

AUCTION PLATFORM

Discovery & Requirements Guide

PURPOSE

This document helps you document your specific business needs, compare different software vendors side-by-side, and ensure you ask the right questions before committing to a platform.

PART 1: Operational Must-Haves (MVP Requirements)

Check the boxes for features that are absolutely essential for your Day 1 launch.

Branding & Independence

- White-Label Domain:** The site must live on my own domain (e.g., auctions.mycompany.com), not a third-party marketplace URL.
- Brand Customization:** Ability to use my logo, brand colors, and remove "Powered By" footers.
- Data Ownership:** I must legally own 100% of my bidder data, consignor lists, and sales history with the ability to export at any time.

Auction Types & Bidding Logic

- Timed Online Auctions:** Automated bidding with countdowns.
- Soft Close (Anti-Sniping):** Automatically extends bidding if a bid is placed in the final moments.
- Proxy / Max Bidding:** Allows bidders to set a maximum price and let the system bid for them.
- Bid Increments:** Configurable increment tables (e.g., bids go up by \$10 until \$100, then \$25).

Financials & Payments

- No "Platform Skim":** The software vendor must not take a percentage of my hammer price/sales.
- Automated Invoicing:** Invoices generated and emailed immediately upon auction close.
- Integrated Payments:** Direct integration with gateways (e.g., Fiserv, Stripe, Authorize.net) so funds go straight to my bank account.
- Sales Tax Automation:** Automatic calculation of sales tax based on buyer location.

Logistics & Admin

- Mobile Cataloging:** A dedicated mobile app for staff to take photos and write descriptions in the field (offline capability required).
- Bulk Uploads:** Ability to upload lot data via CSV for large inventories.

PART 2: The Wish List (Growth & Efficiency Features)

These features streamline operations as you scale. Rate importance: Low / Medium / High.

Feature	Importance	Notes on Your Needs
<p>Simulcast / Hybrid Bidding Stream live audio/video to allow online bidders to compete with a floor audience in real-time.</p>		
<p>Consignor Management Automated commission tracking, payouts, and generating seller settlement statements.</p>		
<p>Pickup Scheduling A system for buyers to book specific time slots for removal to prevent warehouse chaos.</p>		
<p>Soft Close Groups Linking related items (e.g., tractor + plow) so if one gets a bid, both stay open.</p>		
<p>Chargeback Mitigation Assistance or specialized tools to fight "friendly fraud" and credit card disputes.</p>		
<p>SMS/Text Alerts Notify bidders via text when they are outbid or when an auction is closing.</p>		
<p>API & Webhooks Ability to connect the auction data to external CRMs, ERPs, or marketing tools.</p>		

PART 3: Critical Questions for Vendors (Due Diligence)

Ask these questions to every software provider you interview. The answers will reveal hidden costs and risks.

1. The "Lock-In" Question

Question: *"If I leave your platform in 3 years, do I take my bidder's credit card tokens and user history with me, or do I lose them?"*

My Requirement: Full portability of customer data via CSV or API.

2. The Pricing Model Question

Question: *"Do you charge a 'performance fee,' 'platform fee,' or percentage of the hammer price on top of the subscription?"*

My Requirement: Flat-rate SaaS pricing. No penalty for success/high revenue.

3. The Traffic Question

Question: *"Do you market my items to your own database, or do I build my own SEO and bidder list?"*

My Requirement: I want to build my brand equity and SEO ranking, not feed a third-party marketplace.

4. The Support Question

Question: *"If my auction crashes at 7 PM on a Friday, who do I call?"*

My Requirement: Reliable support from people who understand the auction industry.

5. The Reliability Question

Question: *"What is your documented uptime for the last 12 months?"*

My Requirement: 99.99% uptime or better on enterprise-grade infrastructure (like AWS).

PART 4: Technical & Migration Needs

Use this section to list the systems you currently use that need to integrate with your new auction software.

Current Website Platform	(e.g., WordPress, Wix, Squarespace)
Payment Gateway	(e.g., Authorize.net, Stripe, Fiserv)
Email Marketing Tool	(e.g., Mailchimp, Constant Contact)
Current Auction Software	(if switching from another platform)
Migration Needs	Do you need "Concierge Migration" to scrape data from your old provider?

Vendor Comparison Scorecard

Use this grid to objectively compare your top vendor choices across the criteria that matter most.

Criteria	Vendor A	Vendor B	Vendor C
Financial Model (Flat Fee vs. % Commission)			
Data Ownership (100% Mine vs. Shared)			
White-Label Branding (Full vs. Limited)			
Mobile Admin App (Dedicated App vs. Browser)			
Hosting/Security (AWS Cloud / Uptime SLA)			
Support Quality (Auction Industry Experts)			
Payment Integration (Direct to My Bank)			
Overall Score			