consisting of 140 characters or less. The post can include links to images, videos, webpages, or anything else.
- @: The @ symbol is a way of referring to another Twitter user
- Reply (or mention): Using the @ symbol directly in front of another users name will notify the user, and provide a link to the users profile.
- Retweet, or RT. The new version directly reproduces another user's tweet on your profile and to your followers. The old version quotes the original tweet, and allows you to add commentary.
- Direct Message, or DM. A private message between users. In order to send a private message, the recipient must be following the sender.
- Follower: While Facebook requires that all relationships be reciprocal, Twitter allows for one-way relationships. If you find Twitter users who are interesting, you can "follow them" to subscribe to their tweets. They do not necessarily have to follow you back, though the more social users will want to follow you back.
- Hash Tags or #: Hash tags are words or acronyms that begin with the number sign. They are used when many people are tweeting about the same topic or from the same event. At least one hash tag is often atop Twitter's trending topics list. To track what the different hash tags are about you can use a tool such as **Hashtags.org**, which tracks tags by popularity over time.

A full list of terms and best practices can be found at <https://business.twitter.com/en/basics/what-is-twitter>

# Twitter Best Practices



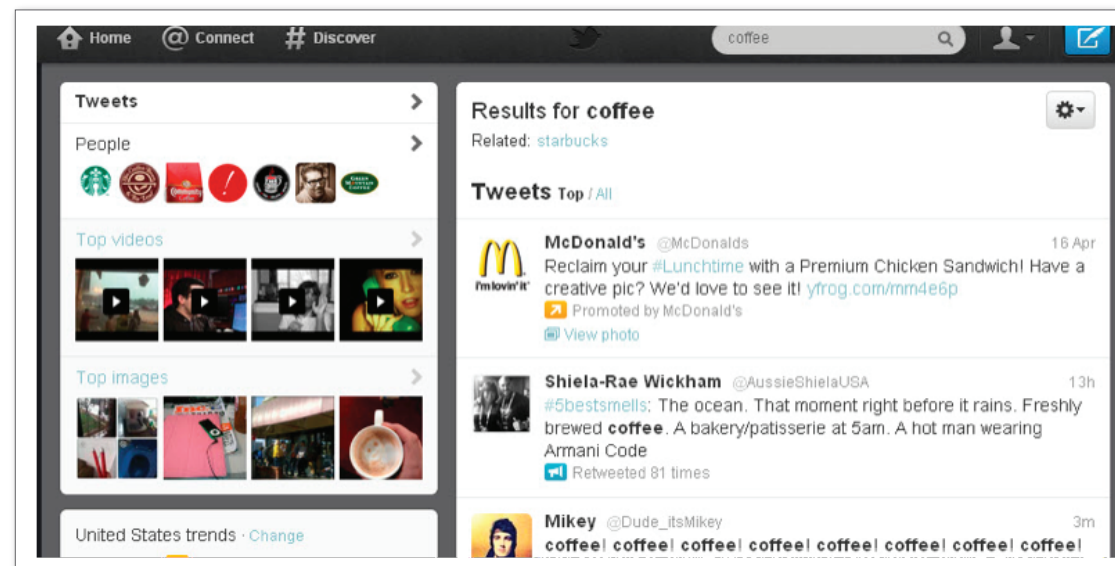
eBay seller **vipfanclubs** thanking a follower for retweeting a post

## Twitter mining

Twitter offers a search function for all public tweets, and chances are someone is discussing something that is relevant your business.

Twitter mining is a great way to follow, interact, and re-tweet influential leaders in your field. It is also a good way to find users with similar interests.

For example, if you sell coffee mugs, search for keywords related to coffee, and follow or interact with the users.



A search for coffee reveals tweets including the word coffee, people who tweet about coffee, images and videos related to coffee, and possibly a promoted tweet.

# Twitter Best Practices



## Keep it short and sweet

Twitter allows 140 characters per tweet to share your message. Edit your tweet until you fit the constraints, and be cognizant of your language. Any language shortcuts reflect the professionalism of your brand. Too much shorthand and your followers may say C U L8R.

## Provide updates

Have a special listing ending soon? Let followers know by giving them an update that shares your expiring auction. Don't be spammy. Be selective or run the risk of unfollows.



eBay Seller **neldasvintageclothing** reminding followers of an auction out to end

## Provide answers

Buyers will often research the brands they buy from first on Twitter and the responses will gauge the user's confidence level in making the transaction. Every interaction is public, so make the most of it.

## Learn and connect

People use Twitter to find the latest stories, photos, and news from the subjects they are most interested in. Establish yourself as an industry expert and interact with your peers and anyone with a passion for your industry. Your standing in the industry gives your buyers confidence.

PINTEREST

# Pinterest Best Practices

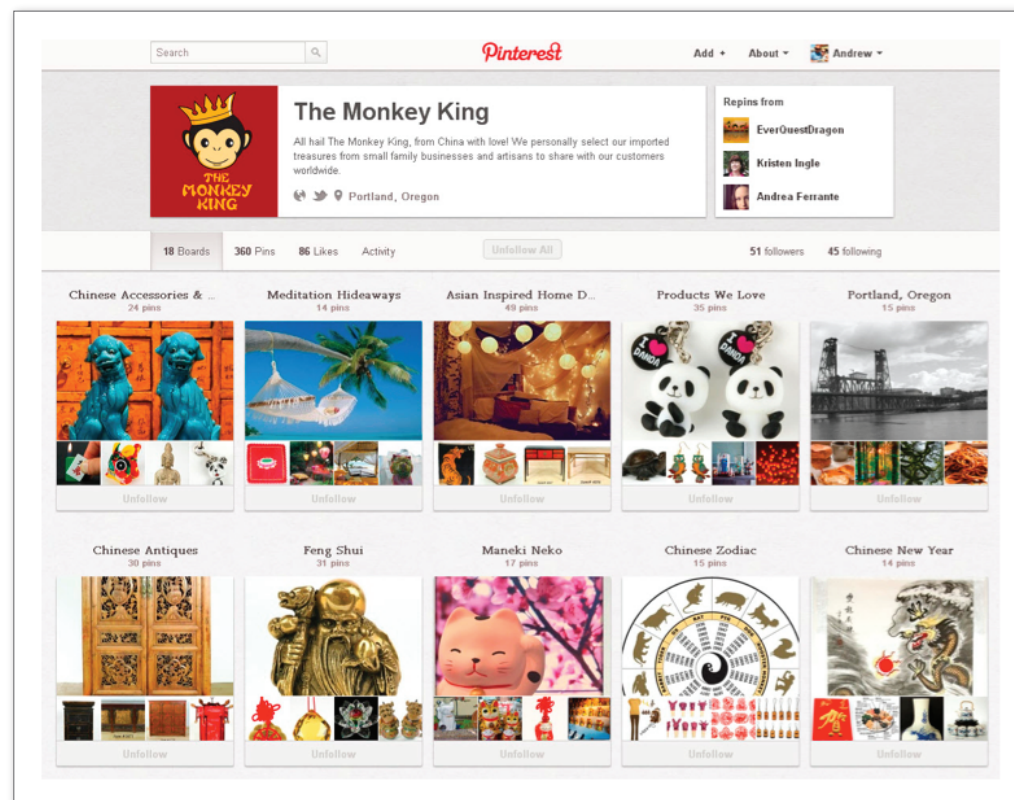
## Sign up

Although Pinterest does not currently offer open registration, you can request an invite at <http://pinterest.com/landing>. If you have a friend on Pinterest, personal invites allow for even quicker registration. Invites can be sent from <http://pinterest.com/invites>. Keep in mind Pinterest requires new users to sign up with a Facebook or Twitter account.

## Create multiple boards that represent your brand's essence

Give each board you set up a title, a description including any relevant links, and a Pinterest Category. Remember not to be pushy, rather express the interests of your brand and the interests of your customers. The pins should include some of your most interesting eBay items, and other collections from around the web. You can also set the cover photo for each of your boards, so make sure you choose a pin that will make users want to see more.

eBay seller  
**themonkeykingnw**  
with categorized  
boards displaying  
the tastes of  
the business



# Pinterest Best Practices

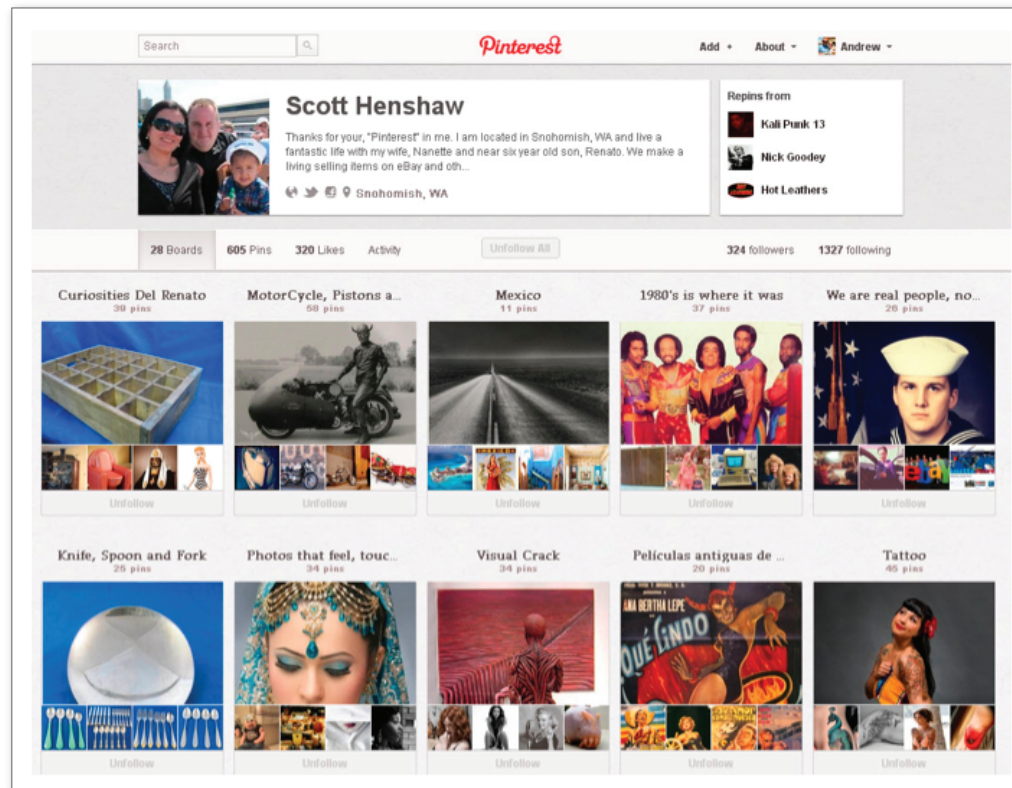
## Be Social

Following other Pinners and brands that compliment your brand's essence can improve trust and credibility with current and future customers. Repin, Like, and comment to show you are part of the community and increase your own reach.

## Be subtle. Don't over self promote

Ideally, you will have content to share that is interesting to your customers. Some examples are pinning from a how-to post on your blog, or pins from stories or news relevant to your industry. You can even pin videos from YouTube and Vimeo. It is good to include some of your eBay store items to share, as well as other items. The key is to avoid overwhelming your followers while providing tastemaking content.

eBay seller **Scott Henshaw** shows his brands interests have a range.



# Pinterest Best Practices

## Use your toolkit

Pinterest offers “goodies” including a “Pin It” button bookmarklet for each major internet browser. Simply click the bookmarklet when you want to pin something while viewing a webpage. When pinning, always choose the largest version of the image you want to share. You can also upload images directly to Pinterest. Add a description that lends itself to repins to see the most virality. And remember when sharing from eBay to use the built in sharing button.



## Be careful with the \$

When you include a \$ and price in the description of a pin, 2 things happen.

- The item gets a pricing banner with the price indicated
- The pin shows up in the gifts section of Pinterest

According to **a Mashable study**, if you are a brand and use the \$, you are less likely to get a re-pin. Selective use of the \$ is okay, but keep in mind that any pricing adjustments on an item are not reflected on Pinterest. Except in rare cases, it is best not to use the \$ as a brand or retailer.

## Be timely

Pinterest displays newsfeeds chronologically, so pin at regular intervals. Don't go overboard, as rapid fire pins will fill a users feed, and might result in unfollows. Ideally, pin a few items throughout the day.

## Be informative

If you have a blog, pin an image from your blog post and link it to the blog. You can share a short extract as well to give users a reason to click thru. The same applies to interesting or special listings on eBay. Be selective by choosing your most interesting items with the best images to generate traffic from Pinterest.





**BLOGGING**

# Blogging Best Practices

## Choose your platform

3 of the most common blogging platforms online are **Tumblr**, **Blogger**, and **Wordpress**. If your content is mostly short form, and image or video heavy, consider using Tumblr. If your content is longer, and includes how-to's, or reviews, consider Wordpress or Blogger. Wordpress is the most robust option of the three, and Blogger works with a Google account.

eBay seller **MLSolar**  
created this  
informative blog  
using Wordpress



Each of these options have mobile and web apps available, and all have strong SEO presence in their architecture. Develop your own engaging style of writing and make your blog posts friendly, welcoming, and informative about the area you're blogging about (e.g., classic Hollywood movies, sports collectibles, knitting, etc).

# Blogging Best Practices



## Establish yourself as an expert

Blogging consistently and knowledgeably establishes you as an expert in your area. Blogging also raises your visibility in search engines, so more people can find your eBay business online. Post informed and well-researched opinions.

## Content. Content. Content.

Photo and Video. The social media and blogging space is incredibly visual. Include quality photos, and videos that include demos, reviews, tutorials, etc. Also, be sure to fill out all of the structured data when hosting your videos at YouTube that relate to your video. A blog helps you provide more detailed information about your products and your excellent customer support. Photos and videos are a visual way of expressing your business qualities.

eBay seller **vipfanclubs** links content relevant to their customers interests to their items at auction on eBay



# Blogging Best Practices



## Devote each blog post to a specific topic

Don't cram everything you know about your subject into one blog post. Craft each post to one (or a few) aspects of your field. Plan and schedule the blog posts for regular updates to keep your content fresh and relevant. Target at least once a week for your own content, and link to other thought leaders in your industry during the week.

## Cross Promote

Don't forget to cross-promote your blog and social media channels. When you update your blog, post a small excerpt and image on Facebook letting your fans know about the new post. Do the same on Twitter. And pin an image from your post on one of your Pinterest boards, and provide a link back to your blog.

eBay Seller **nanettestore** offers a blog built on Wordpress that includes blog content and cross promotion of their other social media channels

