

Title:

3 Million Items and Counting, Bidville Becomes Big Business

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Summary:

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

Since their introduction, online auction sites have been making e-history as some of the most popular destinations on the Internet. From designer-label clothing to grandma's jewelry to cars and even houses, anything and everything imaginable can be auctioned off online.

People who place items for sale on auction sites are attracted to the prospect of building a business from home with no morning traffic jams and little required capital to start. And bidders are drawn to the unique shopping opportunities and the potential to purchase hard-to-find items from all over the world.

Increasingly, buyers and sellers are discovering the unique benefits of using emerging sites rather than the giants of the industry, such as eBay. Bidville.com is one such site that has been quietly gaining momentum in the wake of eBay's ongoing fee increases.

Bidville started in 1999 primarily as a sports card auction site, but began expanding its merchandise base in late 2003 to take advantage of burgeoning market opportunities. Throughout 2004, its membership base increased to nearly 1 million members and the number of items listed daily reached 3 million. In addition, the site now has more than 600 "storefronts" that sell anything from collectibles to electronics at a fixed price.

Bidville markets itself as "the alternative auction site" because it does not charge listing fees. Rather, sellers pay what's called "final success fees"

after their items sell. These fees, at no more than 5 percent of the selling price, are lower than what other sites charge.

So what is the key to Bidville's success? The company is striving to expand its growing community of loyal members and makes it a policy to give them personalized attention. While most auction sites answer questions with an automated reply, Bidville has live customer service representatives who respond to all queries within 24 hours.

In its extensive community section, there is ample opportunity for member interaction via the Member to Member Help Desk, the Bidville Cafe, where members can share stories and make friends, and the Sellers Forum, where members can discuss successful selling tips and offer suggestions for site improvements. A special charity section allows nonprofit organizations to use Bidville to raise money for good causes.