

Marketplace Fee Transparency Report

Q2 2026

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Executive Summary

Marketplace fees represent one of the most significant operational expenses faced by online sellers. Across Amazon, Walmart Marketplace, eBay, and Etsy, fee structures continue to evolve through changes to referral fees, transaction fees, fulfillment costs, advertising charges, payment processing expenses, and platform-specific service fees.

Despite the importance of these costs, sellers frequently encounter challenges understanding the complete cost of marketplace participation. Fee information is often dispersed across multiple policy documents, support resources, announcements, and platform updates, making it difficult for businesses to evaluate the financial impact of marketplace participation.

To address this challenge, Seller Transparency Hub conducted an independent review of marketplace fee structures and transparency practices during Q2 2026.

This report provides a comparative assessment of fee transparency across major marketplaces and highlights areas where improved visibility could benefit sellers, entrepreneurs, and small businesses.

Introduction

Digital marketplaces play an increasingly important role in the U.S. economy by providing businesses with access to customers, logistics infrastructure, payment processing systems, and marketing opportunities.

However, participation in these marketplaces requires sellers to navigate increasingly complex fee structures that can significantly affect profitability and long-term business planning.

For many small businesses, marketplace fees represent one of the largest controllable operating expenses.

Understanding these fees is critical for:

- Product pricing
- Inventory planning
- Profitability forecasting
- Marketplace diversification decisions

- Long-term business growth strategies

Seller Transparency Hub was established to improve access to marketplace fee information and provide independent transparency resources for sellers.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this report are:

1. Improve public understanding of marketplace fee structures.
 2. Document fee transparency practices across major marketplaces.
 3. Identify common challenges faced by marketplace sellers.
 4. Provide comparative analysis across platforms.
 5. Establish a foundation for ongoing marketplace transparency research.
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Scope of Analysis

Platforms Covered

This report evaluates publicly available fee information from:

- Amazon Marketplace
- Walmart Marketplace
- eBay
- Etsy

Reporting Period

April 1, 2026 through June 30, 2026

Data Sources

Information reviewed includes:

- Official fee schedules
 - Marketplace policy documentation
 - Seller help resources
 - Public announcements
 - Historical fee change notices
 - Marketplace support documentation
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Amazon Marketplace Fee Overview

Amazon maintains one of the most comprehensive marketplace ecosystems in the world.

Major Fee Categories

- Referral fees
- Fulfillment fees
- Monthly storage fees
- Long-term storage fees
- Returns processing fees
- Advertising costs
- Additional service fees

Transparency Observations

The Seller Transparency Hub identified several transparency challenges:

- Numerous fee categories affect total selling costs.
- Sellers must often consult multiple documentation sources.
- Historical fee changes are not consolidated into a centralized repository.
- New sellers may underestimate total operating costs.

Impact on Sellers

Amazon's fee structure can materially influence pricing strategies, profit margins, inventory decisions, and product selection.

Walmart Marketplace Fee Overview

Walmart Marketplace continues to expand as an important alternative marketplace for sellers seeking additional distribution channels.

Major Fee Categories

- Referral fees
- Optional fulfillment-related services
- Advertising expenses

Transparency Observations

- Fee schedules are generally less complex than Amazon.
- Category-specific fee structures may create confusion.
- Information is dispersed across multiple seller resources.

Impact on Sellers

Greater fee transparency may assist sellers evaluating whether to diversify beyond a single marketplace platform.

eBay Marketplace Fee Overview

eBay remains one of the largest online marketplaces and supports a diverse range of businesses.

Major Fee Categories

- Final value fees
- Listing-related fees
- Optional promotional fees
- Advertising services

Transparency Observations

- Fee calculations vary by category.
- Promotional options may increase total selling costs.
- Historical fee comparisons are not always easily accessible.

Impact on Sellers

Transparent fee information assists sellers in evaluating listing strategies and marketplace participation decisions.

Etsy Marketplace Fee Overview

Etsy serves a unique segment of the digital commerce economy by supporting artisans, creators, independent designers, vintage sellers, and micro-businesses.

Unlike larger general retail marketplaces, Etsy's seller community is heavily composed of entrepreneurs operating small-scale businesses.

Major Fee Categories

- Listing fees
- Transaction fees
- Payment processing fees
- Offsite advertising fees
- Etsy Ads expenses
- Currency conversion fees

Transparency Observations

The Seller Transparency Hub identified several areas where fee visibility could be improved:

- Total costs are distributed across multiple fee categories.
- Advertising-related fees can create uncertainty regarding final transaction costs.
- Historical fee changes may be difficult for sellers to track over time.
- New sellers often face challenges estimating total marketplace costs before launching products.

Impact on Small Businesses

Because many Etsy sellers operate micro-businesses, fee increases may have a disproportionate impact on profitability.

Improved transparency may support:

- Product pricing decisions
- Business planning
- Marketplace participation decisions
- Financial forecasting

Significance

The inclusion of Etsy broadens marketplace transparency research beyond large-scale retail platforms and reflects the growing importance of independent creators and small businesses within the digital economy.

Comparative Marketplace Analysis

Platform	Primary Fee Structure	Transparency Complexity
Amazon	Referral, fulfillment, storage, service fees	High
Walmart Marketplace	Referral fees	Medium
eBay	Final value fees and optional services	Medium
Etsy	Listing, transaction, advertising, payment processing fees	Medium-High

Key Findings

Several trends were observed across all platforms:

- Fee structures continue to increase in complexity.

- Sellers frequently struggle to calculate total selling costs.
 - Historical fee tracking remains limited.
 - Fee information is often fragmented across multiple resources.
 - Greater transparency would support informed business decision-making.
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Implications for Sellers

Transparent fee information is essential for:

- Pricing decisions
- Profitability analysis
- Marketplace selection
- Risk management
- Long-term planning

Improved visibility into marketplace fees can help sellers better understand operating costs and make more informed business decisions.

Public Interest Significance

Marketplace transparency benefits not only individual sellers but also the broader digital commerce ecosystem.

Small businesses increasingly rely on online marketplaces to reach customers throughout the United States and internationally.

Improved access to fee information contributes to:

- Greater market transparency
- Better-informed business decisions
- Increased accessibility of marketplace information
- Reduced information asymmetry
- Enhanced support for entrepreneurship and small business growth

Seller Transparency Hub seeks to advance these objectives through independent research, data collection, and public reporting.

Methodology

Seller Transparency Hub collects and reviews publicly available marketplace information.

Data categories include:

- Fee schedules
- Policy updates
- Historical fee changes
- Seller documentation
- Marketplace announcements

All findings are based on publicly available information available during the reporting period.

Future Research Roadmap

Future reports will include:

- Quarterly transparency reporting
- Historical fee benchmarking
- Expanded Etsy coverage
- Policy change monitoring
- Marketplace transparency indicators
- Seller-impact trend analysis
- Longitudinal marketplace research

The long-term objective is to create a publicly accessible repository documenting marketplace fee developments and transparency trends across major e-commerce ecosystems.

About Seller Transparency Hub

Seller Transparency Hub is an independent research initiative focused on marketplace fee transparency, seller policy research, and public-interest analysis of e-commerce platforms.

Website: <https://sellertransparency.com>

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