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# New and Evolving Web-based Marketing

## How to Find a Market Outlet for your Wildlife Friendly Products



2009

By Julie Stein and Ann Koontz

# New and Evolving Web-based Marketing – How to Find a Market Outlet for your Wildlife Friendly Products

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# New and Evolving Web-based Marketing – How to Find a Market Outlet for your Wildlife Friendly Products

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## Introduction

This tool provides guidance to accessing web-based and distributor assisted markets for your wildlife friendly and other conservation-based, green products. The underlying assumption in using web-based and/or distributors is that your product is sufficiently developed that you are ready to export the product out of your immediate area. For most producers this means international exporting. International exporting can be complicated and does take a significant investment of time and resources to do it right. When done properly it can create local jobs, support conservation and cultural preservation efforts all while educating consumers on how their practices can contribute to conservation.

## Ready, Set, Go

First you must determine if you are **ready for export**. The text box at the right provides guidance from Aid to Artisans on how to determine if you are ready for export in the handicraft sector. Most of these requirements are also true for non-handicrafts items, with food items having additional phytosanitary requirements. The companion TRANSLINKS publication – *The Conservation Marketing Equation* by EnterpriseWorks/VITA<sup>1</sup> has detailed worksheets and step-by-step guidance to allow you to assess if your products are export ready. If you have any doubt about being export ready, take the time to review these resources.

### **Ready for Export?**

*Aid to Artisans has developed the following checklist through their Market Readiness Program as a self-assessment tool for artisans.*

*You are ready to enter the export market if you have:*

- \*A finished product line that is unique and competitively priced*
- \*The capacity to re-design your product to suit your intended market*
- \*Excess production capacity so you can fill a large order quickly*
- \*Excellent, consistent quality control, even if you increase production*
- \*A bank account*
- \*A functioning record keeping system to track your expenses and income*
- \*Cash reserves, savings, or access to capital to finance your production (buyers rarely pay up front)*
- \*An export license or access to export marketing and logistics expertise*
- \*English speaking personnel with good customer service skills*
- \*Customers and references in the U.S. or outside your native country*
- \*The capacity to survive for two years without making a large profit.*

*Source: <http://www.aidtoartisans.org>*

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<sup>1</sup> The *Conservation Marketing Equation* can be downloaded for free from [www.enterpriseworks.org](http://www.enterpriseworks.org) from the publications section of the website.



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If you have determined you are ready for export, or are in the process of getting ready for export, then you are **set to explore the markets**. This tool has guidance consolidated from the latest ventures and opportunities in the marketplace to help you explore web-based and distributor options. But be aware that green markets are evolving quickly. It is important that you map the sector your products fall into as well as the specialty niche that you are targeting to ensure that you go 'deep' enough into the green niche to reach the buyers most interested in your products. For example, if you have beautiful hand dyed, spun silk yarn, seek out the specialty yarn websites, catalogs, and tradeshow that also are looking to support green practices. This would be in contrast to targeting broader-based handicraft catalogs that might have some yarn, but do not specialize in yarns.

Both fair trade and environmental concerns are strong motivating factors for buyers of your products. With wildlife friendly products made by local producers, you have two important draws for consumers – wildlife and people. Always include your product story that highlights the producers and their conservation and wildlife protection activities. This is a unique attribute of your product and will set you apart from comparable products which lack these rich stories.

For additional guidance on green marketing and reaching green consumers with your wildlife and people story please see the companion tool *"Green Marketing Trends – Guidance for Wildlife Friendly Products to Understand and Access Green Markets"*. If you follow the guidance and do your homework based on the guidance of this and the other two companion tools then you are ready to **go for it** and join the growing selection of wildlife friendly and conservation-based products that are in the marketplace and enriching producers' and consumers' lives.



Customers like to feel a connection to the producers of the products they purchase.  
Photo courtesy of EnterpriseWorks/VITA

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## The Importance of a Website, How to be Highly Visible in a Googlized World

No matter what export markets and outlets you target, in this day and age you must be visible to consumers online. Having your own website is valuable whether you are selling your products directly from your own site or just linking your website to the sites where your products are available for purchase. (E.g. your distributor, retail shops or catalogs that carry your products.) If you do not have the capacity to sell products from your own website, concentrate on a few good web pages that tell your products' stories using compelling pictures. Features pictures of your site, the animals, landscape, people, and your products with clear links to easily direct customers to where they can buy your products. Website maintenance costs have come way down over the years and for minimal budgets you can have a website. A simple well maintained website can be one of your most cost-effective marketing tools.

To get interested consumers to your website, the site needs to be visible to surfers using Google. Why is Google so important? The research firm Hitwise which measures Web audiences, estimates that Google has 72% of the US search engine market, versus 17.9 % for Yahoo. Microsoft's two search services, MSN and Live.com, constitute a distant third, at a combined 5.4 percent. Many website owners who track where their visitors come from report that Google's search engine now refers 80 to 90% of their visitors.<sup>2</sup>

For optimal results on Google you will want your site to show up in the top 20 -30 listed sites, or the first 2-3 pages of results, since most searchers don't look beyond this point unless highly motivated. While Search Engine Optimization is a field of expertise unto itself there are a few things you can do to help Google to find your website.<sup>3</sup>

### **1. Submit your website URL to Google at <http://www.google.com/addurl.html>**

This is probably the slowest and least reliable method to getting consistent results on Google as there may be thousands of sites ahead of your website. Your site is competing with millions of existing sites, and even after submitting your site there is no guarantee Google will list you since this is their least preferred method of finding new sites. While you should not skip this first step, Google would rather discover you on their own. How can you help Google do this? Link to other indexed sites; create good site content; and use popular search terms.

### **2. Link to other sites already indexed by Google**

Another way to get your site listed and to raise your web page's rank is by getting other websites that already show up on Google searches to link to your website. It is

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/22/business/22digi.html>

<sup>3</sup> Advice summarized from [www.showupongoogle.com](http://www.showupongoogle.com)

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important to keep in mind that Google favors the quality of the links over the quantity of links to your site. Once you are linked to some high quality sites when Google's robots or spiders, known as Googlebot, crawl the web, they will follow the link back to your site. If your site content is high quality, your site will get added and you will show up in Google searches. The more popular a site is (and the more a site's content is updated), the more frequently Google comes back to crawl it. The sooner Google comes back to that site, the sooner it will be indexed. At the time of this writing, if you googled "Wildlife Friendly", the Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network (WFEN) website is the first listed by google. The WFEN site also features all the Certified Wildlife Friendly™ enterprises and provides links to each enterprises' website. If your enterprise is also affiliated with well known conservation organizations or other internationally recognized certification programs, be sure to take advantage of website cross linking if available. This will help to boost your visibility in Google searches.

### 3. Create good content on your own site and foster links from quality sites back to your site

Perhaps the best method for showing up on Google is to write an article about a topic related to your site that includes a link back to your site because Google frequently visits article directories in search of new content. Submit your piece to one or several good article directories, and once listed your site will soon be added to Google's index. For a good example of a free online Article Directory see <http://ezinearticles.com/>. You can also submit your website's content directly to Google from <http://www.google.com/submityourcontent/index.html>.



Link your site with sites that already rank high in Google searches.

Image Courtesy of Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network

### 4. Use Google's search based keyword tool

Created for its AdWords program you can learn about the most popular keywords across different categories used by searchers on Google by accessing <http://www.google.com/sktool/#keywords>. For example if you type in *sustainable* Google shows you 800 popular search terms related to *sustainable* and how many times a month searchers are using that term. The top search term related to this keyword is sustainable agriculture with 8,200 monthly searches on Google. If you type in *wildlife* you'll find that wildlife conservation is the top related search term and gets 12,000 monthly searches on Google. When you are designing your website keep these popular search terms in mind and make sure you incorporate the popular search terms in the text portion of your website to increase your chances of Googlers finding you.

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## The Role of Distributors and How to Find One

What does a Distributer do? While Distributers are invisible to most consumers their role is to bridge the geographical gap between producer and retailer. Supermarkets and department stores couldn't exist without a complicated distribution system, capable of moving enormous amounts of product from point A – the producer to point C – the consumer. Distributors add significantly to the cost of the products we buy but they deliver a valuable service in providing access to the marketplace so producers can focus their energies on manufacturing the product.

Distributers transport goods to their warehouses for storage, and then from the warehouses to the retail outlets handling all of the logistics in between including invoicing and collection. However, the producer still has the primary responsibility of selling their products through advertising and promotion. In other words the producer needs to attract retailers and drive them to their distributor. From the retailer's perspective a good distributor provides access to a wide range of products from a single source as well as providing efficient, on schedule, door-to-door delivery in the quantities and mix needed.

Distributors are too often vilified and lumped in with the stereotypical “evil middlemen”. The percentages charged by distributors often appear high, but in reality are most often competitive for the range of services and risk they take in getting the products to market. Thousands of companies, big and small, use distributors every day to efficiently supply their products to a wide range of retailers. Why do they pay these seemingly high percentages to distributors? Because it makes good business sense and allows the enterprise to make a profit and have a specialized firm handle functions it would be hard-pressed to take on in a cost effective manner. So, bottom line, keep an open mind about distributors and explore if you need one and what

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### **Get Comfortable with Distributors**

*Finding a distributor that matches your needs will take some effort, but is worth it in facilitating access to markets that are currently beyond your reach.*

*Start by contacting retailers which sell similar products to yours. Ask the retail manager if they are willing to share who they source their products from; often times it will be a distributor. For example one company found a distributor by asking the end buyer who their preferred distributor was for essential oils*

*Don't be afraid to pick up the phone or send email inquiries to distributors. If a distributor does not express an interest in potentially handling your products, ask him or her for recommendations of other distributors that might be interested.*

*Finally, if you identify a potential distributor and you have not found them through a trusted referral, ask the distributor for references.*

*A distributor is like hiring an employee; you need to feel comfortable with them as well as make sure they are the right match for your company. Take the time to “train” the distributor on your product line and unique story.*

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distributor services would provide you with access to your target markets.

If you are able to sell your products through a good catalog, online outlet, or other type of retailer that is happy to work with you directly, go for it. But, if you find many interested buyers asking, “who is your distributor” and expressing reluctance to take on the direct importing function than you should explore using a distributor for your products. There are several resources you can use to help find a distributor.

The Natural Products Expo series of Tradeshows produces a Distributer Directory online through their publication *The Natural Foods Merchandiser* which is available at: <http://naturalfoodsmerchandiser.com/BrokerDistributorDirectory/tabid/124/Default.aspx> . This Distributor database is searchable by region, retail channel and service provided. Another option is Amazon.com. In 2006 Amazon.com leveraged its existing fulfillment infrastructure<sup>4</sup> to allow vendors to use its network of more than 20 distribution centers around the world to fill orders, including products listed on Amazon's e-commerce rival, eBay. While sellers are effectively paying to ship their goods twice the program is aimed at small online retailers who have filled up the space in their basements and attics but want to avoid buying/renting and managing their own warehouses.<sup>5</sup> You can learn more about the warehousing, packing and shipping services they offer at: <http://www.amazonservices.com/content/fulfillment-by-amazon.htm>

You can also, of course, find a good distributor through a word of mouth recommendation from someone you know and trust. In addition, certain retail outlets may be able to make recommendations to you based on their own positive experiences. For example if you decide to sell products on Worldstock.com they may be able to help match you with a good Distributer from their network based on what type of merchandise you are selling (food, fiber, gifts etc.). Remember, do your homework first before contacting distributors (see ready for export advice and resources above) and treat finding a distributor like you would hiring an employee for a key position in your company.

### Getting the Price Right

As you will see below in the feedback gathered from buyers it is imperative that you get the pricing of your product right both to keep your business viable and profitable and to ensure that you remain competitive to buyers of green products. At each stop along the value chain costs are incurred. Packing, shipping, warehousing, advertising, inventory carrying costs, losses due to theft and breakage, and listing on certain websites all cost money. Some experts advise that you should be prepared for a 600% mark up for

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<sup>4</sup> Fulfillment infrastructure covers the functions that take place once a web order is placed to get the product to the customer – e.g. warehousing the product, shipping, and returns.

<sup>5</sup> You can read more on this Amazon.com venture at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/27/technology/27amazon.html?pagewanted=1&r=1>

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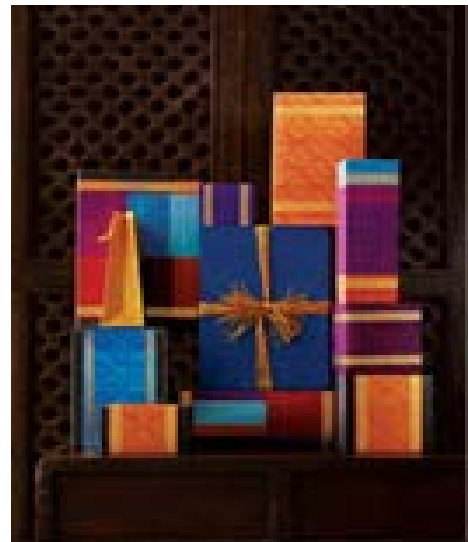


handicrafts from the point of export.<sup>6</sup>

Distributors may take 20% of the sale price of a product for basic services like warehousing, processing and packing and up to a 30% commission for adding website and accounting services.<sup>7</sup> Other sources claim artisans typically only receive 7 to 9% of the final selling price of a handicraft item, if the item is sold at full retail price.<sup>8</sup> What does this mean for producers? It means that if you sell your product for \$5 at your point of production, by the time it is consolidated in country with other producers' goods, warehoused and transported by an exporter, brought in through customs in the receiving country, again warehoused and transported by an importer, transferred to a specialized distributor who also then has warehouse and transport costs in addition to maintaining supply relationships with a wide range of retailers, and finally sold to the final consumer by a retailer who has marketing

costs, and store outlet costs (virtual, catalog, brick and mortar or a combination), the final full retail price can be in the range of \$60 to \$70 U.S. dollars. Yes, it sounds like somewhere in the value chain the producer is being taken advantage of if an item starts out at \$5 and sells for \$60 to \$70. In reality all the value chain functions just add up. For example a common myth is that since retailers have the largest product market up (often 200% to 300% for crafts for example), they must also be making the most money. Not necessarily true since retailers also have the largest business closure rates of all the value chain actors. Retailers have high costs, risks, and stiff competition. One cannot simply look at selling prices without knowing the cost side of the equation.

Experienced buyers in the value chain have these price margins in their head and quickly take a product quote and multiple through to the final



Fairly Traded Paper Products  
Photos courtesy of Aveda

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<sup>6</sup> Personal communication from Dan Salcedo of PEOPLELink, based on guidance he's received from Aid to Artisans.

<sup>7</sup> Personal communication from Kevin Ward of Global Crafts: Gifts with Humanity

<sup>8</sup> Ebay, collected from interviews with TransFair, IFAT, PEOPLELink and other NGOs.

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consumer price to see if it is worth negotiating with a new supplier. You can do research up front by browsing online catalogs and product websites to learn what the end selling prices are for the products you produce. Then work backwards on the overall margins to see what the range will need to be for your product to be competitive in the end market and pay for all the value chain functions between you and the consumer. Price margin examples have been provided for handicraft items, but note that other product lines – food, personal care products, etc. many have different margins. Shipping and warehouse costs tend to be consistent across products, since space is space for these functions. The exception is when climate controlled (e.g. refrigeration) are required during shipping and storage.

Some fair trade labels work to increase the price at the producer level by consolidating some of the functions and negotiating higher margins for the producers. Other approaches emphasize fair wages for work done and a living wage. This means insuring that the producer makes a fair and living wage in the production of the product. This latter approach is more realistic and encourages producers to invest their time and labor in products for which they can be competitive.

### **Direct Mail Catalogs and Online Catalogs**

For communities around the world interested in reaching a global audience with their conservation related products and stories direct mail Catalogs and their online equivalents are an obvious choice. Some recent statistics from the National Mail Order Association (NMOA) and the American Catalog Mailers Association (ACMA) show that the US catalog industry is a \$400+ billion marketplace and is made up of thousands of catalogs some with huge distribution and some which appeal to a specialized niche of the consumer market. Despite the rising costs of printing and mailing catalogs the industry is still growing. Between 2001 and 2006 the annual compounded growth rate for catalog sales was 5.95%, which is 25% more than the growth of brick and mortar retail stores for the same period. Given the current economic conditions, trends in store closings, and the high cost of gasoline this consumer trend is expected to continue.

Who are these catalog shoppers? Again according to the NMOA and ACMA, 49% of all consumers shop from catalogs. Baby boomers (buyers in the 45+ age range) are the most active catalog shoppers, with the 25 - 44 age range ranking second, and 18-24 year olds coming in third. Gender demographics show that 55% of catalog shoppers are women and 45% are men.

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Of the 20 billion catalogs mailed each year approximately 60% are consumer oriented, or business to consumer (B2C) in the industry lingo, 35% are business oriented - business to business (B2B), and 5% are hybrid (B2B/B2C). The most popular catalog product categories are apparel, gifts, books, music, videos, toys and games, electronics, sporting goods, home décor and furniture, gardening, flowers, food, and pet supplies.

While the print catalog industry is worried about the high costs of postage, paper and package delivery, paper catalogs still work well in conjunction with their online retail counterparts sometimes referred to as *webalogs* (i.e. online catalogs). From a sustainability standpoint of course webalogs are also preferable. But at least for now in terms of sales, research shows that these two sales outlets appear to work in concert by moving new and existing consumers into a 'sales funnel' with print catalogs driving more prospects to online purchases by increasing awareness, consideration and actual purchase. The Multi Channel Catalog Study of one million US consumers found that print catalog recipients make 16% more online visits, viewed 22% more pages, and spent 15% more time at the retailer's website.<sup>9</sup>

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### ***Print Catalogs and Online Catalogs a Powerful Combination***

*A Multi Channel Catalog Study of one million US consumers found that if you mail consumers a print catalog:*

*They are twice as likely to make an online purchase*

*They will purchase more often*

*They will spend more on each purchase made on the website*

*They will spend more meaningful time at your website*

*They are more likely to purchase online with greater catalog frequency*

*For wildlife friendly enterprises using product sales to support conservation and communities, it is important to be able to utilize both print and online catalogs (webalogs) successfully in order to reach global consumers.*

*Photo courtesy of EnterpriseWorks/VITA*



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<sup>9</sup> Statistics from The Multi-Channel Catalog Study conducted by comScore Networks for the US Postal Service. Summary of results available from: <http://www.marketingsource.com/articles/view/2254>.



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### Guidance from Catalog Buyers: How to Get Your Products into Print or Online Catalogs (Webalogs)

Where and how do catalog and weblog buyers find new products? What are they looking for? What is the 'psychographic' of the average consumer for these catalogs and products? When is the best time of year to approach them? These are questions we asked in interviews with print and online catalogs to consolidate general guidance for projects around the world that could benefit from accessing these markets.

Catalogs are always looking for the next new big thing to keep ahead of their competition. And green products are the next new big thing so wildlife friendly and other related products are on the cutting edge

already of what these companies are seeking to motivate shoppers to spend money in challenging economic times.



Wildlife Friendly is on the cutting edge of what motivates shoppers to spend money.

Photo courtesy of EnterpriseWorks/VITA

How can you ensure these companies discover your products? Some catalog buyers, as well as many retail store buyers, rely on the convenience of trade shows as a one stop shopping place for their products and trade shows can be a wonderful venue not only for you to showcase your products to potential buyers but also because they offer a variety of training and networking opportunities. The Natural Products Expo series of trade shows offers both the Distributer Matching Service, mentioned above, and a Global Business Training Program free to participants at its trade shows. See Additional Resources Section for more information. The Santa Fe International Folk Art Festival, which is the largest international folk art festival in the world, offers an Artists' Training Program sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Artists participating in these workshops learn about pricing; packaging, shipping and invoicing for export; working

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with importing partners; and displaying their products. Presenters range from economic development professionals to gallery and shop owners, educators and business consultants. There are similar trade shows for foods and beverages including the Fancy Foods Show and Tea and Coffee Trade Show held annually. Please see the Additional Resources Section for more information on these and other relevant trade shows.

Other retailers would rather save the time and money spent on trade shows and have sellers with wonderful products contact them directly via email so that they can concentrate on ‘minding the store.’ If you decide to contact retailers directly be sure to send excellent photos and pricing information. All of the retailers we spoke to stressed the importance of *the story behind the product*. The stories of your products, your producers and the species you are working to conserve are very important in building a relationship with green consumers. (Please see TRANSLINKS publication - *Green Marketing Trends Tool* for more information on Telling Your Sustainability Story and building long term relationships with consumers.) A large segment of the shoppers seeking green products are educated women of upper middle class income between the ages of 25-50 so have these consumers in mind when developing and marketing your product. The importance of quality cannot be over-emphasized. Some buyers expressed disappointment in the quality of product packaging and presentation, product quality and design, product hygiene, and expressed that many producer groups around the world need training on standards related to these issues for the international consumer markets.

Catalog buyers also stress the importance of reliable and consistent communication between buyers and sellers around the world. Do your best to be available and responsive via email, Skype, or phone to potential buyers. Try to maintain a policy of replying to inquiries and correspondence within 24-48 hours if possible. Along the same lines buyers are sympathetic to a point about seasonality of materials, the limitations of sustainably produced items and the resulting lead times, but it is

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### **Trade Shows**

#### ***How to Shop the Show***

*Trade Shows offer a tremendous opportunity to gather market information and make contact with buyers. But, if you do not prepare and make a plan before attending a trade show, the experience can be overwhelming. The larger trade shows will have thousands of attendees and hundreds of booths.*

*But, managed properly a day spent at a trade show can provide you with market information and contacts that could take weeks to gather outside a trade show. You will see how competitors package, label, and price their products. You will learn how conservation, sustainability and fair trade messages are presented to consumers. You can talk directly with potential buyers.*

*First, research which trade shows might fit your product lines. This guide offers several suggestions, but there are many more. Second, sign up on the tradeshow websites to receive notices on dates, education events and admittance discounts. Third, plan to have a representative of your company attend a show first before investing thousands of dollars to have a booth. Fourth, use the shop the show guide found in Annex A to make the most of attending the trade show and have fun!*

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important to strive to have product in stock and ready to be shipped so that you don't lose sales and buyers. Be transparent about seasonal availability and ordering lead times if this is a true constraint for your enterprise and product line.

Never ignore an email because you don't understand the inquiry or the buyer is expressing a complaint. Answer promptly, ask for clarification when needed, offer remedies (replacement product, refund, discount on next purchase to make up for an ordering inconvenience, etc.), and if appropriate an apology. Buyers do not expect a perfect ordering and product experience 100% of the time, but they do expect reputable sellers to own up to their mistakes and offer solutions to remedy problems. Your company can garner valuable customer respect and loyalty when it deals with a problem to the customer's satisfaction.

### Solving a Social Problem through a Private Sector Approach: Two New Outlets for Selling Conservation and Socially Sustainable Products

There are two new online initiatives that have been developed with the particular challenges of small, rural or remote producer communities around the world in mind. These two unique online consumer outlets are Worldstock.com and World of Good by eBay.

#### Worldstock.com

Worldstock.com is a project of popular online reseller Overstock.com

(<http://www.overstock.com/Worldstock>).

Overstock.com was conceived as an Internet outlet store designed with one mission according to Founder and CEO Patrick Byrne: to create an e-retailer optimized for liquidation. That is, "to work within fractured supply channels of numerous, scattered vendors, scooping up products in lots too small to be moved efficiently through mass retail."<sup>10</sup> In 2001 Byrne founded Worldstock.com as a store within Overstock.com and its mission is his personal passion according to staff at Overstock.com. Since Overstock.com's main business is bringing small lots to consumers at affordable prices and Byrne recognized that this is the same structure

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#### *The Vision behind Worldstock*

*Artisans around the world have trouble reaching their natural markets due to poverty, poor information, and the disadvantage of being small-lot producers in an age of high technology and mass distribution. Yet they are capable of making exquisite products. These artisans could feed their families, vaccinate their babies, and send their children to school, if we in the developed world were to purchase the high-quality goods they know how to make. We realized that Overstock could bridge this global gap. The result is Worldstock, a store emphasizing sustainability, fairness, and transparency while empowering artisans to achieve their dreams for themselves and their families.*

*Patrick Byrne – CEO Worldstock*

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.overstock.com/1328/static.html>

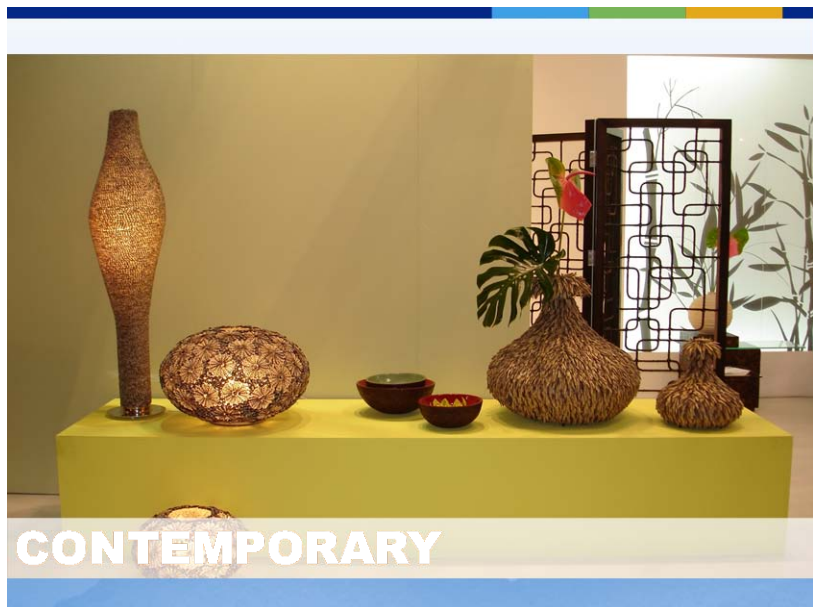
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needed to help small scale artisans around the world sell their products the concept was a natural fit for the online retailer. Worldstock.com's principles include cultural, environmental and economic sustainability and the company prides itself on their razor thin margins and fair negotiation practices with the producers. Worldstock.com also puts a particular emphasis on sustainability by choosing items that are environmentally sound, and that do not destroy the natural or human resources of their producers. Unlike their parent company Overstock.com, their goal is not to maximize profits, but rather to create jobs in the poorest regions of the world, while bringing customers unique products of which they can be proud.

How does Worldstock.com source new products? The Director of Worldstock.com, Angela Ramirez, provided some guidance for Wildlife Friendly certified enterprises and other sellers wishing to market their products through the site. Worldstock.com often works directly with local producer groups and even assists with product development through partnerships with experts in this field such as Aid to Artisans. Ramirez stresses that quality is very important in order to appeal to U.S. consumers. Beautiful pictures and great stories are crucial to help the consumer

understand that these products are unique and to highlight cultural diversity. To submit a product for consideration by Worldstock.com the best initial approach is through email and you should include photos and pricing information. If Worldstock.com is interested in your product they will ask for samples to verify quality. They usually order no more than 30 units maximum initially so that they can test the market and at the lower end they are able to begin selling with as few as 10 units. Worldstock.com understands that handmade items need a longer lead time so they are accustomed to 90-120 day ranges for orders to arrive. Worldstock.com does not have seasonal deadlines but they do advise that prospective sellers start the process early in the year so that they are ready for the Holiday season which is their busiest selling time and which begins in September of each year.



Products that showcase ethnic value and are functional and appeal to the U.S. market are in demand on Worldstock.com  
Photo courtesy of the Cebu Furniture Industries Foundation



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The logistics of shipping and warehousing at Worldstock.com works in two ways. They have a drop ship program<sup>11</sup> that uses distributors around the country who source hand made products for, and who sign a standard agreement with Worldstock.com. These distributors then own the inventory themselves and deal directly with the artisan groups. They drop ship products from their U.S. warehouses to Worldstock.com and the cost of shipping is built into the wholesale price of the products. In other cases Worldstock.com buys directly from the artisan group and has a freight forwarder who takes care of the logistics, transporting product in shipping containers to Salt Lake City, Utah where Worldstock.com is based.



Ramirez shared a few additional trade secrets for sellers hoping to appeal to Worldstock.com shoppers. According to

Worldstock.com is very interested in showcasing Wildlife Friendly and other products with similar compelling stories to their large customer base.

Photo courtesy of EnterpriseWorks/VITA

recent market research conducted by Worldstock.com their average shopper is a woman between the ages of 35-50, with an income of \$60,000 and \$100,000 so products that appeal to this demographic are popular. She also advised that the key to developing a product for Worldstock.com is to make sure it is unique and that you showcase its ethnic value but also to make sure that the product is functional and appeals to the U.S. market. Functionality can include anything from jewelry to furniture, and food products are a growth category for the company.

Ramirez indicated that Worldstock.com would be very interested in showcasing Wildlife Friendly and other products with similar compelling stories to their large customer base. If you think your products are a good fit for Worldstock.com you can begin the process by submitting an application for your products online at:

[http://partners.overstock.com/cgi-bin/sellInv.cgi?TRACK=FOOT\\_OI\\_L4](http://partners.overstock.com/cgi-bin/sellInv.cgi?TRACK=FOOT_OI_L4)

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<sup>11</sup> **Drop ship** is an inventory management technique in which the retailer does not keep goods in stock, but instead transfers a customer's order and shipment details to either the producer, a distributor, or wholesaler who then ships the goods directly to the customer.

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## World of Good by eBay

The second of these new initiatives launched in September of 2008 is a similar partnership between an organization called World of Good, Inc. and online auction giant eBay. This collaboration is known as World of Good by eBay and their tagline is “Where your Shopping Shapes the World.” The partnership was formed with the idea that there is a growing consumer need for trusted information, and for transparency into how and where products are made. Both World of Good and Worldstock.com are based on the principles of the LOHAS, or Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability, consumer. (See Green Marketing Tool for more details on LOHAS consumer trends.)

Listing products on World of Good by eBay is a stepwise process and general guidance is outlined below. The first step is to affiliate with what World of Good by eBay calls a Trust Provider.

World of Good by eBay’s corporate mission is to provide a trusted platform where individuals can create positive change through commerce, as part of a global community with the belief that a growing number of individuals want to understand how the choices they make impact people and the planet. They meet this mission by using what they call Trust Providers to screen products prior to being able to list products on World of Good by eBay. After affiliating with a Trust Provider you will also need to become an eBay seller<sup>12</sup> and complete the World of Good by eBay Seller Application<sup>13</sup> online.

Here are a few additional things to remember about your eligibility to become a Seller on World of Good by eBay:

- Your eBay seller account must be opted in to ‘eBay Checkout’
- Your PayPal account must be either a Premier or a Business Account
- Your payment method must be set to ‘Immediate Payment’

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<sup>12</sup> See pages <http://pages.ebay.com/education/selling.html> and [http://pages.ebay.com/help/sell/seller\\_account.html](http://pages.ebay.com/help/sell/seller_account.html) for more detailed information and guidance on becoming an eBay Seller.

<sup>13</sup> You can complete the Seller application online at <http://sellerapply.worldofgood.com/TempSignIn.aspx>.

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### ***World of Good by eBay Trust Providers***

*Established Trust Providers are considered the cornerstone of World of Good by eBay. These Trust Providers encourage transparency within supply chains, promote ecological sustainability, economic empowerment, and ethical business practices. There are currently 36 Trust Providers and examples include the Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network, Fair Trade Certified, Forest Stewardship Council, and Rainforest Alliance.*

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- You must have an eBay Feedback Score of 5 or greater or your eBay seller account must be ID Verified

For additional information on these requirements please see:

<http://content.worldofgood.ebay.com/ns/BecomeaSellerSN.html>

If the process for selling goods on World of Good by eBay seems daunting to you, be aware that the company has anticipated this and has developed a program to help Sellers and Producer Groups who don't have the time, experience, Internet connection, or otherwise lack capacity to complete the process outlined above. This initiative is called the Marketplace Access Program (MAP) and puts sellers in contact with what World of Good by eBay calls MAP Agents. Map Agents are experienced eBay sellers who help qualified WorldofGood.com producers manage their listings and sales on WorldofGood.com. MAP Agents can help with warehousing, shipping logistics, marketing expertise, language proficiency, challenges due to limited Internet connectivity, payments, returns, and more. Some MAP Agents sell goods on consignment for a fee. Others buy goods outright in order to resell them on behalf of a producer or producer group. In essence MAP Agents are independent business people who can play the role of distributors and beyond for sellers. The fee for service is negotiated directly between the seller and MAP Agent and World of Good by eBay accepts no liability related to this relationship. You can download a pdf file of certified Map Agents from:

<http://content.worldofgood.ebay.com/special/WorldofGoodcomMAPAgentDirectory.pdf>.

Allen Thayer, the Senior Manager for Trust Provider Relations, provided some additional guidance on pricing for products. The combined listing fees on World of Good by eBay including the site's listing fee and costs associated with setting up a PayPal account will add approximately 15% to the cost of your product. So keep in mind that you will need to build this cushion into your pricing.<sup>14</sup> If your organization has 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax status in the US, you might be able to reduce your selling fees through eBay Giving Works<sup>15</sup> and PayPal. For additional information you can contact PayPal directly ([compliance@PayPal.com](mailto:compliance@PayPal.com)) and inquire about options for reducing these selling fees.

An added benefit of listing your products on World of Good by eBay is that every product listed on World of Good also gets a complimentary listing on the regular eBay site which reaches millions of global consumers. It is important for this reason alone that you understand the basics needed to create an excellent product listing for these sites. Please see Annex B for a summary of best practices for listing and selling on World of Good by eBay.

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<sup>14</sup> For a much more detailed accounting of the site's fee structure please see

<http://pages.ebay.com/help/sell/fees.html>

<sup>15</sup> For more information see <http://www.ebaygivingworks.com/ns/nonprofit-info.html>



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## Conclusion

We have learned to what it takes to get ready for export, how to identify and find market outlets for products, and tips for going after the target markets.

To sum up, we have provided an example of how one Wildlife Friendly product, specialty yarn, used the steps in this guide to identify and prioritize market outlets for their products

We encourage you to use these same steps for your own products and start talking to potential buyers. Remember, offer a high quality product, tell the buyer about the wonderful natural beauty and endangered wildlife being protected through the purchase of the product, and highlight cultural diversity and the special people that produce the products and protect the wildlife and their habitats.<sup>16</sup>

### Handmade Paper Products



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<sup>16</sup> Pictures courtesy of EnterpriseWorks/VITA and ANSAB



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## Putting it all Together – Wildlife Friendly Yarn Example

The United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has declared 2009 the International Year of Natural Fibers so we are using Wildlife Friendly certified plant and animal fibers, specifically yarn as a mini case to illustrate how you can pull together the guidance in this document for your product.

**Market Trends and relevance to Wildlife Friendly yarns** - The past few years have seen an explosive interest in knitting and corresponding growth in yarn sales especially with a younger demographic of women. Consumer research in the US shows that between 2002 – 2004 participation in knitting and related crafts increased more than 150% in the 25-34 age category, jumping from 13% to 33% and representing 6.5 million women. The 18-years-and-under age group increased 100%, growing from 8% to 16% or 5.7 million women. Women ages 55-64, followed by a 74% increase in participation, or 7.8 million. Overall, 36%, or 53 million American women, know how to knit or crochet, a 51% increase over the past ten years. Within the knitting Blogosphere "natural is the new novelty yarn." More people are asking where the fibers they are considering buying are coming from, and how they are dyed. Yarns with a unique story are growing in popularity.

**Going Deep Within the Yarn Niche** - Wildlife Friendly yarns should target specialty knitters and shops who like to work with exotic natural fibers. Exotic can mean both the type of fiber (wild silk, alpaca wool, camel wool, etc.) and the exotic stories behind the fibers about the communities and wildlife the fibers help to protect.

**Your Website and Google Searching** - Link your site to [www.knitmap.com](http://www.knitmap.com), a searchable catalog of yarn stores from all over the world. Search terms that bring you deeper into the yarn niche markets that Wildlife Friendly yarns would want to target include: specialty, exotic, natural, eco-friendly, green, luxury, fair trade as well as specific yarn types – alpaca, tasar silk, bamboo, etc.

**Distributors** - There are thousands of yarn wholesalers and distributors around the world. It is a very crowded market and insiders warn of scams by distributors, but also of heart-warming tales of distributors who find the best yarns and offer the most fabulous products. Here is where you certainly want to start by interviewing an established yarn retailer who carries your type of yarn and ask for their recommendation on their preferred distributors. Related to this, yarn buyers report that there is also a lot of confusion about the validity of these claims. Is 'organic' yarn from China really organic? How can we verify this to justify the higher prices? There is skepticism from buyers unless a reliable certification exists to verify these claims to give retailers and their customer's confidence in their purchases.

**Getting the Price Right** - Yarn buyers, like other buyers, stress the importance of quality (minimize impurities, use colorfast dyes, strive for consistency of product) and getting the pricing right since yarn retailers need approximately 100% markup over wholesale/distributor prices.

**Trade Shows** - Check out the Craft Yarn Council <http://www.craftyarncouncil.com> for announcements about upcoming trade shows and The National Needle Arts Association Trade Shows: <http://www.tnna.org/TradeShows/tabid/97/Default.aspx>

**Direct Mail Catalogs and Weblogs** - Wild Fibers Magazine: <http://www.wildfibersmagazine.com/>

**World of Good by eBay and Worldstock.com** – Both these sites do not have categories that get down to yarn, so it may be difficult for specialty buyers to find your yarn on these sites. But, the Wildlife Friendly enterprises producing yarn for knitting and crocheting also produce finish products from the fibers – clothing, home accessories, and handicrafts all of which are appropriate for these two market outlets.

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## Additional Resources

### Trade Shows

1. Natural Products Expo
  - a. Natural Products Expo East:  
<http://www.expoeast.com/expoeast09/public/enter.aspx>
  - b. Natural Products Expo West:  
<http://www.expowest.com/ew09/public/enter.aspx>
  - c. Natural Products Expo Asia: <http://www.naturalproductsasia.com/>
  - d. Natural Products Expo Global Business Training Program  
<http://www.expowest.com/ew09/public/Content.aspx?ID=1002106>
  - e. Natural Products Expo Asia Global Business Matching Service:  
[http://www.naturalproductsasia.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=33&Itemid=57](http://www.naturalproductsasia.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=33&Itemid=57)
  - f. Natural Products Expo New Products Launchpad:  
<http://www.nplp.com/About.aspx>
  - g. Natural Products Expo Online Library with Audio Recordings and Presentations: <http://www.naturalproductsexpo.com/cl/public/enter.aspx>
2. Sustainable Brands, Monterey, Sustainable Brands International, and other SBI events and market research: <http://sustainablelifemedia.com/events>
3. New York Gift Show (January and August): <http://www.nyigf.com/>
4. Santa Fe International Folk Art Festival, the largest international folk art market in the world: <http://www.folkartmarket.org/index.php/about/C96/>
5. W. K. Kellogg Artists' Training Program at the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market: <http://www.folkartmarket.org/index.php/about/C10/>
6. The National Needle Arts Association Trade Shows:  
<http://www.tnna.org/TradeShows/tabid/97/Default.aspx>
7. Fancy Foods Shows of North America:  
<http://www.specialtyfood.com/do/fancyFoodShow/LocationsAndDates>
8. CoffeeFest – Specialty Coffee and Tea Tradeshow:  
<http://www.coffeefest.com/>

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### Other Relevant Resources

9. UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicraft Products:  
<http://www.unescobkk.org/index.php?id=483>
10. For more information on International Year of Natural Fibres (2009):  
<http://www.naturalfibres2009.org/en/index.html>
11. Aid to Artisans Market Readiness Program:  
<http://atar.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=mrp>
12. Green America's searchable Green Pages (Formally known as Coop America)  
<http://www.greenamericatoday.org/>

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## Annex A - Shop the Show Guide

Leading trade shows are held at large convention centers in major cities around the world and feature hundreds and sometimes thousands of exhibitors under one roof. Attendees for these large shows, number in the thousands. Most shows runs over two days with educational and training seminars running a day or two prior to the trade show. The best shows are also for “industry only”, meaning that tourists or the general public are not allowed in just to browse and pick up free samples. This means that all the people exhibiting and attending the show are associated with the industry and are there to do business.

Large trade shows can be overwhelming if you do have a plan and know how to “shop the show”. But, if you do have a plan you can collect strategic information on competitors, obtain pricing information at wholesale and retail levels, see what trends are in, check out packaging and labeling, and overall gain more marketing information in a few hours than could be collected over weeks if you had to contact all the buyers and sellers individually.

**Registering and Preparing for the Show:** When you register for a show, you often need to pick a category – manufacturer, distributor, retailer, media, other. If you produce and sell goods then you are both a manufacturer and also function as a retailer. Many shows have discounts for retailers attending so you may want to register under this category if you are attending a show for the first time and not exhibiting. If you are exhibiting, then you would register as a manufacturer. Before coming to the show identify what you want to learn from the show. For example, learning about competitors prices, packaging options, interest in conservation and fair trade products, etc. You may also want to explore distributors and be able to interview them on the products they represent and the fees they charge and their terms for carrying your products.

**What to Bring:** A photo ID, pen and paper to make notes, business cards, product lists, comfortable shoes and a water bottle – you will be on your feet all day and doing lots of walking.

**Attending the Show:** Pick up a show directory when you enter the show and then go sit down. Make a plan for the type of exhibitors you want to see. Most shows are so big that if you just wander up and down each aisle you could easily get overwhelmed and miss your best marketing opportunities.

**First,** review all the product listing categories in the show directory and mark those that have relevance for your products. For example, if you have plant products that go into teas, look up herbal teas and bulk teas in the product listing section of the show directory. This will list all the vendors and their booth addresses. Next take the map in the show directory and mark where the booths are and set a time limit to go and visit ONLY those targeted booths.



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**Second**, make a list of companies you have heard of that you would like to learn more about or approach about purchasing your products. The show directory lists all exhibitors alphabetically and by categories so you can quickly look up companies of interest. Mark these companies and their location and booth number on the map.

**Third**, now that you have a subset of booths to visit (by product areas and specific companies of interest), come up with 3 to 5 important issues or questions you want information on. Here are some examples:

- a. What type of packaging is being used and what themes of messages are being used to present the product (pictures or nature, slogans, health messages, fair trade, etc.).
- b. Ask the vendors for a price list with wholesale and retail prices and purchasing terms? This will help you to see some of the end of the value chain price structures for the products.
- c. Ask the vendors if they have a contact at the company they can give you who is their buyer for new products or product ingredients (Think of ingredients in a broad sense, e.g. bulk herbs for teas, but could also be a handicraft items for a gift basket company. ) This will give you the name and number of the actual buying staff at the company to contact.
- d. Look for and ask about growing and declining trends for your products, e.g. demand for organic, positioning of conservation messages, interest in fair trade, etc.

Once you have done this structured “shopping of the show” then you can go back and visit all the other booths. Keep in mind that all the people at the show are there to talk about their products and learn about new products. Take advantage of this and don’t be shy.

**After the Trade Show:** Send follow-up emails to people you talked with that expressed an interest in your products and remind them that you met at the show.

Most importantly attend the show with an upbeat attitude and enjoy yourself. Be prepared to talk about your products and tell your unique story about wildlife, conservation, and the people who produce the products. If you convey enthusiasm about your products, then buyers will also be excited!

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## Annex B - Best Practices for Selling on World of Good by eBay



### Best Practices for Listing Your Products on WorldofGood.com by eBay

With thousands of listings on WorldofGood.com by eBay how do you make your items stand out from the crowd – and make the sale? The first step is creating a listing that attracts buyers. Here are some tips on how to make your listing as attractive as possible and shine a light on your organization's great work.

Note: For step-by-step instructions on how to write a listing, please visit our Create the Ideal Listing page (<http://content.worldofgood.ebay.com/ns/HelpCreateListing.html>).

For this document with embedded links, go to the following web page:  
[http://community.worldofgood.com/go/thread/view/12376/5123133/What\\_are\\_the\\_best\\_practices\\_for\\_listing\\_selling\\_products\\_on\\_WorldofGoodcom](http://community.worldofgood.com/go/thread/view/12376/5123133/What_are_the_best_practices_for_listing_selling_products_on_WorldofGoodcom)

#### 1. Make your listing title 100% accurate and easy to search

- Use only words that accurately describe your item. However, optimize your title for search on eBay, Google and beyond. Use search-friendly terms.
- Include details such as type of item, color, size, condition.
- Use as many of the allowed 55 characters as possible.
- Repeat the category name.
- Lead with color and size if you list multiple variants.

#### 2. Great product photos make your listings fantastic

- Think of search results pages as an online catalog. Make sure your image is clear and accurately represents the size and quality of the product.
- The live area for each WorldofGood.com photo is 400 x 400 pixels. Make sure your image fits this size and shows the proportion of the item.
- It's easier to show the item on a plain background, but if you want to show it in action ("lifestyle"), make sure it's clearly visible and presented attractively.
- Consider using multiple photos. Buyers like to see the item from several angles.

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## 3. Introduce your producer

People buy from people. Emotionally connect with buyers by introducing them to the maker of the item through words and pictures.

- **Producer Photo** - Show a clear portrait of the individual or the cooperative that made the item. All producer photos are 180 x 180 pixels. Be sure your photo fits the image size.
- **Producer Story** - Speak from the heart. Help buyers build a personal connection to the producer, your product, and your organization. Don't try to "sell" the item or the producer. Just talk about who the producer is, where the producer lives, and the producer's expertise.

## 4. Don't skimp on your item descriptions

The more you tell the more you sell! So take full advantage of both description areas on the WorldofGood.com listing page. Here's how:

*Description* (500 character limit)

This description appears only on WorldofGood.com.

- Answer the common questions buyers have: product type, style, size, dimensions, material, and color.
- If your item comes in several sizes or colors, save money by listing the item once, stating the available sizes in the description, and asking buyers to indicate the size they want in the Notes field at checkout.
- Use as much of the 500-character allotment as you can.
- Never assume that a buyer will read the Full Description. Put the most important details first.

*Full Description*

Buyers on eBay.com see only this description. Buyers on WorldofGood.com see it when they click "See Full Description."

- Repeat the information in the WorldofGood.com description.
- Tell buyers that you're a registered WorldofGood.com seller.
- Include your Trust Provider, producer information, and the listing's Goodprint.
- Bring your item's story to life. Use HTML and Rich Text editing tools to add colors, images, and more along with bold, bullets, or italics.

## 5. Proudly connect Goodprint to your listing

Buyers use Goodprint to learn how your item connects with their personal values.

- Choose your Goodprint statements carefully – it's crucial that they accurately and clearly describe the item's social impact.

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- Three to five statements are enough.

## **6. Simplify your shipping and handling options.**

Give buyers flexibility by offering a variety of shipping options. If possible offer free shipping. You'll very likely make up the expense of free shipping in increased sales!

## **7. Build trust with competitive pricing and a clear return policy**

- Try to price your items as competitively as possible. Item price plays a big role in a buyer's consideration.
- Buyers appreciate the "safety net" of a clear return policy. Provide concise details about your return policy to gain buyers' trust and give them reassurance.

## **8. Show us your logo!**

Our listing page includes a prominent space for a logo. So use it! Place a distinct logo for your business in every listing – and in your WorldofGood.com profile – so buyers can get familiar with you and your brand.

- The logo area on WorldofGood.com listings allows a 180 x 180 pixel image so be sure to scale your logo to fit.

## **9. Complete your Community profile.**

Take advantage of your free Community profile on WorldofGood.com to tell your story to thousands of buyers - for free! The doorway to your profile is your logo and quote on your listing.

- Buyers will click on your logo to link to your profile, where they'll learn more about your business and link to other items you're selling.
- For your quote, choose a statement that expresses your philosophy and engages buyers so they want to learn more about your business.

## **10. List more and spread out your listings.**

- Organize your WorldofGood.com listing inventory so you're covering as many categories as your business allows.
- Then push your listings live in stages rather than all at once, so buyers find your items whether they're searched by start date, end date, or best match.

Need more selling tips?

Check out the Selling section in WorldofGood.com Help Central:

<http://content.worldofgood.ebay.com/ns/Help.html>

Or send us an email at [seller.info@worldofgood.com](mailto:seller.info@worldofgood.com)