

# Developing an E-Commerce Plan for MW/GW ReStore Supplemental Material

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report

Submitted to the Faculty of

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Science.

By:

David Alex

Zander Barker

Ethan Glasby

Alton Miles

Samuel Wing

March 1st, 2024

Worcester Community Project Center



Report Submitted to:

Project Sponsor: Kevin Maguire

WPI Faculty Advisor: Corey Denher

# Table of Contents

- Table of Contents..... 2**
- Authorship Page..... 3**
- Appendices..... 4**
  - Background Data..... 4
    - Appendix A: Affordable Rental Home Availability by State..... 4
  - Data Collection Tools..... 4
    - Appendix B: Informed Consent..... 4
    - Appendix C: Interview Questions..... 5
  - Collected Data..... 6
    - Appendix D: Platform Comparison Table..... 6
    - Appendix E: Social Media Marketing Cost-Benefit Analysis..... 8
    - Appendix F: Sponsored Social Media Marketing Cost-Benefit Analysis..... 8
    - Appendix G: eBay Listing Guide Materials..... 9

## Authorship Page

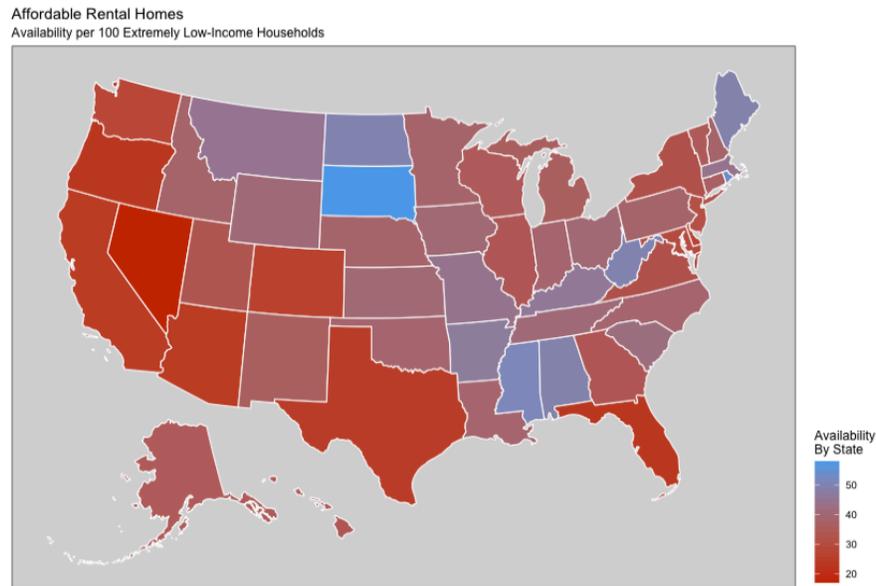
Abstract	Sam Wing	Sam Wing and Alton Miles
Acknowledgments	David Alex	All
Executive Summary	David Alex and Alton Miles	All
Introduction	Sam Wing	Alton Miles
Housing Insecurity	Sam Wing	Alton Miles
Sales Platforms and Tools	David Alex	Alton Miles
Marketing	Alton Miles	Alton Miles
Environmental Impact	Ethan Glasby	Alton Miles
Introduction	Sam Wing and Alton Miles	Alton Miles
Objective 1	Sam Wing	David Alex
Objective 2	David Alex	David Alex
Objective 3	Ethan Glasby	David Alex
Objective 4	Zander Barker	David Alex
Objective 5	Alton Miles	David Alex
Objective 6	Sam Wing	David Alex
Findings and Recommendations	Sam Wing and Ethan Glasby	Sam Wing and Ethan Glasby

# Appendices

## Background Data

### *Appendix A: Affordable Rental Home Availability by State*

The diagram below shows the number of available affordable rental homes by state per 100 extremely low-income renter households (Data sourced from Aurand et. al. 2023).



## Data Collection Tools

### *Appendix B: Informed Consent*

Prior to any interview or survey we shared a variation of the below text with the subject to ensure that they understood and consented to sharing their information with us.

We are Alton Miles, Sam Wing, David Alex, Ethan Glasby, and Zander Barker, students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts and we are working with the Worcester/Ashland Habitat for Humanity ReStores to help them develop an e-commerce plan.

We would like to interview you to learn about how other e-commerce plans were implemented. We appreciate any time and input you're able to share with us. This interview will take between 45-60 minutes. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. There are no risks associated with participation in this interview. If you would like, we are happy to keep your identity confidential. Alternatively, if

you are comfortable having us use your name, we are happy to share the report with you prior to its publication.

If you have any questions feel free to reach out to us at gr-C24.ReStore@wpi.edu or our faculty advisor, Corey Dehner, cdehner@wpi.edu.

### *Appendix C: Interview Questions*

General questions for ReStores and local businesses:

- Can you describe the process you went through when you first entered ecommerce?
  - What items were you selling at the start?
  - What platforms did you start with?
- Which ecommerce platforms do you use currently?
  - Why did you choose those platforms?
  - How has your experience been with those platforms?
    - Do you have any specific pros/cons?
  - Do you have any plans to expand beyond those platforms?
  - Do you offer both shipping and/or in-store pickup?
    - Roughly what percentage of revenue do each of those provide?
- Do you have any specific advice for a ReStore just starting ecommerce?
  - Were there any problems that you ran into as you were starting ecommerce?
  - Are there any marketing avenues that you would recommend?
- What marketing avenues are you pursuing?
  - Are you marketing on social media?
    - Which platforms?
    - What types of posts do you use?
    - How successful has it been?
  - Are you using any sponsored marketing methods?
  - Are you using Google Ad Grant?
  - How many people do you have employed for marketing?
  - Have you done any Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
    - If so, have you had an employee do it or outsourced it?
- How many people do you have employed for ecommerce?
  - How much and what sort of training do you give them?
  - Did they have prior experience with ecommerce?
  - How many employees do you think a new ReStore should employ?

General questions for marketing professors:

- How do you think the ReStore could best market itself?
  - What platforms would be best?
    - Why those specific platforms?
  - What marketing strategies would you recommend?
  - Do you think sponsored marketing on social media or other platforms would be worthwhile?

- How difficult would it be to do SEO or utilize Google Ad Grant in-house?
  - How many employees would that require?
    - What skills would they need?
  - How much time would it take?
  - How worthwhile would it be?

## Collected Data

### Appendix D: Platform Comparison Table

Below is the platform comparison table we used to evaluate and choose between platforms to recommend alongside the information we heard from our interviewees. Since it has too many columns to fit in the page all at once, we've broken it in half with the first table holding evaluation categories A-E for all platforms and the second table holding categories F-K. Our color key is located directly above the tables and any notes (shown by \*) are addressed below the tables.

Scale of colors				
Undesirable	Concern	Neutral	Possible benefit	Desirable
n/a				

Platform Option	POS* integration [A]	Social media integration [B]	Cost [C]	Card charges [D]	Use Own Payment Processor [E]
Etsy [1]	Any with API*	Yes, from social media to platform	\$.20 list + 6.5%	By country, 3% + \$.25 in US	Unable
Temu [2]	No	Yes, from social media to platform	% by category	5%	Unable
eBay [3]	Any with API*	Yes, both directions	\$.30/sale + 2% + \$5/month	No	Unable
Facebook Marketplace [4]	No	Yes, both directions	5% or \$.40/sale minimum or \$0 if pay in person	No	Unable
Squarespace [5]	Square Partnership	Yes, both directions	\$23/month + 3% or \$27/month	2.9% + \$.30	Able
Shopify [6]	Is POS*	Yes, both directions	\$39/month to \$399/month	2.9-2.4% + \$.30*	Able

Amazon [7]	<a href="https://www.24sevencommerce.com/amazon-integration.html">https://www.24sevencommerce.com/amazon-integration.html</a>	Yes, from social media to platform	\$.50/sale or \$39.99/month	2.9% + \$.30	Unable
Lightspeed [8]	Is POS*	Yes, both directions	\$199/month	2.9% + \$0.30	Unable
Square [9]	Is POS*	Yes, both directions	\$0.30/sale + 2.9%	2.6% + \$0.10	Unable
BigCommerce [10]	Any with API*	Yes, both directions	\$29/month to \$299/month	2.59-2.05% + \$0.49*	Able
Wix [11]	Is POS*	Yes, both directions	\$16/month to \$158/month, negotiable	2.9% + \$.30	Able

Platform Option	Charity Benefits [F]	Shipping Options [G]	Item Options [H]	Brand Visibility [I]	Customer usability [J]	Aesthetics [K]
Etsy [1]	None	Shipping labels	Handmade/Craft/Vintage	Strong focus	Easy to use	Easy to look at
Temu [2]	None	Fully DIY	Cheap items	Low focus on brand	Moderately usable	Busy and flashy
eBay [3]	Charity discount*	Shipping labels	Anything	Low focus on brand	Easy to use	Simple
Facebook Marketplace [4]	None	Fully DIY	Anything	Low focus on brand	Moderately usable	Simple
Squarespace [5]	None	Third party	Anything	n/a	Customizable	Customizable
Shopify [6]	Charity plan*	Shipping labels	Anything	Strong focus*	Customizable	Customizable
Amazon [7]	None	Many options	Anything	Low focus on brand	Easy to use	Busy
Lightspeed [8]	None	Shipping labels	Anything	n/a	Customizable	Customizable
Square [9]	None	Shipping labels	Anything	n/a	Customizable	Customizable
BigCommerce [10]	None	Third party	Anything	n/a	Customizable	Customizable
Wix [11]	Charity plan*	Shipping labels	Anything	n/a	Customizable	Customizable

* notes
API: Application Programming Interface
POS: Point of Sale
D6: lower for NPO Full
D10: can use your own payment gateway instead
F3: charity rate is listed as the cost
F6: NPO Lite is \$29/month, NPO Full is \$99/month
F11: only if TechSoup member
I6: in the Shop app, otherwise n/a

### ***Appendix E: Social Media Marketing Cost-Benefit Analysis***

Social Media Marketing:

	Costs	Benefits
Monetary	Personnel time to design, post, and reply	Increased sales proportional to following
Non-Monetary	Risk of reducing following and credibility with poor quality	Increased brand recognition proportional to following Chance of increased following

### ***Appendix F: Sponsored Social Media Marketing Cost-Benefit Analysis***

Social Media Sponsored Advertisements:

	Costs	Benefits
Monetary	Personnel time to design	Increased sales proportional to investment
	Significant purchase cost	Great targeting to consumer groups
Non-Monetary	Risk of upsetting consumers with poorly conducted ads	Increased brand recognition proportional to investment

## ***Appendix G: eBay Listing Guide Materials***

This is a summary of the different components that come with listing items on eBay. The information for these guidelines and best practices have been compiled through interviews and research from eBay's resources.

<https://export.ebay.com/en/first-steps/how-create-listing/how-create-listing/#step1>

<https://export.ebay.com/en/marketing/promote-listings/seo-promotion/>

<https://export.ebay.com/en/listings/how-optimize-your-listings/photo-tips/>

### **Photography**

- Photos must be in the following jpeg, png, gif, tiff, heic or bmp, at least 500px on the longest side, and maximum 24 per one listing.
- Use a plain white background to create the backdrop for the item
  - For reflective items using a black background is effective
- eBay has their own editing tool that you can use to remove the background
- If you are listing an item that is used do not use the stock photo

Ex:



It is recommended to post items with a solid color backdrop to make the item stand out. Many other specific photo tips can be found here.

<https://export.ebay.com/en/listings/how-optimize-your-listings/photo-tips/>

### **Shipping**

- You must specify shipping terms and regions you can ship your item to
  - There are recommended delivery options available
- You can create a business policy and it will make a template that will apply to the items you sell and can change based on item for
  - Payment policies
  - Shipping policies

- Return policies

### **Deals and Promotions**

- You can improve the chances of selling with promoted listing and volume pricing
  - Promoted listings will help your listings stand out when there are lots of similar items listed
    - This takes a portion of the revenue but is only taken when the item is sold.
  - Volume Pricing is a discount that buyers can get by purchasing multiple items at a at a time and it's only available on fixed price listings

### **SEO**

- eBay has their own search engine within eBay to help buyers find items
  - This takes into account Seller performance, return policy, ad compliance with the request, and more.
- Keywords are what is most important when it comes to SEO.
  - When listing, the best way to find the best keywords is to envision what a buyer might type in when looking for this specific item
- Only use keywords that are related to the item you list, or else the search engine might lower the listings ranking.
- <https://export.ebay.com/en/marketing/promote-listings/seo-promotion/>

### **Customer Service / Seller Performance**

- Being able to have prompt and good customer service positively impacts the position of the listings within eBays pages.
  - Encourage customers to leave reviews
  - The performance of future listings depends on how well your customer communication and feedback is.
- Make sure you are communicating with customers, thanking them for their order and reminding them to leave a review
  - Clear communication
  - eBay has shipping tools that will greatly help your communication with customers

## eBay Listing Checklist:

# eBay Listing CHECKLIST

### BEFORE LISTING:

- START THE LISTING BY TYPING IN THE ITEM AND TRYING TO FIND A MATCH THROUGH EBAY'S CATALOG

---

- ADD HIGH QUALITY PHOTOS WITH A CLEAN BACKDROP

---

- MAKE SURE THE ITEM IS THE ONLY THING IN THE PHOTO

---

- TITLE TEMPLATE: "NEW" [BRAND] [PRODUCT NAME] [MODEL NO] [VARIANTS — SIZE, COLOR] [ADDITIONAL KEYWORD]

---

- CHECK OUT SIMILAR PRODUCTS LISTED TO VIEW COMMON DESCRIPTIONS AND TITLES FOR THAT ITEM

---

- ADD KEYWORDS RELEVANT TO THE ITEM AND DO NOT USE TOO MANY KEYWORDS

---

- EMAIL THE CUSTOMER AFTER PURCHASE THANKING THEM FOR THE ORDER AND ASKING THEM TO LEAVE A REVIEW

---

- FOLLOW UP WITH CUSTOMER SUPPORT PROMPTLY

---

- ### SETUP;

---

- ADD A SHIPPING POLICY THROUGH EBAY'S BUSINESS POLICIES TO MAKE LISTING FASTER

---

- CONSIDER THE USE OF PROMOTED LISTINGS IF EBAY HAS MANY SIMILAR ITEMS ALREADY LISTED

---

Example Listing:



**Dolce Vita Zohara Mercury  
Leather Shoes - Women's 7.5**

**\*New in box**

New with box

**US \$74.99**

+\$8.00 shipping

Quantity:



**eBay Money Back Guarantee**

Get the item you ordered or your money back.

**Add to cart**

[View all details](#)

