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The San Francisco PESA Summit

Posted by [Colin Rule](#) on September 27, 2006 at 01:58 PM in [General](#) , [Musings from Colin Rule](#) | [Permalink](#)



Last week I was lucky enough to attend the [Professional eBay Seller's Alliance \(PESA\)](#) conference in San Francisco (PESA is an independent group - not an eBay program). It was a great gathering of about 200 or 300 top sellers. As usual, PESA put on a wonderful show, with good food and stimulating conversations. It was held at the Stanford Court Hotel, right at the top of Nob Hill, with amazing views in every direction. The sessions were great, with a lot of interesting information, but (as usual) the best discussions happened in the hallways.

We talked about the challenges facing sellers in terms of margin pressures, the recent crackdown on excessive shipping, the [re-balancing of the marketplace](#), and finding the right mix between stores and auction format listings. I was very eager to get some feedback on the new PayPal Dispute Resolution process, and most of it was quite positive. I made several pitches for people to fill out their Customer Service Messages in their seller profiles - it still amazes me that even top sellers don't know about that feature. Not all the conversations focused on challenges -- [Golf44bob](#) told me some amazing success stories about his recent diversification into the wine business. So it's clear opportunity is everywhere out there in the marketplace, you just have to identify it and then go after it aggressively.

I attended one of the roundtable lunches where eBay and PayPal employees outnumbered the sellers almost two-to-one. The PayPal and eBay delegation that came up the peninsula was definitely the largest group, but there were representatives from other companies there as well, including Google, Amazon, Prosper, and many others. I missed the dinner at the Foreign Cinema in the Mission District, but I heard the food was great (that's the challenge when the conference is in your home town - you can't stay out all night gallivanting because the wife expects you home in time to give the boys their bath... lol).

On Friday after the conference ended a smaller group of about 20 or 30 sellers came down the peninsula for a tour of eBay's north and south campuses. Sadly, as the driver was a little confused about directions, the delayed arrival kept me from acting as tour guide on north campus (PayPal's home) but several folks from our Community team were more than able replacements.

(It looks like the San Francisco conference pictures aren't yet up at [www.gopesa.org](#), but there's some good shots of last year's conference in Austin. Here's one of me alongside Steve Abernathy of SquareTrade as he awarded some iPod Nanos in a raffle on the roof deck of the Whole Foods corporate headquarters, with Jonathan Garriss, PESA Executive Director, by our side: [http://www.noblespirit.com/PESA_Austin/_DSC2163.jpg](#))

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