

# HOW TO SELL YOUR CRAFTS ONLINE

DERRICK SUTTON





how to



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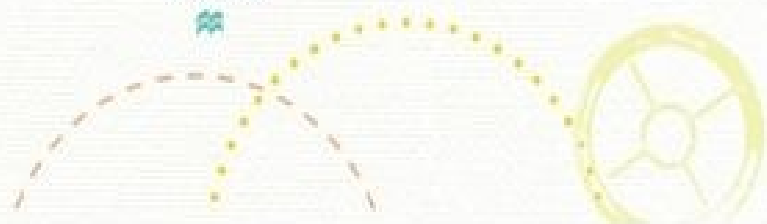
# CRAFTS ONLINE

Derrick Sutton



St. Martin's Griffin

New York





To Lora, Mum, Dad,  
Maja, Inez, Jeni,  
Queen Badger, and Auntie Gaye  
(for your eagle eyes!).  
I also dedicate this with heartfelt  
thanks to Andrea Hurst, for  
inspiring writers on  
the pier, and to  
everyone at Just  
Write!

# Acknowledgments

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**I WOULD** like to thank my wife, Lora, my Aunt Gaye, my agent Andrea Hurst, BJ Berti and Jasmin Faustino at St. Martin's Press, as well as everyone who generously agreed to be included in this book.

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# Introduction

**SELLING** your art, crafts, and designs has never been easier. There are now huge opportunities for creative people to not only sell their work to a staggering range of highly targeted buyers but also use the Internet to build a loyal and attentive online following. In the not-too-distant past your options were limited to craft fairs or local shops, word of mouth, or stores willing to sell your items (often for a hefty commission).

Today, the Internet has opened up a great window of opportunity for creative sellers and you now have a chance to showcase your talent before thousands of eager consumers.

You can set up your own Web site for a very affordable sum of money, but if you don't have the time, money, or inclination there are a number of online venues that are fully dedicated to artists and crafters, which will help sell your items for a reasonable fee.

Initially eBay became a site where artists and crafters could sell their work, but because eBay is primarily geared towards auctions it was not always an ideal venue to sell handmade items.

Everything changed in 2005 with the advent of Etsy, a marketplace dedicated to buying and selling all things handmade. The site has seen a meteoric rise and shows no signs of slowing. People are attracted to buying on Etsy for many reasons and certainly the ease with which you can buy beautiful unique and affordable items is a strong factor, but so, too, is the sense of community within Etsy.

Etsy has a rather unique proposition, since there are not many other retail outlets where you get to make such a personal connection and communicate directly with artists who are also sellers. Etsy's thriving community of artists and enthusiasts of all things handmade can become both addictive and highly rewarding.

You may wish to sell your art or crafts for a variety of reasons. Perhaps you create for fun and your house is being overrun with your works of art (a houseful of sock monkeys can be a problem!) or maybe you're an artist or photographer and you want to build an online presence and reach a wider audience. Your creative business may be a supplement to your income, or perhaps it's a full-time job.

Whatever your niche, craft, or creative expression, online marketing is vital to expanding your audience. In this book you will learn:

- The quickest and simplest way to optimize your Etsy shop for online exposure
- How to generate traffic and bring potential buyers to your Etsy shop
- Quick and straightforward ways to stand out from your competition
- The best way to photograph your items and key mistakes to avoid
- How to get the most from your listings using highly effective copywriting secrets
- How to gain an instant snapshot of your shop and where you need to focus your efforts
- Why blogging can give your Etsy shop a boost in traffic and sales
- How to place your Etsy shop on the map for local shoppers
- A strategy for securing your own Web address, which hosting site to use, and how to set up a blog with a one-click install
- Easy ways to create a wealth of fresh and relevant content and never suffer writer's block!
- Tips to improve your blog and help it to rank high within the search engines
- How to find the best "Web 2.0" sites and how they can direct a high amount of targeted traffic to your shop
- The effective way to use Facebook and Twitter and why so many people get it wrong

- How to make a video showcasing your creativity and upload it to YouTube
- ~~How to write articles about the subjects you love, have them published, and increase your visitors and potential customers~~

If you're new to Etsy, you can follow the advice given in each of the chapters and ensure your shop is fully optimized by the end of each lesson. If you already have an Etsy shop or are an experienced seller, then I still suggest you take the time to follow along with each of the techniques in this book. While some of the suggestions may seem obvious, the devil is in the details and sometimes the simple techniques are overlooked.

No matter how little experience you have using the Internet, this book has been written and designed to teach practical lessons with a low learning curve. These are techniques that can be put in practice as you read through the chapters and they will start working immediately. One of the best things about working on the Internet is that you have an amazing sense of leverage. As you send a "tweet" or share content on your Facebook Page, the work is amplified by as many people as you're connected to. The key is to connect with as many people as possible, and I will show you how.

The best way to work through this book is one chapter at a time. There will be no chance to overwhelm or information overload if you take each step slowly. Read through, implement the lessons, and move on.

By the time you've finished reading this book you'll have a strong grasp of online promotion and you will have learned many practical techniques, which will help people find your unique handmade items.

You've put your blood, sweat, and tears into your work, so you deserve to find the largest possible audience to share your creativity with!

So let's turn to chapter 1, where we will consider the best name for your Etsy shop—a name that will summarize your creativity and build your online brand.

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# 1

## Naming Your Etsy Shop

**IF YOU** haven't yet set up a shop on Etsy, you will need to visit the link below and fill in the details. One of these steps will be choosing a shop name, so I recommend you read this chapter before completing this step.

[www.etsy.com/register.php](http://www.etsy.com/register.php)

If you already own an Etsy shop and are experiencing low sales, then you may wish to open a new shop using the techniques in this chapter.

### Name

When it comes to choosing a name for your Etsy shop and for your Web site (which will be covered in more detail in a future chapter), it's really important that you take some time to find the best option—one that will both represent the items you're selling as well as help you rank in the search engines.

Take time to make a list of your most common items; is there a theme or "keyword" that can act as a neat summary for your creations?

Sometimes you may find Etsy shops whose shop names have very little in common with the products they are selling, and in terms of a shop being optimized for the Internet this can be counterproductive.

When it comes to choosing a name for your Etsy shop, you can use a keyword, which may help you to rank in the search engines. Or perhaps you prefer something more fun or personal, e.g., using your own name for your shop. Let's look at both options.

### KEYWORD

A keyword, in terms of the Internet, is a word that the search engines use to categorize and decide what a Web site, or piece of content or article, is about.

If, for instance, you're selling photographic art prints, then your keywords would be "Photographic Art"; if you were selling handmade Celtic jewelry, then your keywords would be "Celtic Jewelry". This may sound obvious, but working out the essence of what you're selling and choosing keywords will help you with the topics throughout this book, as well as give you a boost when it comes to placement with the search engines.

You could use your keywords within the title of your shop; for example, if you were selling fine art you could call your shop something along the lines of "Fine Art by \_\_\_\_\_", or if you were selling handmade tote bags, you could call the shop "Tote bags by \_\_\_\_\_."

This may sound unimaginative, but it can tell visitors to your shop, in a glance, exactly what you're

selling as well as helping the search engines decide where your shop fits within their rankings.

The sample Etsy shop I'm going to use throughout this book is selling sea glass jewelry. So I chose the shop name "Sea Glass Jewelry Box," I would be using my keywords "Sea Glass Jewelry." The search engines would "read" the shop title and this would give my shop a slight boost if I wanted to rank for the phrase "Sea Glass Jewelry."

Here's how my shop name would appear:

[www.etsy.com/shop/seaglassjewelryboxexample](http://www.etsy.com/shop/seaglassjewelryboxexample)

## **SOMETHING MORE FUN OR PERSONAL**

However, you may wish to have a more thoughtful or imaginative name for your shop or perhaps, as mentioned, you want to build your brand using your name. This is fine, because the techniques and exercises in this book are going to help you optimize your shop for the items you're selling. Think of using your keyword in your shop title as a small boost in search engine optimization, rather than an essential decision.

The one thing to bear in mind is that you should choose a brief, memorable name, which is both positive and appealing to your customers. You will also need to ensure that your shop name is between four and twenty characters long to fit within Etsy's requirements and bear in mind that, once you choose your shop name, it can't be changed at a later date.

A fun way to tackle this exercise is to brainstorm and write down a few names and options, perhaps using keywords as well as more personal choices, and then ask friends or family to help you decide.

## **A VARIETY OF ITEMS**

But what if you're selling more than one item? You may be creating and selling both jewelry and artwork, so how do you choose a name for your Etsy shop? If you're an existing seller, then you could run a simple analysis of your shop and decide which item sells the most and is of the most interest to browsers and customers, as well as having the highest value. If you're new to selling, then you could still use the above solution, analyzing your items to see which of them you will be concentrating your efforts on and are going to be the most profitable.

If you're planning on selling more than one type of product and they have nothing in common, for example, sea glass jewelry and landscape photography, then there is no reason why you can't open two Etsy shops. The only thing you need to bear in mind is that you must link your shops by disclosing them in each shop's announcement.

If you're selling different items, then you can work towards your shop having a "theme," which will unite your creations. This can be achieved in a number of ways (all of which are covered in future chapters). A few ways to ensure your shop stands out from other sellers and has a strong sense of unity is your choice of shop name, distinct and sharp photography as well as the color schemes you use for backgrounds in your photographs, how you title your items, and your Etsy banner. If you tie all of these together, then your shop will have a distinctive and identifiable look and feel, even if you are selling different items.

If you take a little time to look at a cross section of Etsy shops, you will see how organized and well-presented some of them are, as opposed to the less well-planned shops, which can sometimes

look fairly chaotic and haphazard and do not have a clear theme.

~~Whether you're going to start a new Etsy shop with a keyword-specific name or stick with an existing shop, you'll need to ensure your store is fully optimized for the search engines. This topic covered in chapter 2.~~

### **ACTION STEPS**

- 🕒 Find keywords that summarize your items for your Etsy shop name, or choose a warm, memorable, and professional name.
- 🕒 Analyze a cross section of Etsy shops to see how other sellers represent themselves through their shop names.
- 🕒 Get a second opinion—conduct a poll with friends, family, or colleagues and ask them to choose the best name for your shop from a list of brainstormed suggestions.



---

## 2

### Search Engine Optimization

**NOW THAT** you've found a name for your Etsy shop, it's time to ensure maximum exposure in the search engines by optimizing your shop. Search Engine Optimization (or SEO) can sound a little daunting if you're new to the subject, but it's really very simple. It's like holding up a sign that tells the search engines what your Web site is about so that they can decide where to place you within the results.

There are several areas where you can place keywords within your shop that will optimize your shop and improve your ranking. The first one is your "title tag."

When you open a Web browser and visit a Web site, you can see its title tag in the top left-hand corner of your screen.

For example, visit Etsy's front page and look at the top of the screen and you should see the words "Etsy—your place to buy and sell all things handmade, vintage, and supplies." That is Etsy's title tag.

### Title Tags

Your Etsy shop will have its own title tag, and ensuring that you're using a relevant keyword can help optimize your shop for the search engines.

To enter your title tag, you need to sign in to "Your Etsy," look to the left of the menu and under "Shop Settings," and click on "Info & Appearance":



On the next page, the first option under "Shop Info" is "Shop Title," and as you can see below I've entered my keywords:



If I had a shop name, I would write something like "Sea Glass Jewelry by———." Once you click on "Save" and click on your Etsy shop's home page (the page your customer sees), you should see your keyword in the top left-hand corner of your Internet browser.

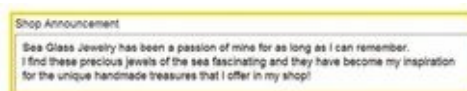
The next place you need to optimize for your keyword is your shop announcement.

To set this up, click on "Your Etsy," look to the left, and under "Shop Settings" click on "Info &

Appearance.”

I’ve used my keywords in my sample shop announcement shown below. This is a really important field because it’s the first thing people see; so you will want to spend some time and thought on the information you add. Not only do the search engines read this area, but so will potential customers and while you need to include your keywords, you should focus equal attention on writing something that will captivate human readers.

In my example, I’ve used my keywords upfront by starting my announcement with them: “Sea Glass Jewelry.”



It’s a good idea to keep your shop announcement brief. Occasionally I visit Etsy shops that have a huge block of text, and this can be a little overwhelming and off-putting, plus it pushes the listing farther down the page, where they may not be immediately visible.

## [Sections](#)

The search engines also scan your shop sections, as shown in the following illustration:



Again, I’ve ensured the words “Sea Glass Jewelry” are included in my first section because they are my main keywords. You will want to do the same, by including your main keywords in the first section and then creating related sections that utilize your other keywords.

For ideas for relating keywords, you could use the above example or get a wealth of related keywords through Google Insights:

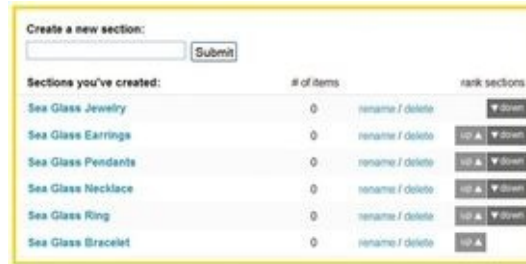
[www.google.com/insights/search/](http://www.google.com/insights/search/)

By adding your main phrase in the Google Insights search box, you can find related phrases.

To add new sections to your Etsy shop, log in, go to “Your Etsy,” “Shop Settings,” and “Info & Appearance,” and then select “Sections” from the menu at the top of the page:



A shop sections dialogue box will now show on your screen where you can choose your section. Below is an illustration of the sections I chose to add, and naturally my first choice is “Sea Glass Jewelry,” as these are the first keywords I want the search engines to scan:



Once you’ve filled out the sections and listed items under each section, they’ll appear on your main Etsy page.

This has a twofold benefit: it not only improves the SEO for your shop; it also makes customer lives a lot easier if they want to search through your shop for specific items.

Other areas where you should ensure you include your keywords are in the titles, descriptions, and tags of your listings, although these areas are covered in more detail in future chapters.

## **Beware of Keyword Stuffing!**

By using your keywords up front in a few of your listing titles, as well as descriptions and tags, you help to optimize your shop for your chosen phrase. However, you need to keep this balanced; overuse of a phrase can be seen as “keyword stuffing.” In extreme cases, the search engines have been known to penalize Web sites for abusing their system by giving them a lower ranking.

So as tempting as it can be to use your keywords as often as possible, it’s better to use them moderately, and this is easily done by writing unique, enticing, and balanced descriptions that read well for the customer and are liberally peppered with your keywords.

### **ACTION STEPS**

- ⦿ Ensure your keywords are contained in your title tag, shop announcement, and shop sections.
- ⦿ Include your keywords in a few of your listing titles and in the first few words of your descriptions (taking care to avoid keyword “stuffing”).

---

## 3

### Your Etsy Banner

**YOUR BANNER** is the virtual equivalent of the shop signs you find outside retail stores, and when you consider the amount of time and money that corporations and main-street shops spend on their logos and branding, it's clear that this is a key area of significance. Likewise, the banner you choose for your Etsy shop needs to both be eye-catching and convey a sense of professionalism.

Occasionally I see Etsy shops that don't make use of a banner at all. This can lead to their shop looking a little "flat," and it's definitely a missed opportunity to attract the interest of potential buyers by building anticipation and catching their attention.

A good banner really stands out on the page. As well as being eye-catching, it may feature items that the seller has created, but ideally it will always be relevant to your shop, simple, and uncluttered.

Very involved banners, with an assortment of strange colors, shapes, and abstract designs, can be effective if you're selling contemporary abstract art, but if you're selling traditional jewelry or knitwear then it could be slightly confusing for the shopper. Think of your banner as part of your brand.

Common mistakes with a poorly designed banner include blurred photographs and a clunky font with the shop name stretched, distorted, or even disappearing over the edge of the banner.

If you're disappointed with your banner or don't have one yet, then don't worry as it's easily fixed. There are some terrific designers on Etsy who sell banners, or you can create your own.

#### Buying a Banner

To find someone who will create your banner for you, run a search on Etsy:



You can find a number of creative, professional designers who will design a banner for you for a reasonable price.

You can also buy ready-made banners, and while these are often cheaper, bear in mind that other Etsy shops may also use the same design. If you have a little money, then it could be worth spending to have something absolutely unique created for your shop.

If you're going to buy a banner, you should also ask for an avatar, which is the small graphic that appears by your username when you send a conversation ("convo" in Etsy language) or comment on the forums within Etsy. You can usually find designers who offer packages that include banner, avatar, and business card designs, which can save a lot of time and effort and add to your business branding.

Another place where you can discover a range of designers is a Web site called fiverr, which has offers for all sorts of online work, and all for the princely sum of \$5! You should take time to check feedback before hiring and you can also send e-mails asking to see samples of their work. You can find out more by visiting:

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[www.fiverr.com/](http://www.fiverr.com/)

## **THE DIY BANNER**

If you have experience and own photo-editing software such as Adobe Photoshop, then you should be able to make a banner in no time at all.

If you don't own Photoshop, then there is an excellent free and open-source alternative called GIMP (which stands for GNU Image Manipulation Program) at [www.gimp.org](http://www.gimp.org), and not only is the price very reasonable (as in free), but there's plenty of support and forums where you can find an abundance of knowledge and help.

One drawback with programs such as Photoshop and GIMP is that they carry a steep learning curve. It can take months or even years of exploration to become familiar with the vast array of tools they offer.

Thankfully, there's a fantastic simple and free alternative you can use called pixlr:

[www.pixlr.com/](http://www.pixlr.com/)

This is an online service, which means you don't need to download software and you can create your banner or upload and edit images online.

## **IDEAS**

A great way to start the design process is by gathering ideas. If you are feeling stuck, start by creating a simple banner that includes your Etsy shop name and a one-line phrase summarizing your art or craft. For instance, my Etsy shop might have the shop name "Sea Glass Jewelry Box" and my "one-line phrase" below might be "Sparkling Jewels Shaped by the Sea."

If you want to develop ideas for designing your banner, looking at examples can help to get those creative juices flowing. You can take a look at some of Etsy's top sellers by using the ever-helpful Craft Count.

[www.craftcount.com](http://www.craftcount.com)

As you look through the top results, make a note of their banners (taking a moment to analyze the photography and how items are listed can also be highly informative). Is it eye-catching? Are they using a clear and vibrant font? Does it represent their items, brand, or style? Would it encourage someone to browse through their shops? These are the targets that we want to hit when it comes to a well-designed banner.

## [MAKING A BANNER ON PIXLR](#)

I'm going to make a banner on pixlr for my imaginary Etsy shop so that you can see all the steps.

First, head on over to pixlr at:

[www.pixlr.com/](http://www.pixlr.com/)

You can either create a brand-new image yourself or make your banner using the theme of your Etsy shop, which is the option I'm going to choose for this example.

First, select "Open image editor":



Then click on "Create a new image":



Etsy recommends that your banner measures 760 pixels wide by 100 pixels high, so this is the image size that you need to type into pixlr:



Now you have a blank white canvas to work with:



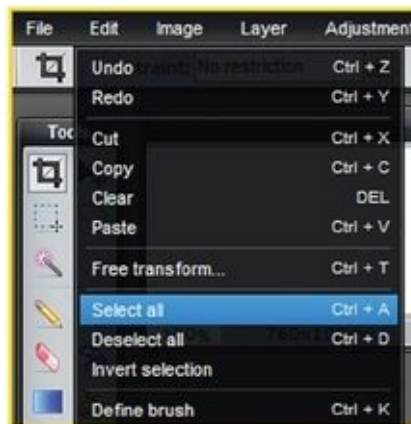
At this stage, you could play around with colors and fonts and create a banner from scratch, but I'm going to use an image from my computer. To do this, go to the top of the menu on pixlr and select "File," then "Open":



Now you need to navigate to the folder on your computer and find the photograph you'll be working with.

In this instance I have a photograph from the beach with a selection of stones, which ties in with the beach theme for my sample sea glass jewelry shop.

Once you've opened the image you want to use, you need to select it. You can do this either by clicking "Control" and "A" on your keyboard or going to the menu and selecting "Edit," then "Select all":



Now that your image is selected, you'll see dashed lines, sometimes referred to as "running ants" surrounding your image.

To copy either press "Control" and "C" or select "Edit" from the menu and click "Copy."

Then navigate back to the blank banner you made a moment ago and press "Control" and "V", select "Edit" from the menu and then "Paste."

Once your picture has been pasted into your banner, you'll probably want to reposition it. In my example I want to shrink the picture because for now it's too large:



You can shrink your image by enlarging the canvas you're working on, which will make the transformation process easier.

---

To do this, click and drag the field in the bottom right-hand corner as shown below:



Now it's time to transform the image. I want to resize mine, so I can either go to "Edit" and click on "Free Transform" or click "Control" (or "Command" for Macs) and "T".

In free-transform mode you'll see an outline around your picture and a small square box, which you can then drag and drop until it's in the position that best works for you. You need to hold down the Shift key on your keyboard as you resize, in order to keep your picture from warping.



Once you've shrunk your image, you can click off the corner box and then click anywhere within the picture to drag and drop it around the screen until it's in the best position.

When you're happy with the placement of your image, simply press "Enter" or "Return" on your keyboard.



Now that I have the base for my banner, it's time to add text.

You can access the "type" tool on the left-hand "Tools" sidebar either by pressing "T" on your keyboard or by selecting it as shown below:



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sample content of How to Sell Your Crafts Online: A Step-by-Step Guide to Successful Sales on Etsy and Beyond

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- [click Overbite \(Insatiable, Book 2\)](#)
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