

FENCE MASTER AMERICA

The Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance gave Fence Master of Cherokee a jump start to expand its electric fence charger customer base to a global market.

The small, home-based manufacturer faced a dilemma when co-ops, Fence Master's primary vehicle for reaching customers, began changing their focus from product sales to providing services. To keep the company profitable, owner Karl Skinner had to cut expenses. He was ready to eliminate Fence Master's unprofitable website when manufacturing extension agent Doug Taylor had an idea.

With some coaxing, Skinner let Taylor experiment with selling a fence charger through the online auction site e-Bay. The test was successful with the product selling for more than 60 percent above the minimum reserve price. Still, Skinner was skeptical about using e-Bay as a serious sales tool. So Taylor decided to prove this was not just a one-time lucky shot. He put a second and third charger on e-Bay, this time teaching Skinner how to do it himself. The results were repeated and a new revenue stream was born.

More than two years after the e-Bay experiment, Skinner continues to sell chargers through the online auction site and now includes a link to his own website. His once dismal internet sales have soared, and Fence Master has struck a deal with a company based in France to produce a custom line of chargers sold through a catalog.

[Go to the Fence Master website](#)

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