



How to write descriptions that sell merchandise.

How can you increase your sales? Well, how do you describe your merchandise? It's a fact that on-line merchandise with a good description has a better chance of being found and sold, than merchandise with a bad description. This is a basic tutorial on how to write descriptions that will (hopefully) help you improve your on-line sales.

Why

bother?

First, let's look at why complete descriptions are important. Since our system has the ability to include pictures with descriptions many people are relying on the picture to sell the item. Pictures are great, but they don't tell the whole story. Yes, a picture is worth a thousand words, it's just that computers can't "read" pictures. More and more people are starting to use the search engine to find items they are looking for. Search engines are fast, easy to use and take a lot less time than browsing through every single store in our Mall.

Not only our search engine, but frequently search engines outside of our site also catalog your inventory. These include Hotbot, Excite (also known as AOL's Netfind), Lycos, Alta Vista, Google and several others as well. These search engines take keywords that are entered by the customer and then try to match these words to the text descriptions from your Web site. The search engines can't "read" pictures. As an example, if you have an incredible black cat cookie jar compare these two descriptions:

1. "Black cat cookie jar \$300",
2. "Cookie jar, ceramic, McCoy, 'Coalby Cat', mark #4, in perfect condition, stands 10", manufactured 1967. The *Collectors Encyclopedia of McCoy* puts a value of \$400 on this rare cookie jar. Our asking price is \$300. This cookie jar will sell fast."

The second description gives the search engines and the customer a lot more information to find the item and hopefully increases your chances of selling the cookie jar. It also gives the customer a reason to buy the cookie jar.

The contents of a good description:

Here is a basic formula that seems to work rather well for on-line antique stores. Feel free to vary the order that I have given here. You may not be able to supply all of this information, but try to give as much as possible. The more information you can give the customer, the better. Above all, be as accurate as you possibly can. Using our "Cookie Jar" example given above, let's break it down...

1. Start out with the obvious: tell what the item is. If it is a doll, the first word should be "doll", if it is a vase, the first word should "vase." The first word should be the broadest description of what the item is.
2. Tell what the item is made of. Is it wood, cut glass, ceramic, porcelain, ivory, etc. If you are not sure, give your best guess, but say "My best guess is that this is *****".
3. Tell who the manufacture of the item is. If the item was hand made by a 16th century monk, then say so. If it is made in Japan, then say so. If you have a best guess, then say "my best guess is that it was made in ***** by *****". Again, give as much information as you can.
4. If you know the specific name and/or model number of the item, give it here. If you are not sure, say so. It is difficult to fudge something this specific, so don't try if you don't know.
5. What is the condition of the item? Check the item over carefully. Are there any flaws? No matter how insignificant the flaw may seem to you, make sure that you mention it in the description. If it is perfect, then say so. If it is "MIB" (Mint in box), then say so. Always give as much information on condition as possible.
6. Give the size of the item. Some people include a ruler when they photograph an item to give the scale. The height is usually enough, but you can include the width and the depth. Some folks also include the weight for shipping purposes.
7. Date of manufacture. When was the item made? If you don't know, give a best guess but say "my best guess is that this item was made around *****".
8. Use the last part of your description to "sell" the item. What is it about this item that is so special: is it rare, is it cheap, is it one of a kind? Let the customer know! Are you selling it below book value? Then make sure you say so and tell what book you got the price from. If the item is a bargain, let the customer know they are getting a great deal. Give them a reason to buy the item. Every item has a selling point. All you have to do is let the customer know what it is.

If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact Customer Service at support@tias.com