

# REACHING OUT

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS IS A GREAT WAY  
TO LEARN WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW  
ABOUT STARTING A BUSINESS ON EBAY.

BY JANELLE ELMS

**W**ith so many people using eBay to build their businesses, you have a huge network to draw from when you need to learn more about eBay. “eBay education is a never-ending process; we like to refer to it as the ‘yellow brick road;’” says David Hardin, eBay Platinum PowerSeller and 60-year-old founder of Shoetime (eBay User ID: shoetime), a Mayfield, Kentucky, business that sells designer shoes. “As one learns more about the world of eBay and its constant evolution, one learns new ways to use these new tools to create new business opportunities.”

Connecting with other sellers and experts inside eBay is a great way to boost your knowledge of the different solutions, tools and opportunities eBay has to offer. If you find the world of eBay to be intimidating at first, don’t worry. It’s easy to find what you’re looking for, and there are a multitude of helpful resources right within reach. You just need to know where to look.



**The not-so-hard sell:**  
Gold PowerSellers Harvey Levine and Marcia Cooper take advantage of the wealth of tools available to eBay sellers.



▼ **EBAY COMMUNITY:** Ten years ago, eBay was founded on a sense of community, and your eBay journey will show you that the community can assist in your success. By clicking “Community” at the top of any eBay page, you’ll find numerous options for networking with other eBay members. A few of these sections include:

● **DISCUSSION BOARDS:** From feedback to dolls, PayPal to sports cards, eBay’s discussion boards are a great place to connect about almost anything.

● **GROUPS:** eBay Groups are similar to the discussion boards, but many are created by members of the community. Are you a 1972 Miami Dolphins fan? Do you collect frogs? Would you like to talk to other stay-at-home moms from New Jersey who sell on eBay? eBay Groups will help you connect with other members with common interests and goals. (For tips on setting up your own group, see “Fast Friends” on page 25.)

● **ANSWER CENTER:** Have a question or want to share some information you found helpful? The Answer Center on the eBay Community page is for member-to-member assistance. Topics include eBay Stores, international trading, packaging, shipping, policies and more.

● **WORKSHOPS:** These board events are a must for any new or seasoned eBay seller. The workshops—presented online in a discussion format by experts from eBay and the community, as well as by Certified Providers—cover a wide variety of topics. If you can’t make the live workshop discussion, don’t worry: eBay has kept transcripts of all the workshops since late 2003, so you won’t miss out.

▼ **EBAY UNIVERSITY:** Learn from eBay experts and network with other eBay novices and experienced users at these educational events. eBay University ([www.ebay.com/university](http://www.ebay.com/university)) tours the U.S. educating sellers of all levels. “Sellers who start out by attending an eBay University seminar are generally more confident when they list their first item,” says Jim “Griff” Griffith, dean of eBay Education. “This confidence, along

with the tips and instruction they receive during the seminar, help assure greater and faster initial success, both in the listing process as well as in garnering bids and new customers.” If you can’t make it to a live session, classes on the topics of Selling Basics and Beyond the Basics are available on both DVD and CD-ROM, allowing you to learn in the comfort of your own home. For more information, visit <http://pages.ebay.com/education/ebayuniversity> online.

## LEARN TO TEACH

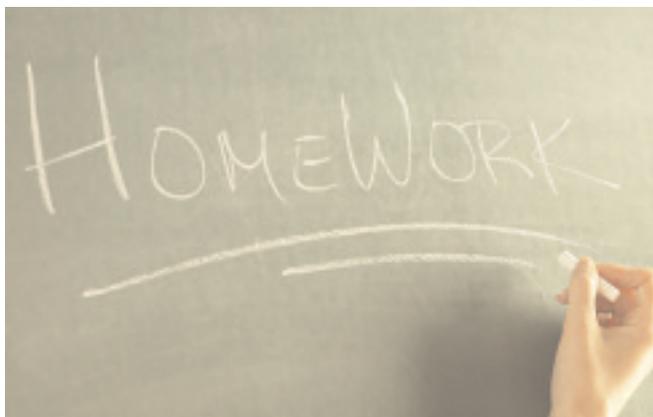
Would you like to teach others how to buy and sell on eBay? eBay will not only train you, but will also provide you with up-to-date course materials, including eBay-approved Student Guides to teach individuals and groups.

Upon registering at [www.poweru.net/ebay](http://www.poweru.net/ebay), you’ll receive the “Basics of Selling on eBay” welcome package, which includes your instructor’s manual and an eBay University CD. Next, an online course will show you how to teach this class. Upon finishing the course, you’ll receive a certificate, student materials and be allowed to use the official “Education Specialist trained by eBay” logo. eBay also assists you with your marketing efforts by providing you with advertisements in the Education Specialist online directory, links on the eBay University pages, and even a private Education Specialist discussion group that includes tips on running a successful teaching business. Once you’re officially trained by eBay and have met certain criteria, you’ll be eligible to learn to teach other courses, such as “Beyond the Basics,” “Buying on eBay” and the popular holiday courses.

The cost is \$149, which includes the training, instructor’s manual, CD, use of the official Education Specialist logo and a listing in the online directory.

▼ **EBAY LIVE!** Every year, thousands of eBay community members come together for a three-day celebration of all that is eBay. This ultimate eBay networking event includes valuable business resources, extensive education programs and an opportunity to meet both eBay users and eBay employees. At last year’s eBay Live! in San Jose, more than 160 eBay classes were taught. eBay has added a Networking Center to this year’s event that will include speed networking, networking breakout sessions, short presentations and more. Mark this year’s eBay Live! on your calendar now to get in on the fun, excitement and educational opportunities. eBay Live! ([www.ebay.com/ebaylive](http://www.ebay.com/ebaylive)) 2006 will be in Las Vegas at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center from June 13-15.

▼ **EDUCATION SPECIALIST PROGRAM:** If you’re craving interaction with other eBay users who are at a similar level, you can usually find an Education Specialist class in your area. Education Specialists are armed with the most up-to-date information about eBay, and they’ve been specially trained by eBay to teach you how to sell.



“eBay is a road with no speed limit, no stop signs and many forks in the road that will take you on amazing paths,” says eBay PowerSeller and Education Specialist Marcia Cooper, 70. Marcia and her partner, Harvey Levine, 66, are eBay buyers, Gold PowerSellers, Trading Assistants and owners of General Enterprises (eBay User ID: generalent), a Fort Lee, New Jersey, company that sells an eclectic mix of items, from concert tickets to antiques to designer clothing. With one of the top U.S. Education Specialist ratings, these five-star educators teach other eBay members how to buy and sell on the site. To find an Education Specialist in your area, go to [www.poweru.net/ebay/student/search/index.asp](http://www.poweru.net/ebay/student/search/index.asp). (To learn how to become an Education Specialist, see “Learn to Teach” at left.)

▼ **EBAY DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE:** The eBay Developers Conference brings the eBay and PayPal developer communities together to talk about new ways to make the eBay marketplace better. Whether you’re just getting started, you’re looking for innovative ways to enhance or launch an application, or you’re ready to dive into advanced application development, this unique event will help prepare you for success.

The agenda includes inspiring keynotes, in-depth technical and business sessions, hands-on labs with advance access to new tools and technology, and plenty of opportunities to exchange information and ideas with your fellow innovators. This year’s eBay Developers Conference will be held June 10-12, 2006, at the Mandalay Bay Hotel in Las Vegas. For more information, visit [www.ebaydevcon.com](http://www.ebaydevcon.com).

▼ **EBAY DEVELOPERS FORUMS AND EBAY COMMUNITY CODEBASE:** There are two online ways to get more involved with the eBay developer community 24/7. The eBay Com-

munity Codebase ([www.codebase.ebay.com](http://www.codebase.ebay.com)) is intended to help software developers collaborate on creating open source applications using eBay Web Services. “We hope to encourage new ideas, and [to] make developing with the eBay and PayPal [application program interfaces] faster, easier and more cost effective for members of our program,” says Greg Isaacs, director of the eBay Developers Program. Using the Codebase, members can browse current projects, download code, and join a project using their eBay Developers Program User ID.

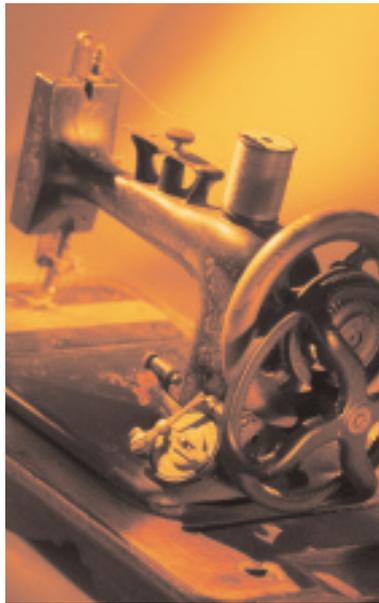
Also, there are bulletin boards called eBay Developer Forums at [www.developer.ebay.com/help/forums](http://www.developer.ebay.com/help/forums). These forums allow developers to share knowledge and ask questions about building applications using eBay Web Services. Once you’re an eBay Developers Program member, you can visit the forums for lively discussions about new technology or to get valuable technical support from fellow program members.

▼ **TRADE SHOWS:** A great way to meet both eBay employees and eBay users selling in a similar category is to attend trade shows in your industry. eBay goes to scores of trade shows throughout the year, many of which include classes that are specific to selling within a certain category. For a list of trade show locations and other eBay events, go to <http://pages.ebay.com/community/events>.

▼ **REVIEWS & GUIDES:** This new section of eBay (<http://reviews.ebay.com>) allows you to read comments and ratings of specific products written by eBay members. Are you passionate about something? Write a review or a guide, and share your knowledge with the community. Guides, usually written by experts, collectors and eBay members, include topics such as “Introduction

## FAST FRIENDS

Want to share your stitching love with other collectors of antique sewing machines, help mentor new eBay community members about shipping, or simply be with other people whose eyes don’t glaze over when you talk endlessly about eBay? Start your own eBay group by following these easy steps:



- Go to [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com).
- Click on the “Community” button.
- Click on “Groups.”
- Sign in to enter.
- On the right side of the page, click “Start Group.”

eBay will ask you for the name of the group, its description, whether you want the group to be public or private, if the group will meet in the real world, and for a charter specific for your group. Upon becoming moderator of your unique group, you’ll be allowed to invite members and create polls, event calendars, photo albums, discussions and announcements.

to eBay Shipping,” “Buying and Selling for Charity on eBay” and “Seller’s Guide to Researching Your Market.”

▼ **EBAY RADIO:** Made famous by Griff, eBay Radio is offered at various times daily at [www.wsradio.com](http://www.wsradio.com). Featured guests always include eBay experts, and you can interact during the call-in portions of the show. If you miss the live show, you can listen to the archives at [www.wsradio.com/internet-talk-radio.cfm/shows/eBay-Radio.html](http://www.wsradio.com/internet-talk-radio.cfm/shows/eBay-Radio.html).

▼ **DOUA:** The Disabled Online Users Association ([www.doua.org](http://www.doua.org)) helps bring tools, support, guidance and technology to the disabled. “Our goal at DOUA is to help the differently abled become self-sufficient and independent,” says Marjie Smith, founder and executive director of DOUA. “If you’re disabled and would like to start your own online business,

we can help.” The DOUA Training Center includes students, mentors and volunteers, forming a community of education.

▼ **PESA:** As your success takes you to the very top, there’s another community you may want to join: the Professional eBay Sellers Alliance ([www.gopesa.org](http://www.gopesa.org)) Though the organization is not associated with eBay Inc., members represent more than 70 million eBay transactions and \$1 billion in eBay gross merchandise volume annually. PESA member Hardin says the learning never stops. “My advice to those who choose the eBay way to make a living is to look at eBay as a vehicle, but you will have to learn to apply the gas, hit the brake, keep a trunk full of merchandise and, most of all, remember the steering wheel is continuously turning down your own yellow brick road.” ■