



Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Feedback on eBay



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An important part of successful selling on eBay is the feedback you receive from your sales. Feedback has been an important part of eBay's ethos since the company's launch back in 1995. Customer feedback builds trust on the platform, highlights retailers that offer a genuine, great service, as well as draws attention to sellers that may have caused issues for buyers in the past. We're even seeing this type of feedback model become more prominent on retailers' own brand websites, with the introduction of product reviews.

One of the most powerful ways to persuade shoppers to convert is by including clear and highly visible product reviews. Feedback on eBay works in the same way — though, granted, it's more complicated than general product reviews. If you get your products, price and service right, customers will respond with their positive experiences. If the buying process doesn't go well, customers will highlight the negatives in a highly visible forum.

This white paper will walk you through the steps you need to take to make sure you're using eBay's feedback metrics to your advantage. Along the way, we'll give you some advanced tips and recommendations to help you boost your feedback on this important e-commerce channel.

HOW DOES EBAY FEEDBACK WORK?

For each transaction made on eBay, a buyer gets the chance to leave a positive, neutral or negative score with a small comment about their shopping experience.

For each positive response you receive, one point will be added to your feedback score. For any neutral feedback, you get zero, and negative posts deduct one point. These points are then calculated as an overall percentage of your transactions to give you your feedback metric.

As you're building up your feedback numbers, your feedback star will also change. eBay allocates a coloured star to different levels of ratings, indicating the retailers that have built up a large amount of feedback and have a long history of selling on eBay.

These stars and customer ratings are the 'visible' part of leaving feedback. The other part of leaving feedback involves detailed seller ratings (DSRs). As of 20 August 2014, eBay has moved away from the traditional DSR ratings, to a new measure for transactions called the defect rate. To learn more about this metric and how it affects your business, [check out our eBay Metrics blog post](#).

Star	Colour	Number of ratings
	Yellow	10 to 49
	Blue	50 to 99
	Turquoise	100 to 499
	Purple	500 to 999
	Red	1,000 to 4,999
	Green	5,000 to 9,999
	Yellow shooting star	10,000 to 24,999
	Turquoise shooting star	25,000 to 49,999
	Purple shooting star	50,000 to 99,999
	Red shooting star	100,000 to 499,999
	Green shooting star	500,000 to 999,999
	Silver shooting star	1,000,000 or more

WHY YOU NEED TO KEEP ON TOP OF FEEDBACK

In short, you need to be constantly monitoring your feedback levels because your feedback and defect rate performance are linked directly to your sales performance. Any feedback you get is visible for all shoppers to see. Would you buy from a seller that had multiple instances of negative feedback that mentioned issues with products, delivery times or returns? The better your feedback, the more likely it is that other buyers will feel confident in purchasing from you.

The defect rate (although not visible to buyers) is a key metric linked to your performance on eBay. A defect rate of 2% or below qualifies you for Top Rated Seller status, which will improve your search visibility. You'll also be awarded an eBay Premium Service badge, although you do need to have one-day or same-day dispatch, a 30+ day money back return, a free delivery option, an express delivery option and extended holiday returns to qualify. All these benefits make maintaining your feedback results an important and beneficial task.



5 TIPS FOR PREVENTING NEGATIVE FEEDBACK ON EBAY

1. Educate Your Buyers on Feedback and How to Contact You

Be sure to educate your buyers as they progress through the purchase and post-sale processes. Write a brief piece that explains how important feedback and five-star ratings are to you and that encourages customers to contact you first if they have any issues. You could convey this message in the following places:

- Listing template
- Checkout notification
- Dispatch notification
- Feedback request notification

To add a personalised message to the checkout, dispatch and feedback notifications, go to your eBay account, click on My eBay and navigate to Account > Manage Communication with Buyers.

You should also include this message (or a variation of it) on any paper invoices you send with your parcels. That way, you've notified the buyer on a number of occasions that feedback is important to you, and you've enforced that you're a reachable point of contact for any issues.

By doing this, you're minimising the risk that buyers will leave feedback without contacting you first, thereby giving you the chance to rectify a situation as soon as possible.

2. Make Sure Items Are in Stock

One of the key frustrations for buyers is when they're told that an item they ordered is out of stock. This is more likely to happen if you're running a larger business, perhaps selling your products on multiple platforms. Most customers have no concept of the issues that can arise with stock when selling online. Remember that the number of cancelled transactions you initiate now counts towards your defect rate, so it's important to keep on top of stock levels.

If things do go wrong and you find out that you're out of stock for an order, it's paramount that you notify the buyer as soon as possible and offer an apology and refund right away if appropriate. Quite often, customers don't even know their item is out of stock until they email to query about it. In that case, not only will your cancellation rate be affected, it's likely that the buyer will be incredibly dissatisfied and may then go on to leave negative feedback as well. Trying to appease the buyer and minimise the chance of any further impact is key. These customers have decided to shop with you, so anything you can do to retain them will be beneficial for your business.

3. Work on Your Listings

This may seem obvious, but it really is important that you do as much as you can to make sure your listing is as accurate as possible. You can also reduce issues with this metric by making sure that the items you're selling are of a good quality in the first place.

a. Image

Image is everything when shopping online. The image is the key feature for showcasing the exact product that buyers will receive. Review your listings to make sure that the image is accurate.

Images: What to Avoid

- Inaccurate images
- Stock images from websites
- Incorrect colours — for example, selling a shirt in five colours but showing only an image of the red shirt. Customers need to see all the colours to make a well-informed purchase.
- Copied images from other sellers (you can get reported to eBay for doing this).



- Images that contain other products, such as if you're listing pillowcases but have a picture of the whole bedding set.
- Images that don't accurately depict an item's colour. This can be especially tricky with clothing because of different lighting and fabrics.
- Heavy trademarking or marketing text that obscures the image.
- Poor-quality images that offer no chance to see the finer details.
- Busy/distracting backgrounds.
- Using just one image of your product. Always try to include multiple photos, highlighting different angles and zoom levels.

Remember that a lot of buyers don't scroll past the images and Buy It Now button when browsing on eBay. Your image is likely the one part of the listing that all customers are going to see. Make sure it's an accurate representation of what they could be buying.

b. Title

The title is another important visible selling point of your item. Ensure that your titles accurately describe your products. You might decide to settle on a particular format to make sure key pieces of information are always included. Ask yourself which words are likely to be relevant when buyers scan results. Once you've identified these, you can assess what information you may not need to include. Titles shouldn't include full item descriptions. You can use the space in the product description section of your listing to provide this additional information.

c. Item Condition

It's important that you highlight the condition of your product so that customers are clear on what they're buying. Adding the condition to the title is a good best practice. eBay now has a section in the item condition where you can add further details — make sure you populate this. Item condition is particularly important for refurbished graded products and used items. If an item does have flaws or imperfections, make sure you're making these clear. Also, try to provide pictures of any imperfections, since one person's minor scuff may not be so minor to someone else.

d. Item Specifics

Item specifics are the extra fields that you add to your products to provide more information. Their purpose is twofold. These item specifics make your products searchable for customers using the left-hand filters, as well as share product information details with customers. Make sure that these are accurately populated. While it may take some time to fill in all this information initially, you'll reap the rewards in the long term.

e. Item Descriptions

The item description is the eBay area that offers the most space and flexibility to describe your products. Make sure that you go into greater detail about the item here. Main points to cover are a general overview of the product, key features, condition, material, pricing and what's included in the sale. Again, these will vary depending on the type of products you sell. In addition to describing the product, you can use this section to highlight your other policies, such as shipping times, returns and contact details.

4. Review Dispatch, Postage Time and Costs

Dispatch times and costs are sometimes the most challenging metrics for sellers to address. Plus, they're subjective: Different customers have different expectations of what's acceptable. While sometimes they might just seem like yet more rules that eBay is imposing on sellers, in reality these are offerings that most consumers have come to expect when buying online.

Ideally, you'll need to:

- Offer a free postage option. This can be an economy service if needed.
- Offer an express delivery service.
- Offer a fast and reliable standard postage (three to five working days).
- Offer same-day or one-day dispatch.
- Highlight the latest cut-off for next-day delivery when possible.
- Track all services.



Of course, it's easy to mention all of the above, yet a lot harder to put it all into action. If your business isn't currently in the position to offer these services, then you can still take steps to minimise the risk that customers will leave negative feedback or open cases for items not received:

- Make sure that you manage your customers' expectations. Spell it out and make it clear what your policies are. Be open with your dispatch time, how long shipping will take and how customers can contact you if they have a query.
- If there are known delays, make sure to contact customers to let them know and offer them a refund if they're unhappy.
- If you're away, make sure to turn on holiday settings.

Dispatch and postal time are still the parts of the process that are most likely to lead to dissatisfied buyers. Even with your best efforts to highlight shipping times, a customer still may not be satisfied that the item took five working days to reach them. For this reason, we strongly recommend putting a large emphasis on providing reliable and quick service to customers. If you don't, your competition will — and unfortunately your customers are likely to choose a seller that can offer faster delivery.

It's worth noting that eBay will remove any cases against you for items not received if they were caused by wide-scale delays outside your control, such as flooding or strikes. eBay will also remove cases for which you have a tracking number and can prove that the item was delivered.

Ease and Cost of Returns

Another key concern that buyers have when purchasing online is how easy it will be to return an item if it's found to be unsuitable or faulty.

In your listings and correspondence, make sure that you highlight how a buyer can return an item. If an item is deemed faulty or not as described, you should pay the return cost for the buyer.

eBay is bringing in its own managed returns process that will be compulsory going forward. Read more about the details of that on eBay's site.

To qualify for eBay Premium Service you will need to offer at least a 30-day money back return policy. Make sure that you're flexible on this, depending on customers' needs. Always try to offer an extended returns period for items purchased as gifts around Christmas.

5. Focus on Customer Service

Customer service is the first port of call for many customers when they have a post-purchase query or issue. When a customer contacts you, this is your opportunity to provide the information the customer is looking for, or rectify the situation when something goes wrong.

For Returns, You Should Be Looking To:

- Respond to customers within 24 hours to keep dialogue open.
- Be knowledgeable about the products you're selling so you can offer customers advice pre- or post-purchase.
- Offer a phone number and email address if possible.
- Offer refunds or partial refunds for faulty items or items that were not as described.
- Send out an email about any postal/system delays to keep customers notified.
- Try to personalise responses when possible. Customers can tell if you're giving them a template answer.
- Listen to feedback from customers on what they want. Recount any trends to your wider team so they can implement changes if necessary.
- Contact customers who have left negative or neutral feedback to see what went wrong and whether you can rectify the situation.

Keep in mind that eBay is also there to protect against buyers who are being abusive or leaving threatening feedback. Report those buyers, and eBay should remove their feedback. But overall, you'll likely find that most customers are genuine.



SUMMING IT UP

Feedback is one of the most significant pieces of information that customers are looking for when viewing your eBay listing, so improving and maintaining this metric should be a focus for all eBay sellers. Work hard to offer an exceptional service, regularly review your listings to be sure they're up to date and encourage feedback at all points during the customer journey. Then sit back and watch your feedback levels rise!

For more information on how to improve your eBay sales, you can call us on [1300 887 239](tel:1300887239) or email ausales@channeladvisor.com.