



The Company

Connection to eBay provides end-to-end services that enable large organizations to sell in high volume on eBay. They help retailers, manufacturers, and distributors build and scale significant sales channels on eBay, providing services that include strategy, listing management, customer support, and logistics. Connection to eBay is the only branded Preferred Solution Provider for eBay and is owned and operated by Accenture, one of the world's leading management consulting and technology services organizations.

The Business Challenge

Most of C2eBay's clients are selling on eBay for the first time. They need to strike a sensitive balance between the eBay channel and their existing channels, as well as to adapt their branding strategies to meet the unique requirements of the eBay and its customers. They particularly need guidance in choosing what kind of eBay stores to build and in presenting their brands on eBay in order to preserve valuable brand equity while maximizing sales opportunities.

The Solution

We conducted Brand Interview attribute research with eBay shoppers in different U.S. markets, and analyzed their feedback and comments on the eBay brand. We also gathered comparative attribute ratings of "generic" and "branded" eBay stores and manufacturer direct online stores. Using the findings from BrandSequencing, Connection to eBay was able to demonstrate to their clients eBay's positive impact on brands, and to give clients specific brand strategy recommendations supported by empirical data.

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the eBay Brand Interview: A Comparison of Online Stores

Connecting to the World's Online Marketplace

eBay's influence and market impact are beginning to set unprecedented customer expectations in terms of convenience, selection, detailed product information, customer service, and flexible pricing. eBay's sheer size, powerful brand equity, and customer loyalty, as well as its impact on retail markets, all combine to make selling on eBay a way for manufacturers to realize compelling advantages in channel sales and brand management.

But eBay presents unique branding challenges to manufacturers, both in countering established perceptions of eBay and in mitigating the sensitivities of traditional channel partners. There was a need to provide data and facts that answered two key questions for manufacturers selling on eBay:

- What is the impact of eBay on our brand?
- Should we sell from a "Branded" or "Generic" store on eBay, and why?

Conversations with eBay Customers

The research with eBay customers consisted of what we call the Brand Interview (as opposed to a "test" or a "survey"), a direct telephone interview aided by a Web-based visual tool. Brand Interviews have proven to be much more effective in gathering relevant customer feedback than focus groups or other forms of research. BrandSequence worked jointly with Connection to eBay to design the Brand Interview, selecting the appropriate target customer groups, developing incentives, and reviewing all of the brand attribute choices and interview scripts.

The Brand Interview provided an accurate and unbiased reading of customers' "top-of-mind" positioning of eBay and eBay stores against competitors.

Key Findings

Our findings addressed manufacturers' questions in decisive and often surprising ways:

- Selling through eBay branded stores can enhance brands rather than dilute them.
- eBay presents several viable store options to manufacturers that are on par with, or in some cases superior to, their own direct sales websites.
- Customers see eBay as the most convenient, fun, trusted source for almost anything one could hope to buy online.
- eBay's decisive competitive advantage with "convenience" has a strong impact on brands, as customers can find and buy their favorite brands effortlessly.
- Both eBay and PayPal (an eBay company) enjoy significant brand equity and customer loyalty that enhance co-branding opportunities.
- eBay is increasingly seen as a primary channel for new, branded products.
- Customers prefer eBay stores with recognizable manufacturer brands, and associate these stores with better value than comparable manufacture-direct sites.

According to Masami Suzuki, Marketing Director for Connection to eBay, "This research gave us the data and tools we needed to address crucial brand strategy issues with our clients."



eBay's Brand DNA snapshot, a result of Brand Interview attribute research.