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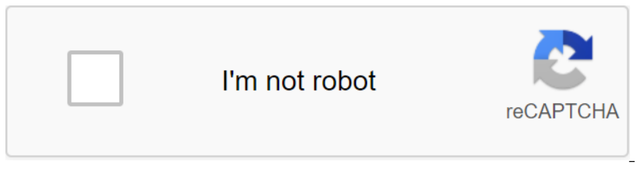

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The new CEO of eBay (EBAY) takes over the company after the resignation of former CEO Devin Veniga from the post late last year. These five companies have made it clear that they won't be cutting dividends or buybacks anytime soon, and with programs that were solid before the pandemic, they may be just what your portfolio needs right now. Part 4: How to sell auto parts on eBay In Part 1, we bought a $1000 1992 Lexus SC400 as a suspension car project donor. In Part 2, we disassembled the car and removed all the parts that might be worth selling. Part 3 saw the beginning of the Great SC400 Sell-Off, with scrap metal and Craigslist sales. The biggest source of money from the SC400 part of the project, however, came from sales on eBay Motors. That's how this part of the process went. 2 I dragged home three carloads of SC400 pieces during the dismemberment process, totaling over 100 pieces that I thought I could sell at the world's largest online auction. I did some sorting and went down to maybe 80 pieces that I felt ready to list on eBay. 3 I consider myself a fairly experienced seller of eBay. My feedback rating is over 1000 and I sold my first items there back in 1999. When the dotcom boom ended a few years later, I made deals with several of my car parts of amassing friends: I sell your stuff on eBay, I keep half the take. I sold over 500 auto parts during 2002 and 2003, ranging from a $3 owner manual to a $1,200 mint-conditioned large unit of Ford Toploader. Since then, everything has changed. I've sold a few items in recent years, particularly when I sold parts from the 1985 Volvo 244 that my 24 Hour LeMons team is building in a V-8 powered racing car, but it's been a decade since my last heavy eBay sales fight. My garage was clogged full of 1992 Lexus SC400 parts, and my hard lessons about selling auto parts online came back to me. 4 First, I organized parts on the shelves, discarding anything that showed the damage I missed during the Lexus showdown. 5 The most important piece put together by an eBay listing is getting good pictures of your items. You want a lot of lighting, a camera on a tripod, and a neutral background for shots, so potential bidders can see any flaws in the stuff you sell before they bet on anything. I used a sheet-covered card table lit by a bunch of clamp lights. 6 Just to get the white balance camera settings right, I created a bunch of SC400 different computers and ECMs and photographed the whole mess. Yes, it was one heavily computerized car in 1992; Every place had a computer! When I photographed each subject, I measured it and made careful notes about its weight, size and condition. I would use the U.S. Postal Service Priority Mail Flat Rate Boxes whenever possible to International delivery is easier. (Because the SC400 was almost the brother of the Toyota Soarer, which was very popular in places like Australia Australia Japan, I wanted foreign bidders to have a simple calculation of shipping costs). So I noted which items would fit in what type of flat rate box. 7 When you sell something on eBay, you can list it as a regular auction (the top bidder after the auction runs its course to buy an item for any top offer price turns out to be) or how the purchase it is now selling (the first person to pay your price gets the item). I wasn't sure what most of my SC400 pieces would go on, so I created almost all of them as seven-day auction listings without a reserve. In the case of bellhousing transfer, however, I have seen that some of them have been sold for $100 to $200 in recent months, so I have listed it with buy now $80 and free shipping. A guy in North Carolina who wanted to do a V-8 swap in his Tacoma truck asked me to lower the price; I refused and he then decided that the $80 sent was a decent deal and pulled the trigger. My first sale! 8 Shortly thereafter, the first round of seven-day auctions ended. I listed 20 or so items and half a dozen auctions ended with buyers. That's when the trouble started. First came this cryptic message about wires from the winner of the HVAC control panel, who finished with a $67 top bet. After a long back and forth, it turned out that the buyer was thinking about buying HVAC management/stereo wiring to use (a separate listing), but then changed its mind about the HVAC panel and refused to pay. A lot of angst from the angst buyer followed, and I finally wrote the whole deal and listed this product with high demand. 9 I had planned to part with the donor car in this way for quite a while, so I created a pretty decent collection of cardboard boxes just for that purpose. Buying new boxes quickly turns into a large bill, so it is better to recycle used. You never know when buyers are going to win multiple auctions and ask for a combined delivery, so it's a good idea to delay the packaging until the auctions are completed and you've been paid. I always abuse on the first business day after I get paid, which meant a lot of busy nights. I take obsessive caution when I prepare an item for a shipment-bubble-wrap tape around it, then packed into a box with a crumpled newspaper, and finally the box gets taped shut with three times the tape redundant. I've never had an item damaged during delivery, so this job pays off. I used USPS Flat Rate Priority Mail boxes for most items, while large pieces went through the FedEx Ground (I opened a FedEx account back when I was moving hundreds of car parts on eBay ten years ago and I've been happy with their service so far). 10 Of the 29 items I sold (out of more than 100 listed), the biggest figure came from the trunk installed by the Nakamichi amplifier, part of an additional lexus Premium Sound package. These amplifiers sound great, but are notoriously crapping after a decade or so. I started this auction at $120, and, 19 bids later, it closed at $217.03. 11 The engine computer was item, selling for $100.99 to a store that specializes in Japanese ECMs. 12 Just a handful of pieces had to be shipped outside the United States. The solar visors went to Canada, the newly HVAC control panel went to New york, and an Australian buyer was willing to spend $47.95 to deliver a $15 dross body to the other side of the globe. 13 But then came the more sophisticated buyers. I was hoping that a ignition switch with the appropriate key and a steal warning computer would go for a lot of money, but I settled on the $24.99 buy now price. The buyer paid for it and then bet on the lighter and replacement bezel, and never heard from again. I filed an unpaid item case with eBay, and my final fees were refunded. 14 The buyer of the rear deck speakers complained that they were in poor condition. I checked their sound in the car (using Jackofficers Do It, the only cassettes I had available) and they seemed to work well, but I couldn't remember checking them completely, so I gave the buyer a full refund. What the hell. I only sold them for $14. 15 Buyer's headaches continued. For example, I mentioned in the description element that RH lights had some of the normal scratching and hazing that you see in the used headlights. The winning attendee waited three days and then sent this message: Do you think scratching/smoke will have a positive effect??? While this was on, another buyer wrote to ask if I would put the price to buy it now on the item. When I refused, the buyer bought the piece through the auction anyway and then accused me of using shill buyers to jack up the price. Back in the old days of eBay, I could hammer this guy with negative feedback and maybe keep future sellers in such trouble, but in 2013 all I could do was scour eBay's fine print to see if I could take any action. In the end, he decided that he wasn't going to get that part for his price and paid. 16 Of the 29 items that I sold, I had problems with seven, and a fair amount of others required a lot of reminders in order to get the bidders to pay. However, most shoppers were pleasant and paid for a day or two, although I would be tired of all the tooth-pull troubles involved. I still have almost 100 Lexus parts that I could keep relisting, but the dollar-per-hour figure just wasn't enough to justify the added work. The Nakamichi subwoofer didn't sell for $24.99, so I decided to install it in the ceiling of my garage and give my homemade auto parts boom-box some extra boom. I never listed the top entry of the variety, instead of hanging it on the garage wall as a work of art. 17 When all the dust settled, here's what I sold on eBay: Front marker lights: $9.99 Wiring harness: $37.00 HVAC Management: $50.00 LH Control Window: $24.99 RH Window Regulator: $31.99 Air-Filter Field: $9.99 LH Headlights: $11.50 RH Headlights: $27,00 LH Rear Lantern: $51.00 RH Taillight: $24.99 Tool Cluster: $26.00 Sun Visors: $16.49 Alternator: $10.50 LH Window/Lock Switches: $10.99 Ignition Switch/Key: Key: Key: Exhaust Variety and Shields: $35.00 Computer Control Mirror: $5.00 ECU Engine: $100.99 Danger Lights Switch: $5.00 Volume/Temperature Management: $22.50 Shifter: $41.00 Throttle Body: $15.00 Radio: $50.00 CD Change: $41.00 Throttle Body: $15.00 Radio: $50.00 CD Shift: $41.00 Throttle Body: $15.00 Radio: $50.00 CD Shifts: $41.00 Throttle Body: $15.00 Radio: $50.00 CD Shifts: $41.00 T00 Body: $15.00 Radio: $50.00 CD Shift: $41.00 Throttle Body: $15.00 Radio: $50.00 CD shifts: $41.00 Throttle body: $15.00 Radio: $50.00 CD shifts: $41.00 Tttle body: $20.00 LH External Mirror: $30.00 Fuel Filler Door: $20.00 LG Outside Door Handle: $30.00 Nakaichim Amplifier: $217.03 Transfer Bellhousing: $80.00 This total $1028.94, to eBay and PayPal fees. PayPal charged me 2.9 percent plus $0.30 per transaction, while eBay fees vary depending on the item's price, its category and other factors. For the typical example of fees I paid for selling my parts of the SC400, we'll look at a cluster of instruments, which sold for $26.00 plus $15.00 shipping price. eBay charged a $0.50 insertion fee, a final cost fee of $2.34, and a final shipping fee of $1.35; add to that a $1.49 PayPal fee and I got $20.32 for that item. It's still worth selling at this price, but those who want to turn their auto parts into cash should keep in mind that it's hard, hard work, and think about which parts are worth the effort and which should go straight to the nearest dumpster. Including fees from items that have never sold and write-off for speakers whose value I reimbursed, my total network for SC400 parts sales on eBay was $836.04. 18 Total revenue from the car: $1,430.62, which means I've got front and rear suspension, a full set of wheels and tires, a battery, and some other useful stuff for my '41 Plymouth project with a profit of $430.62. When you count the hours of work involved- I'm going to say at least 80 man-hours to receive, clean and scrap the car alone, and at least another 30 man-hours for all the work related to the sale and delivery of parts that comes to, well, not many dollars per hour of work. If I had to do it again, I would pick a dozen or so items I know would sell for decent money (like amplifiers, taillights, etc.) and not even bother with low-return parts. Next: do it over and over again with the donor engine! 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