



Account Reviews, Suspensions and Revivals

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to take you through three aspects of an Amazon account:

- Reviews
- Suspensions
- Revivals

Hopefully you never have to deal with any of these but they do occur, especially reviews. If your account ever does get suspended, you want to know what to do because the opportunity on Amazon is significant and you don't want a suspension to keep you from taking advantage of that opportunity. There are ways to revive a suspended account and this lesson will take you through the details of how to do that.

Account Reviews

Causes for Review

For an Amazon account to go into review, the account would need to fall under suspicion. The majority of Amazon selling is automated, but if they think you're doing something they don't want you to be doing, they will throw your account into a manual review, which is where an Amazon employee actually looks into your account activity to make a determination of whether or not you are doing things they like and whether or not they want to keep you on as a seller.

Some of the things that can cause an account to come under suspicion are:

- Account's customer metrics on drop
- Customers are complaining
- A-to-Z guarantee claims occur

These are just some of the things that can cause an account to fall under review. It should be noted that just because any of these should occur does not mean the account immediately falls under review, but if an unreasonable amount occurs, it will raise Amazon's suspicions and they will take action.

One positive point about an account review is that it is temporary, typically not lasting for more than a week.

However, there are a couple of negative points. First, depending on the situation, the selling privileges of the account can be suspended. When this happens, all the products already in your seller's list remain, but you won't be able to sell any and you won't be able to add new products.



Another negative point is that the release of funds is usually withheld. This is a standard Amazon practice – if they think you are doing something they might not like, they won't pay you. Interestingly, this sometimes happen right before you are to be paid (e.g. 13th day of the 14 day period). When this happens, you are not paid immediately upon completion of review – any withheld payments are paid out on the next pay period following reinstatement of your account. That said, you want to be sure and have a good cash balance on hand in case this should happen to your account.

Avoiding an Account Review

If at all possible, you want to avoid having your account go into review. There are some steps you can take to do this:

- **Tracking numbers** – where possible, enter tracking numbers on shipments of your products. Obviously you can't do this for Kindle books, but for all physical products, do your best to work with vendors to get tracking numbers. If Amazon sees you are entering tracking numbers for your orders, they are confident you are shipping out your products, which is their main concern.
- **Take it easy (in the first 28 days)** – when you first sign on with an Amazon seller account, your account does appear to be on a short leash. This lasts for approximately the first 28 days so you want to be careful of how aggressive you are with your account.
- **Don't list products you can't reliably fulfill** – this is EXTREMELY important. If you're working with a drop-shipper or a wholesaling company that isn't reliable or you ship your own products and don't manage that very well, you can run into all kinds of problems because you won't be shipping stuff on time, products don't get delivered, orders can get cancelled, etc. Whether you cancel the order or the customer does, that can create problems for you.
- **Be responsive to customer emails** – if a customer sends you a message asking for something, even if it is something you don't know the answer to, respond with something. Amazon is running a business and is lending their credibility to you, so you want to do everything you can to appease their customers.
- **Ask customers for seller reviews (Amazon actually recommends this)** – if your account does go into review, Amazon will sometimes ask you to go and have customers review you as a seller. This could be difficult in the beginning as you have fewer customers to rely on, so it becomes critical to get as many positive reviews of your seller account as possible.



Reacting to Account Review

If your account does go into review, Amazon will provide you with instructions, but most importantly you will want to:

- **Provide tracking numbers** – for orders already shipped, if you haven't already entered them.
- **Ask customers for reviews** – email those customers who have purchased your products, requesting they provide you with a seller review.
- **Provide Amazon with business/personal information (if requested)** – even if some of this information has been entered, Amazon may ask you to provide proof if they are questioning the information. If Amazon thinks your account is being linked to a suspended or blocked account, they may ask for personal information to determine if that's the case.
- **Be responsive to Amazon's email requests** – provide all the requested information you can as quickly as you can as a way of demonstrating to Amazon that you are doing everything you can to comply. You can even let them know this and request they open your account again, but be sure to respect the authority they have over your account.
- **Be prepared to provide your source of inventory (drop-shipping is OK)** – if you put inventory levels really high, this could make Amazon suspicious and they will want to know what the source of your inventory is.

Account Suspensions

Definition

An account that has gone into suspension has the following properties:

- **Permanent** – this is a permanent condition. You do NOT want this to happen.
- **Amazon revokes selling privileges** – you cannot add new products or sell products already on your seller's list. All you're able to do is ship products out and contact customers.
- **Funds are held for 90 days**
- **Say "adios" to this seller account** – you are still able to log in, which may be helpful for checking what products you had listed or any other pertinent information, but essentially this account is no longer useful.

As the lesson title indicates, there are ways of getting out of an account suspension, but this clearly is not a good situation to be in.



Avoiding Account Suspension

As with reviews, and even though there are ways to get out of an account suspension, you do want to avoid having your account suspended because it is a pain having to deal with a suspended account, the period of time occurring where you're not generating any sales, etc.

To avoid having your account suspended, consider the following:

- **Follow their product policies (don't add products they don't want to be selling)** – a resource is provided in this module regarding this, but typical products they don't want sold are:
 - pornography
 - fireworks
 - tobacco products
 - etc.

If there is anything you have a question about, you can email them or call them (check in your seller's administration area) and ask them if the product is okay. If they say so, get that person's name and write down the date of approval so that if the account does go into review because they don't like the product, you'll be able to provide this verification information. It may not save your account but it does provide a little leverage and some credibility that you're not intentionally trying to sell undesirable products.

- **Treat their customers well** – as with account reviews, watch your customer metrics, avoid getting too many refunds or A-to-Z guarantees, etc. When customers order something, ship it out on time and correctly, and you should avoid any of these kinds of problems.
- **Don't try to run multiple seller accounts...** – everything you are learning in this lesson will teach you how to run multiple seller accounts. You'll learn how to set up a new account that is not linked to your old account. Those same steps can be followed to set up multiple seller accounts. This is the very thing that Amazon does NOT want you to be doing, just as Google doesn't want you having multiple spots in Adwords and their PPC engine. They both want diversity but if an account is doing something they don't want, they certainly don't want this occurring across multiple accounts. They want to protect both the customer and the customer experience and one way of doing that is by disallowing multiple accounts.

It has been said that if you have very distinct product lines (e.g. supplements and books), you can contact Amazon and request that two separate seller accounts be allowed as these are two distinct business entities. You will inform them that both accounts will likely be running from the same computer or same IP address and ask that they not flag or suspend the accounts when this is discovered.

- If they tell you to stop doing something, STOP DOING IT (learned this first-hand) – don't try to be sneaky. There are plenty of opportunities to profit on Amazon (which you have



learned a lot of different ways of doing), so it's worth keeping your seller account open and avoiding having to go through the pain-in-the-butt process of recovering from a suspension. There may be temptation to go after profit-generating, low-hanging fruit, especially if you know how to promote products on Amazon, but avoid it at all cost.

Reacting to an Account Suspension

Should an account suspension ever occur, there are some things you can do in response:

- **Learn WHY your account was suspended** – they will try not to tell you or it won't be clear, but knowing why your account was suspended in the first place can help you to know what NOT to do the next time so it doesn't happen again.
- Prepare to not have access to your remaining balance for 90 days – when setting up your seller's account, you agreed to this term (it's in the documentation). They indicate they do this in case you're not fulfilling product orders, etc., enabling them to refund customers if it should come to that. All those refund requests would happen within the first 30 days but they hold it over for an extra 60 days.
- Write down a list of all computers and internet connections used to access your seller account before it was suspended – when setting up a new account, you want to make sure not to access it from any of those computers or connections in case the new account gets flagged as being linked to the suspended account.
- Prepare for Amazon Seller Revival ☺

How Amazon Links Accounts

Amazon is able to link accounts by a number of different ways:

- **IP address** – whatever internet connection you used (home, coffee shop, outsourcers (their IP address), etc.).
- **MAC Address** – this is the specific address of the device used to access the internet (each device has its own MAC address). Some say Amazon can track this and others say Amazon cannot. The recommendation is to play it safe – don't use any of the same devices previously used to access your new seller account.
- **Cookies** – when accessing your seller account or even opening emails from Amazon, a cookie can be installed on your computer. You want to make sure these are cleared out or, to be even safer, just don't ever open it from the same computer or IP address.
- **Personal account details**(billing information, bank accounts, name, products listed, etc.)

If you try to create a new account without being 100% careful (e.g. not taking into consideration any of the points just mentioned), you'll receive a message or an email from Amazon indicating that the new account was deemed to be associated with a blocked or suspended account and the new account will be suspended.



Account Revivals

If you have had an account suspended or you want to be able to run multiple seller accounts (not recommended) selling the same products, the following is a list of things you will need to successfully create a new account:

- **New internet connection** – be sure to access from a completely different connection point. A prepaid USB modem can be one way of getting a different IP address.
- **New computer (or device to connect)** – any new device will work.
- **New credit card** – it doesn't always work but you can try a prepaid credit card. The only reason you will need a credit card when setting up an account is that if you are not making enough money, Amazon will charge the \$40 / month charge to that credit card. Once you get set up and start selling, you shouldn't need that card again.
- **New business entity** – if you were making several thousands of dollars on your old account, it's probably worth the price to set up a new business entity.
- **New personal information (name, address, etc.)** – you likely won't need this address except perhaps for returns. If selling physical products, you will want an address where you can receive returns.
- **New bank account under different name** – it is said that Amazon cannot verify the name on a bank account so when setting up the account, you can use the same bank account but indicate a different name on that account. However, just to be 100% certain, keep everything clean by using all new information.

Conclusion: Tips

To conclude this lesson, here is a list of tips you can follow once you have successfully created a new seller's account in response to an old account being suspended:

- **NEVER give anyone access to your new seller account that doesn't need it** – keep everything as contained as possible. You don't want to be making some good money on Amazon and be worried that you will get shut down again.
- **Don't ever check any emails coming from your new account on internet connections or computers used with the old account** – checking emails from your new account on old internet connections/computers could get your new account flagged. Also, accessing emails from your old account on new internet connections/computers could also potentially get the new account flagged.
- **Outsource the whole operation and have them send you TEXT MESSAGE updates (not emails)** – this will avoid email tracking issues. Once you're already up and running, and especially if you are drop-shipping products or selling Kindle books, you can have an outsourcer (recommend a new one) check account emails, watch for customer service issues and process orders. If any issues come up, they can text message you with the



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information or any other updates. There are sites on the web that provide text messaging service (some are free) where the outsourcer can simply visit (no login required) and send you a text message directly to your phone, avoiding having them accidentally send you an email.