



## eBay Study: Small Businesses Selling Online Export More

JOC Staff | Oct 24, 2012 4:21PM EDT

A study recently released by [eBay](#) found that 97 percent of commercial sellers, mostly small businesses, list their products on eBay export, with more than 80 percent of them exporting to five or more foreign countries, signifying that the Internet and mobile technologies enable small businesses and entrepreneurs to participate in [global trade](#).

In contrast, 4 percent of offline businesses export, with 14 percent of those exporters selling to five or more countries.

eBay recommended that U.S. policymakers enable small merchants further by improving delivery services, reducing customs complexity and creating innovative trusted trader programs.

[http://www.joc.com/international-trade-news/ebay-study-small-businesses-selling-online-export-more\\_20121024.html](http://www.joc.com/international-trade-news/ebay-study-small-businesses-selling-online-export-more_20121024.html)



### Best Practices

#### International Selling

Selling internationally is a growing trend among eBay sellers. Here are some suggestions to help you create more international appeal for your products, minimize questions from international buyers and improve your ratings.

##### Describing your item

- **Provide global sizes and other product specifications when available.** Include foreign sizes for clothing and provide measurements in metric units. Some electronics and media may not work in all countries due to differences in voltage, plugs, or formats. Offer this information prominently in your listings to avoid confusion or buyer dissatisfaction and avoid listing your item in countries where the item will not work.
- **Clearly state any international limits to your return policy or warranties.** For example, if you don't cover international return postage or have specific warranty limitations, spell it out in your listing and other communications.
- **Research trade restrictions.** may not be legal to trade your item in some countries or you may need a special license, especially for [foods](#), [weapons](#) and some branded items. Please review eBay's policies on [prohibited and restricted items](#) items as well as the [UPS Import/Export](#) and the [USPS International Mail Manual](#) for more information.

##### Communicating

- Be clear about international response times. Mention in your communication policy that it may take a day longer to respond to buyers in different time zones. Use the [Time Zone Converter](#) to help customers gauge your business day.

- **Communicate more with your international buyers.** Go the extra mile and make sure your communications address common concerns such as shipping time. Consider having a special email & FAQs for your international customers.
- **Emphasize your international experience.** International buyers are looking for sellers who are experienced with international selling. If you have expertise in selling to certain markets or specialize in any international services, make this clear in your listing.
- **Include an international section in your listing.** Presenting your international trade, shipping and other details in one easy-to-find, prominent area can help attract more buyers, minimize confusion, and help with a smooth transaction.
- **Take care with your terminology and avoid slang.** Keeping your descriptions clear and simple makes it easier for your international buyers to understand and translate.

## Shipping time and charges

- **Specify shipping destinations and rates.** Be clear about the specific regions or countries you ship to, and your international shipping costs, in the "Shipping Details" section of your listing. Use eBay's [Global Shipping Calculator](#) to make country-specific pricing easier and more visible. Listings with shipping costs specified in the Shipping details have higher conversion rates and receive better detailed seller ratings (DSRs) for shipping and handling costs and shipping time.
- **Explain customs, duties & tax responsibilities.** Let international buyers know they may be responsible for customs fees and experience longer shipping times due to customs-related delays. Let them know they can find more help with customs forms from the carrier site.
- **Represent the value of the item (closing price) accurately on customs forms.** And don't mark an international item as a gift on [customs forms](#). It's against the law.
- **Offer multiple shipping services.** Some buyers will pay more for fast, trackable service, while other buyers may prefer a longer shipping time to save money. Offering a trackable service can dramatically improve the customer experience, especially for international buyers. Tracking can provide an extra layer of protection on higher priced goods. Buyers feel more confident when you provide them with an electronic delivery confirmation, which is required for PayPal's Seller protection program.

## Other international trade best practices

- **Use PayPal for international payments.** With coverage against unauthorized charges in over 190 countries, PayPal makes international payments safer than ever.
- **List on eBay sites in multiple countries.** While international buyers often come to the U.S. site to buy, they are also often browsing other eBay sites for the item. Listing in all your main trading markets gives you greater exposure and more bidding activity. Your eBay ID works on all eBay sites, and PayPal allows you to list in 17 currencies. When selling across borders, be aware of [country regulations](#) and restrictions.
- **Communicate about customs.** Make sure all your international listings include a [clear message](#) to buyers about their responsibility for customs fees. If you include this message, eBay will remove negative or neutral Feedback given on those listings due to customs delays or fees. Please make sure you read and follow the [requirements for this message](#) so that you are fully protected.

<http://pages.ebay.com/sellerinformation/sellingresources/sellinginternationally.html>