

HOW TO

WHATNOT

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO
SELLING ON WHATNOT

USA



The Complete Guide to Selling on Whatnot

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THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO SELLING ON WHATNOT

From Beginner to Successful Live Seller

Your Step-by-Step Roadmap to Building a Profitable Business
on the Fastest-Growing Live Shopping Platform



2026 Edition

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Chapter 1: What is Whatnot?

Whatnot is a revolutionary live-stream shopping platform that has transformed the way people buy and sell collectibles, fashion, and unique items. Founded in 2019, the platform started as a marketplace for Funko Pops and has since expanded to include over 50 categories, from trading cards and vintage clothing to electronics and live plants.

Think of it as a fusion of eBay's auction model, TikTok's video experience, and the community vibe of a collectors' convention – all in one app. Sellers host real-time shows where viewers can interact, ask questions, and bid on items as they're showcased.

Why Whatnot is Different

What sets Whatnot apart from traditional marketplaces is its live, interactive format. Buyers don't just scroll through static listings – they engage with sellers in real time, creating an exciting shopping experience that drives faster sales and builds genuine community connections.

Key Statistics

- Over \$3 billion in gross merchandise volume (GMV) in 2024
- Buyers spend an average of 80 minutes daily watching live streams
- Users make 10x more transactions compared to other peer-to-peer marketplaces
- The average Whatnot seller earns \$25,000 per year
- Over 175,000 hours of live streams hosted weekly

Two Ways to Sell

Live Shows: Host real-time auctions where you showcase items, chat with viewers, and create excitement through bidding wars. This is where Whatnot truly shines.

Marketplace Listings: List items in your shop at fixed prices (Buy It Now) for buyers to purchase anytime, even when you're not live. This provides passive income between shows.

Chapter 2: Getting Started – Your First Steps

Step 1: Create Your Whatnot Account

Download the Whatnot app from the Apple App Store or Google Play, or visit whatnot.com. Sign up using your email or phone number and choose a username that reflects your brand. You must be at least 18 years old to sell on the platform.

Step 2: Apply to Become a Seller

Once your account is created, tap the '+ Sell' button in the app or visit whatnot.com/apply-to-sell. You'll complete a short application that asks about:

1. Your selling experience
2. The types of items you plan to sell
3. Your primary selling category
4. Your average monthly sales (if you already sell online)

The application typically takes 5-7 minutes to complete. Be honest and detailed in your answers – Whatnot wants to ensure quality sellers join the platform.

Step 3: Set Up Your Payment

Once approved, connect your bank account through Stripe to receive payments. You'll be paid 48-72 hours after each order is delivered to the buyer. Payments appear as Whatnot credit in your account, which you can then transfer to your bank.

Step 4: Configure Your Shipping Settings

Before going live, set up your shipping preferences in the Seller Hub. This includes your default shipping methods, return address, and weight profiles for different item types. Accurate shipping weights are crucial – underestimating can cause returns, while overestimating makes buyers pay too much.

Essential Equipment Checklist

- Smartphone with good camera (iPhone or Android)
- Phone tripod or stand for stable video
- Ring light or good lighting setup
- External microphone (optional but recommended)
- Reliable internet connection
- Clean, organized background
- Shipping supplies (boxes, bubble wrap, tape, labels)
- Scale for weighing packages

Chapter 3: Choosing Your Niche

Selecting the right niche is one of the most important decisions you'll make as a Whatnot seller. While you can sell across multiple categories, focusing on a specific niche helps you build expertise, attract dedicated buyers, and establish your brand.

Top Performing Categories on Whatnot

Trading Card Games (TCG)

With over 15,000 live shows scheduled at any time, TCG is a cornerstone category. Pokémon cards lead the pack, driven by nostalgia and collector demand. Graded cards have seen search increases of over 255%, making authentication and grading services particularly valuable.

Women's Fashion

One of the largest categories with around 13,000 live streams active at any time. Popular subcategories include vintage clothing (+55% search growth), designer vintage (+65%), contemporary fashion, and activewear. Pallet flippers selling NWT (new with tags) inventory from major retailers are thriving.

Sports Cards

A massive opportunity, especially with the rise of women's sports collectibles. WNBA searches have surged over 1,500%, and athletes like Caitlin Clark have driven significant collector interest. Graded singles and authenticated memorabilia perform exceptionally well.

Toys and Collectibles

Funko Pops were Whatnot's original category and remain strong. Other popular items include vintage toys, LEGO sets, and limited-edition releases. Nostalgia drives significant purchasing behavior in this space.

Coins and Money

This category enjoys reduced commission rates (4% vs 8%) and appeals to serious collectors. Error coins and global numismatics have seen growing interest. Authentication and condition are paramount.

Electronics

Another reduced-fee category at 5% commission. Popular items include gaming consoles, smartphones, and tech accessories. Condition disclosure and testing are essential for success.

Live Plants

A unique and growing category with high-value items like variegated Monstera and rare Anthuriums. Premium plants appeal to collectors willing to invest significantly. Proper packaging knowledge is essential.

How to Choose Your Niche

1. **Follow your passion:** Knowledge and enthusiasm are contagious. Buyers can tell when you genuinely love what you sell.
2. **Assess your access:** Can you source inventory consistently? Consider local thrift stores, estate sales, liquidation pallets, or wholesale suppliers.
3. **Research competition:** Watch existing sellers in your target category. Note their pricing, presentation, and audience engagement.
4. **Consider profit margins:** Some categories have higher average sale prices but may require more initial investment.
5. **Think about shipping:** Smaller, lighter items are easier and cheaper to ship. Fragile items require careful packaging expertise.

Chapter 4: Understanding Fees and Earnings

Understanding Whatnot's fee structure is essential for pricing your items profitably. The good news: fees are straightforward and generally lower than many competing platforms.

Fee Structure Overview

Fee Type	Rate	Applied To
Standard Commission	8%	Final sale price
Electronics Commission	5%	Final sale price
Coins & Money Commission	4%	Final sale price
Payment Processing	2.9% + \$0.30	Total order value
Listing Fees	FREE	N/A

Example Calculation: You sell an item for \$50. The buyer pays \$8.70 for shipping, making the total order \$58.70.

- Commission: $\$50 \times 8\% = \4.00
- Payment Processing: $\$58.70 \times 2.9\% + \$0.30 = \$2.00$
- Your Earnings: $\$50 - \$4.00 - \$2.00 = \44.00

Total fees typically amount to 11-12% of the sale, which is competitive compared to eBay's 13-15% average.

When You Get Paid

Payments become available 48-72 hours after the buyer's order is delivered. For new sellers, you'll be paid on an item-by-item basis until you process 1,000 orders or reach \$100,000 in sales.

Chapter 5: Setting Up Your First Live Show

Before the Show

Prepare Your Inventory

- Organize items in the order you plan to show them
- Take clear photos for quality listings
- Set starting prices based on market research
- Pre-load items to your show so buyers can preview and pre-bid
- Have accurate weights ready for each item

Set Up Your Space

- Ensure good lighting – ring lights work well
- Use a clean, uncluttered background
- Position your phone on a stable tripod
- Test your audio – external microphones help
- Check your internet connection stability

Schedule Your Show

1. Tap the '+' icon and select 'Schedule a Show'
2. Add a clear, descriptive title (e.g., 'Vintage Designer Handbags Auction')
3. Create an eye-catching thumbnail image
4. Select the correct category and subcategory
5. Choose your shipping settings for this show
6. Add a preview video to give viewers a sneak peek

Use Rehearsal Mode

Whatnot offers a Rehearsal Mode that lets you practice going live without any viewers. Use this to familiarize yourself with the interface, test your setup, and build confidence before your first real show.

Listing Types

Temporary Listings: Quick to create with minimal details. Only visible during your live show and disappear when it ends. Good for fast-paced shows.

Quality Listings: Require detailed descriptions and photos but stay active in your marketplace after the show. Enable features like Flash Sales.

Chapter 6: Mastering the Art of Live Selling

Engagement Techniques

Build Connection with Your Audience

- Greet viewers by name when they join
- Respond to comments and questions promptly
- Share stories about your items and your passion
- Be authentic – viewers can tell when you're genuine
- Don't worry about being camera-shy – many successful sellers focus on items, not their face

Keep the Energy High

- Play royalty-free background music at low volume
- Keep auctions moving – don't let dead air drag on
- Show enthusiasm for your products
- Celebrate wins and sales with your audience
- Use giveaways to attract and retain viewers

Show Format Options

Auctions: Classic bidding format where buyers compete for items. Creates excitement and FOMO (fear of missing out).

Buy It Now (BIN): Fixed-price items that buyers can purchase immediately. Good for items with clear market value.

Flash Sales: Temporarily discount BIN items during your show to create urgency.

Giveaways: Free items that build goodwill and attract new viewers. You pay shipping costs.

Pro Tips from Top Sellers

1. Consistency is king: Set a regular streaming schedule and stick to it. Showing up at the same times weekly is more important than the specific times you choose.
2. Start with lower prices: As a new seller, don't expect full retail value immediately. Build trust and reputation first.
3. Keep shows moving: Don't wait more than a minute to run an item once someone shows interest.
4. Use tools wisely: The Whatnot Randomizer (spin wheel) and countdown timers add excitement.
5. Avoid peak competition initially: Major evenings have lots of experienced sellers live. Consider off-peak times while building your audience.

Chapter 7: Shipping and Fulfilment

Efficient shipping is crucial for customer satisfaction and your seller rating. Whatnot requires you to ship within 2 business days of the sale.

Shipping Options

- USPS Ground Advantage: For packages under 1 lb or over 5 lbs. Delivery in 2-5 business days.
- USPS Priority Mail: For packages 1-5 lbs. Whatnot offers a flat rate of \$9.21. Delivery in 1-3 business days.
- Flat Rate Packaging: Fixed price up to 70 lbs using USPS Flat Rate boxes. Good for heavy items.
- Smart Bundling: Whatnot automatically combines items from the same buyer to reduce shipping costs.

Packaging Guidelines

General Rules

- Always use protective materials (bubble wrap, packing peanuts, air pillows)
- Never leave empty space that allows items to move
- Don't overfill packages - items can get squashed
- Use appropriate box or mailer size for the item

Category-Specific Tips

Trading Cards: Use penny sleeves and top loaders. Tape top loaders closed with painter's tape. Ship in bubble mailers or rigid mailers. Place slabs in graded card sleeves.

Comics: Ship in comic mailers or cardboard boxes, never bubble mailers. All comics must be bagged and boarded. Use cardboard to stabilise. Wrap slabbed comics in bubble wrap.

Collectibles: Wrap in protective material before boxing. Avoid airbag protectors for smaller items as they can crush them.

Label Generation

1. Access your Shipments page in Seller Hub
2. Review shipment details (weight, dimensions)
3. Generate labels one at a time or in bulk
4. Print packing slips (optional but helpful)
5. Match labels to packages using packing slips
6. Request a SCAN form to combine all shipments for easy carrier acceptance

Important: Always get proof of drop-off from the carrier. Keep receipts until orders are confirmed delivered and payment is received.

Chapter 8: Growing Your Audience

Building a loyal following is essential for long-term success on Whatnot. The platform rewards engaged sellers with algorithmic visibility.

In-App Promotion Tools

Promote Full Show

Set an hourly budget to boost your show's visibility across Whatnot feeds throughout your entire stream. Your show appears in more prominent positions, reaching relevant buyers.

Show Boost

A 15-minute surge in visibility, perfect for highlighting special items or key moments in your show. Great for when you're about to auction something exciting.

Giveaways

One of the most effective ways to attract new followers. You pay only for shipping, and giveaways create goodwill and bring new viewers to your shows.

Social Media Marketing

- Share upcoming show announcements on Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook
- Post behind-the-scenes content of your sourcing and packaging
- Create product teasers and unboxing videos
- Use Whatnot Clips to capture exciting moments and share them
- Tag Whatnot's category accounts for potential reposts
- Multicast to bring existing followers from other platforms

Community Engagement

1. Watch other sellers: Attend shows in your niche, participate in chat, and learn from successful sellers.
2. Follow back: Reciprocity helps build community. Follow buyers and other sellers.
3. Cross-promote: Partner with complementary sellers for shoutouts and co-hosted events.
4. Join 'raid trains': Whatnot allows sellers to send viewers to another show when theirs ends.
5. Facebook groups: Join seller communities to share tips, network, and promote shows.

Building Your Email List

Don't rely solely on algorithms. Collect email addresses from loyal buyers to send show announcements directly. This ensures your fans never miss a stream.

Chapter 9: Advanced Strategies and Tips

Optimize Your Listings

- Use clear, high-quality photos with good lighting
- Write detailed, accurate descriptions
- Include relevant keywords buyers might search for
- Price competitively based on recent sales data
- Keep your marketplace filled for passive sales between shows

Diversify Your Inventory

While niche focus is important, having variety within your category helps appeal to different buyers. Mix price points from affordable items to premium pieces. This helps new buyers test you out while giving loyal customers exciting options.

Sourcing Strategies

- Thrift stores and charity shops: Great for vintage and unique finds at low cost.
- Estate sales and auctions: Source entire collections or rare items.
- Liquidation pallets: Buy overstock from major retailers. Popular for fashion sellers.
- Wholesale suppliers: Build relationships for consistent inventory.
- Other platforms: Sync your Poshmark closet to Whatnot for additional exposure.

Analytics and Tracking

Use Whatnot's built-in analytics to understand your business. Track which items sell best, optimal show times, and audience engagement. Adjust your strategy based on data, not just intuition.

- Monitor your sell-through rate
- Track which show times get best attendance
- Analyze customer feedback for improvement ideas
- Keep records of costs for accurate profit calculation

Customer Service Excellence

- Respond to messages quickly (within hours, not days)
- Be honest about item conditions and flaws
- Handle problems gracefully - your reputation matters
- Add personal touches like thank-you cards or freebies
- Use branded packaging to create memorable experiences

Chapter 10: Common Mistakes to Avoid

Starting Out

1. Expecting instant success: Building a following takes time. Focus on relationships first, profits second.
2. Pricing too high initially: New sellers need to build trust. Start competitive and increase as your reputation grows.
3. Inconsistent scheduling: Irregular shows make it hard for followers to find you. Set a schedule and stick to it.
4. Poor lighting and audio: First impressions matter. Invest in basic equipment before going live.

During Shows

- Dead air: Keep the energy up. Don't leave long pauses waiting for more bidders.
- Ignoring the chat: Engagement is everything. Greet viewers and respond to questions.
- Poor item presentation: Show items clearly from multiple angles. Disclose any flaws honestly.
- Disorganized inventory: Know where everything is. Searching for items on camera looks unprofessional.

Shipping Errors

- Inaccurate weights: Underestimating causes returns; overestimating overcharges buyers.
- Poor packaging: Damaged items destroy your reputation. Follow category-specific guidelines.
- Late shipping: You have 2 business days. Consistent lateness can lead to account action.
- Wrong packaging type: Match your packaging to your label type. Don't use Flat Rate boxes with non-Flat Rate labels.

Business Mistakes

- Not tracking costs: Know your acquisition costs, fees, and shipping to calculate actual profit.
- Ignoring taxes: Keep records. Whatnot provides seller statements for reporting.
- Over-investing in inventory: Start small and scale as you learn what sells.
- Neglecting marketplace listings: Keep your shop stocked for passive sales between shows.

Conclusion: Your Whatnot Journey Begins

Whatnot represents an exciting opportunity for entrepreneurs, collectors, and creators to build profitable businesses while doing what they love. The platform's unique combination of live entertainment and e-commerce creates experiences that static marketplaces simply cannot match. Success on Whatnot doesn't require millions of followers or years of experience. It requires consistency, authenticity, and a willingness to learn. Every top seller on the platform started with zero followers and built their community one viewer at a time.

Key Takeaways

- Start now: The best time to begin is today. Apply to sell and practice with Rehearsal Mode.
- Be consistent: Set a schedule and show up. Consistency builds audience trust.
- Focus on community: Engage with viewers, support other sellers, and build genuine connections.
- Learn continuously: Watch successful sellers, read the Help Center, and adapt your approach.
- Have fun: Enthusiasm is contagious. When you enjoy what you're doing, buyers respond.

The live commerce market is projected to reach \$2.4 trillion globally by 2033. Whatnot is at the forefront of this revolution, and there's never been a better time to join.

Your first 1,000 sales are waiting. Your community is out there. The only question is: when will you go live?

Good luck on your Whatnot journey!

Resources

Official Whatnot Links

- Whatnot Website: whatnot.com
- Whatnot Help Center: help.whatnot.com
- Seller Academy: selleracademy.whatnot.com
- Apply to Sell: whatnot.com/apply-to-sell

Recommended Equipment

- Smartphone tripod/phone stand
- Ring light (10-18 inch recommended)
- Lavalier microphone or USB condenser mic
- Thermal label printer (for high-volume shipping)
- Digital scale (for accurate shipping weights)

Shipping Supplies

- Bubble mailers (various sizes)
- Cardboard boxes
- Bubble wrap and packing paper
- Packing tape
- Penny sleeves and top loaders (for cards)
- Comic bags and boards (for comics)
- USPS Flat Rate boxes (free from USPS)

