

The Master Guide To Affiliate Marketing



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Hello, and welcome to the world of Internet marketing! In the age of the virtual consumer many companies have turned to the Internet in an attempt to increase their market share. The fact that the Internet has no geographical limits and allows instant access to information of a product within moments to hundreds of technologically advanced countries around the world has made it the first line of offense in the battle to hold a respected position on the market.

The Internet is a goldmine for small businesses; however, it is not only small business which can benefit from the selling power of the Internet. Many large retail chains have opened their own Internet storefronts and are making sales from there as well as from their physical locations. Stores such as Land's End, Wal-Mart and K-Mart have Internet locations from which they can make their sales. There are also a number of stores, such as Toys-R-Us and Borders, which have aligned with other large storefronts, such as Amazon, to market their products over the Internet.

Why is that significant to you?

Each of these companies wants to bring in the largest number of sales possible through their Internet marketing endeavors; however, there are millions of sales venues available to the Internet marketer and only so many hours in a day. In an attempt not to overstretch their own employees many of these companies will have affiliates do some of their marketing for them.

What is Affiliate Marketing?

If you are reading this chances are that you are already familiar with the concept of affiliate marketing and are seeking to learn methods by which you can bring in the greatest amount of profit as an affiliate. For those who are unfamiliar with this process, however, affiliate marketing is the process by which a larger company will extend the boundaries of its marketing team to include those entrepreneurs who are both shrewd and creative and would like to make a living from the Internet but do not have their own products to sell.

These affiliates will be brought in on “independent contractor” status and registered with the company. They will then be given the opportunity to work with members of the larger marketing team, exploring possible venues and strategies which they can use to maximize the amount of sales while minimizing the amount of out of pocket expense. These fledgling affiliates will then be sent out into the web to spread the word of their products.

Through various methods the companies will track the amount of sales their affiliates make and will grant them a commission on their sales. If you do not enjoy sales, this may just be the opportunity for you if you have always wanted to sell but do not want to be associated with the “used car salesman” stereotype. Some companies grant a higher commission on their sales than others; this is one of the items that should be considered when selecting a company with which to affiliate.

Choosing an Affiliate Company

Obviously, you cannot sell anything on the Internet if you do not have a product to sell. You are going to have to choose a company with which to affiliate yourself. The beauty of affiliate marketing is that since you are considered to be an independent contractor there is no limit to the amount of companies with which you can affiliate yourself. It is not at all uncommon for affiliates to be associated with three or more companies at a time; after all, the more products you have to sell the more profits you can bring in and the higher a commission you are going to receive.

It can be very tricky to work with more than one company at a time, however. It is going to be necessary for you to continuously monitor and improve your marketing strategies, and for this you are going to have to meticulously track each of your marketing attempts and the number of sales it brings in to determine whether you have a need to redirect your marketing campaign or if you are on the right track (this will be discussed in greater detail a little later).

When selecting a company with which to affiliate there are a number of factors which must be considered. First and foremost, you are going to want to ascertain that there is a place on the market for their product and that the place and the demand are large enough that it is going to turn a handsome profit for both of you. There are many companies which will turn to affiliates for their marketing needs but whose products simply do not create a high enough demand on the market to make it worth the time that their marketing team is going to pump into attempting to make a sale.

In order to determine the demand for a product take the time to look around at the competition (this is going to be a helpful part of your strategy later on as well, so do not disregard this step). If the competition has all launched a product and the company you are considering affiliating with is releasing the exact same product in an attempt to “keep up with the Joneses” you may want to carefully consider your position. Remember that the market changes almost daily; what creates a high demand today may be all but obsolete tomorrow. If the company with which you are considering affiliating is unable to keep ahead of the market than chances are it is not going to be a tremendous money maker.

However, a market with competition proves that money is being made in most cases. And according to Internet Marketing expert, John Reese, “It is 99.9% easier to make money where money is already being made.”

As marketers, we are often creative by nature. We want to seek out what is new and be the first to the market with the latest breakthrough, whether as an affiliate or with our own products. However, by taking a piece of the pie that is already being served up left and right all you need to do is out-market your competition. Given that most affiliates out there are not serious enough to invest in a report such as this, it’s really not that hard to out market most once you understand the basic fundamentals.

The decision of a product’s worth on the market is one that you are going to need to make on your own; there is no true science which

can determine the success of a product once it leaves the safety of its creator and goes out into the world. It is a matter of combining common sense and intuition with cold, hard facts to make an educated guess about if the promotion of the product will prove successful.

It is not only the quality and potential of the product marketed by your affiliate that should factor into the decision. Unfortunately, while in a Utopian society all companies would deal honestly with their affiliates and an affiliate would not find themselves losing out on a commission due to a lack of responsibility on the part of the larger corporation this is not always the case. It is important that any company with whom you choose to affiliate yourself have an established means of tracking the sales and commissions paid to their affiliates, as well as a good reputation among other affiliate marketers (more on this is coming up).

There are two means by which an affiliate may work. The first is to buy a company's products up front and sell the products which they have purchased on a private website. This is a method that is not greatly encouraged for the simple fact that in this case it is the affiliate that is taking all of the risk. Say you purchase one hundred units of product from a company with the intent to sell it but are only able to sell fifty units. That means that you have lost whatever money you spent for the additional fifty units while the company with whom you are affiliated has lost nothing. This method of sales is often used in the sale of various sports memorabilia.

If you choose to invest in this type of affiliate marketing it is best to choose to work with a company which does not already have its

own storefront established on the Internet. Chances are that you are going to have to raise the prices on the merchandise which you have purchased slightly in order to make a profit. If potential buyers come to your website and see you selling merchandise which could be found on the company website without a mark-up they will likely go and spend their money there, leaving you completely out of the equation.

... "Time Out: There Is An Easier Way!"

Another method of affiliation is the process by which an affiliate will work to bring business to the affiliated company's website through the use of an affiliate link. This link will be unique to the affiliate, and every customer that visits the website through that link will be logged as having been referred by that specific affiliate. The affiliate will then receive a commission on any purchases that their "lead" (the customer they referred to the site) makes.

This means there is no paying up front or holding of materials. You are essentially just processing orders that are fulfilled by the company as they come through. This could be for either physical or digital products... or even services.

It is important to establish the fact that the company with whom you are affiliated has a reliable method of tracking their sales or you are going to find yourself in the position of bringing in an unknown number of leads without receiving a penny from it. Another fact which you should establish with the company with whom you are affiliated is

how (or if) you will receive a commission in the event that the customer chooses to browse the website then leave, returning to the website at a later time by linking directly to the site rather than traveling through your link.

Most companies solve this problem by tracking their customers through their cookies; the bread crumb trail that a browser leaves as they traverse the Internet. In this manner the company will be able to see an individual that has made a purchase was at the site one time previously and traveled through this affiliate link (yes, that really is possible). The difficulty here lies in that when the facts about cookies and their potentially harmful consequences came to light web surfers became more diligent in deleting their cookies and removing any hints of their browsing history from their computers.

What does this mean for the affiliate?

Consider this. Almost all Internet buyers will visit a site multiple times before committing to making a purchase. Unlike non-virtual shoppers, many of whom will simply purchase the first desired item they see in light of the fact that it is a hassle to travel from store to store comparing prices and product quality, virtual consumers have the power of the Internet at their fingertips. In a matter of minutes they can compare prices on products at sixteen different stores in order to establish which one will best suit their needs.

It is possible for the affiliate to lose commissions on sales because a buyer has deleted their cookies before returning to the website. Ideally, a website that works with affiliates should have some

way of preventing this. Some of these sites will require that a visitor register before shopping (or browsing through the entirety of their stock, although they will often allow for a quick “sneak peek” so that the buyer has some idea of precisely what it is that they are registering for), allowing the site to note upon purchase that a particular buyer was referred by Affiliate X and Affiliate X will receive their due commission.

However, cookies are a generally accepted method and not something to be overly concerned about. Most people out there are not clearing cookies from their web browser on a regular basis, if at all.

The policies of tracking a buyer, both with and without cookies, are an important part of the relationship between an affiliate and their parent company; however, as with the quality of the product these are not the only issues at hand. The novice affiliate will often enter into a relationship with their parent company with little to no experience as an Internet marketer, even if they have had experience in the non-virtual marketing arena (most of the guidelines remain the same, but not all venues of Internet marketing are created equal). An essential part of the success of any affiliate is assistance in establishing their marketing campaign from the vast marketing resources of the parent company.

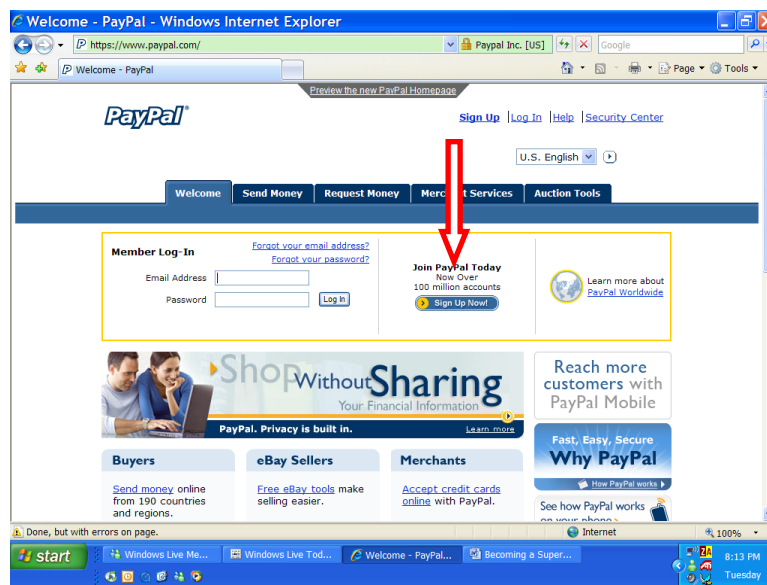
Most parent companies will not assist you with the up front costs of your marketing campaign, assuming that in time you will regain what you have lost by way of your commission. It is inexcusable, however, for a parent company to simply set an affiliate adrift to sink

or swim as they will. Any new job will provide a trustworthy trainer to assist the new employee as they learn to do their jobs, showing them what strategies provide the greatest effect for the least amount of effort, and an affiliate marketing position should be no different. Any company worth its salt has already done the market research and determined the best venues by which to launch their marketing campaign; one would hope that they would share this information with their affiliates as well. This marketing information can be a crucial ingredient to stir into the mix when you are attempting to decide how to best spend your advertising budget (more on specific means of targeting will be revealed later on).

Another key factor in the relationship between an affiliate and their parent company is money. No matter how much you love your job you know the primary reason that you are doing it is to get paid. It is important that you know a) how much money the company is going to pay you (what percentage of your sales will you receive in commissions, how will they be tracked, and under what circumstances will the percentage of your commissions change (this is a big one-it is very easy for a company to promise an affiliate one thing and then turn around and do another)) and b) when and how you are going to receive said money.

There are a number of different ways by which a parent company can pay an affiliate; however, the most common are check, direct deposit and PayPal.

PayPal is one of the safest ways of sending and receiving money in the virtual world. You are going to want to establish a PayPal account if you intend to do any type of selling on the Internet, so if you do not already have one now is as good a time as any. Go to <https://www.paypal.com> (the https: means that the site is secure-no one has access to any of your personal information). Once you are there choose the "Sign Up Now" option, as shown by the screen below.



This will take you to a page which will inquire about your basic demographic information: your name, address, email, phone number, etc. Again, PayPal is a secure site; it is considered safe for you to enter your personal information. Once you have opened your account you will be asked to verify it. What this means is you can add a credit card or a bank account to your PayPal account in order to confirm you really are who you say you are.

Tools, Tools, Tools

When assessing an affiliate program, you want to make sure that you are provided with the proper tools. This will make your job much easier when promoting the given product.

So tools to look for could include the following:

- Banners
- Solo Ads
- Pre-drafted emails (more on this later)
- Signature files
- Text Ads (for Adwords, etc.)

Where To Find Affiliate Programs

While many companies hire affiliates to do their advertising for them it can be difficult for the interested (but not yet experienced) marketer to find a company with which to affiliate. Many companies choose to hire their affiliates through a “back door” policy; they personally hire people they are already acquainted with.

In order to get you started we have drawn together a list of companies that have lists of directories of affiliate programs to join.

- CommissionJunction.com
- ClickBank.com
- AssociatePrograms.com
- AffiliateGuide.com
- LinkShare.com
- AffiliatePrograms.com
- ShareaSale.com

When registering through a third party affiliate directory (such as many of the above listed), they will often ensure some level of insurance that you will be paid your commissions as agreed.

The reasons that the companies offering their products to be sold by affiliates use the above mentioned services is because they 1) provide the affiliate with the assurance of commission payment, and 2) make it easier for affiliates like you to find their products to promote.

As another tip for finding affiliate programs, you can always go to Google and type in your niche followed by the keyword phrase "affiliate program." So if you were in the lawn care niche, for example, you could go to Google and type in: lawn care "affiliate program". This will search the web for various programs that may not be listed in the directories which provide you with good opportunities. Chances are your competition doesn't know about these programs. You can try the same tactic on Yahoo! as well to see what pops up.

Identifying Your Target Audience/Niche Market

Once you have decided on a company with which to affiliate yourself it is time to start the ball rolling. Obviously, you want to do everything that you can to ensure that you are successful; after all, you probably wouldn't be reading this if you didn't!

The first step in launching a successful advertising campaign is to identify your target audience. If you are unfamiliar with the term a target audience is the specific portion of your pool of buyers who is deemed most likely to buy your product. This is important because there are a lot of consumers out there, but not all of them are interested in making a purchase. In order to ensure maximum results for a minimum amount of capital upfront (i.e. your marketing expenses) you are going to have to "target" your campaign towards those who are most likely to help you to recoup your losses.

Identifying your target audience is a simple process, but it's going to depend a great deal on the amount of effort you are willing to put into it. The first thing you are going to have to do is answer some simple questions to help you get to know your product and its role in the market a little better (all of the steps contained within this document can pertain to a service as well as a product; products are used because it is simpler to explain basic marketing concepts if you are thinking in terms of a thing). Ask yourself:

- a) What is the purpose of this product?
- b) How does it fulfill a need?
- c) Who has this need?

d) What is it about the product that makes it irresistible?

Once these questions are answered you will have your target audience.

The difficulty in marketing to a target audience is you have to be aware of exactly what to do to appeal to their desires. There are many different target audiences in the world, and since not all marketing strategies are created to equally entice all groups of people you are going to have to know how to tailor your advertising campaign to meet their needs.

This is not as difficult as it may sound. The question you have to ask yourself is, "What is it that these people want most in a product?"

The answers you get may surprise you. For example, while for the average businessperson the value of a product lies in its ability to perform its intended function with maximum efficiency, a teenager is going to be more worried about how the product will make them appear to be "cool", and up with the times. An entrepreneur is going to worry about how the product is going to keep them ahead of their competition while a parent is going to be more interested in topics such as safety and ease of use. It is important that while you are developing your advertising campaign you take the time to address each of these issues.

Assessing Copywriting

One of the beauties of being an affiliate is that you do not have to create the product or write (or have written) the sales copy to go along with it. However, your duty as an affiliate is to be able to assess the effectiveness of the copy that is made available to you. I cannot express the importance of this enough. Once you have determined that a product is a good fit for your audience or list (more on lists later...), the one thing that will make or break your promotion is the sales copy that you send your audience to view.

Some affiliate products will send the prospect to a catalogue type page. This will not be as effective as a direct response sales letter in conversion. A confused mind says “no” so there has to be a clear presentation of what is being offered.

Some of the more professional affiliate programs out there may have actual stats for conversion rates of people that view to those that buy. That will always vary depending on the targeting that we just discussed above (i.e. the more targeted the prospect, the better the conversion, all else being equal). Generally speaking a conversion above 2% is very good.

Most of the time, this will come down to you being able to assess the quality of the copywriting that the company provides to you to promote their products. If you are unfamiliar with copywriting this may seem intimidating at first. I have included a few tips of things to assess and look for to determine good copy from bad:

- Be sure the headline is compelling and grabs the reader's attention.
- Be sure the sub-headlines through out the letter flow naturally and keep the reader interested.
- When reading the letter, ask, "Does this clearly tell me what I get or do I have to figure it out?" The letter should clearly define the core benefits of what the reader will get.
- Are there misspellings or poor grammar? (Professional appearance is a big deal).
- Is there plenty of "white space" on the borders and between sub-headlines, etc? The copy should be easy on the eyes and flow well down the whole page.
- Is there a strong call to action at the end of the letter? (The call to action is even better if it includes an expression of the pain associated with not making a buying decision).
- Are there strong PS's at then end of the letter? PS's may not seem like a big deal, but they are imperative. They should in some way catch the attention of the reader and remind them of the benefits derived and/or re-state urgency of a purchase

There's obviously much more to copywriting, but just being familiar with some of the common factors that make for good copy can make a

big difference for you. You certainly don't need to be a copywriter yourself to assess good from bad copy.

Here are a few examples of good copywriting (for both squeeze pages and sales pages):

www.SquidooTraffic.com

www.AdInfluence.com

Choosing a Marketing Venue

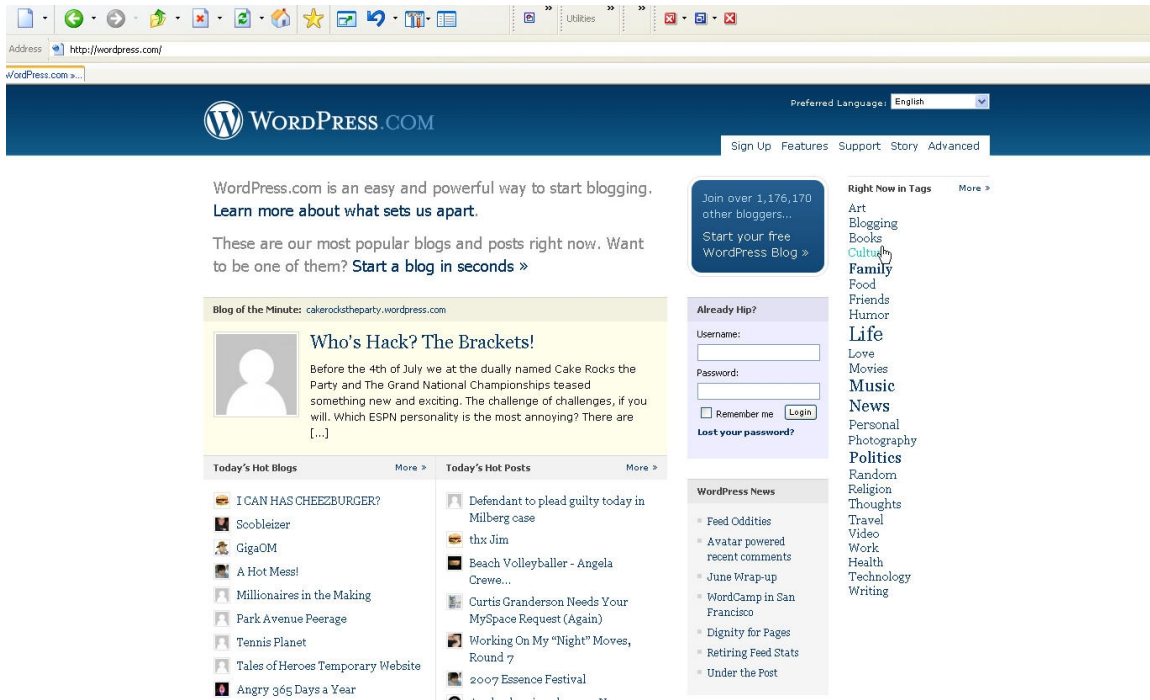
Once you have identified your target audience it is time to begin to develop your plan of attack; your campaign strategy. A large part of developing that strategy is deciding precisely how you are going to go out and market your products. There are literally hundreds of ways that an affiliate can market their products; however, in the interest of getting your campaign off to a solid start on its pathway to success we will only discuss the basics. You can fill in the blanks yourself after getting your feet wet in the world of marketing on the web.

The simplest and least expensive method of advertising for an affiliate is through the use of blogs and forums. A web log (hence “blog”) is an interactive medium where the blogger can provide information to a market and that market has the option of interacting with the author (most of the time) through the comments feature on the blog. A forum is a community feature very similar to a blog and tends to focus on one central theme.

For example, let us say that you are attempting to market a new form of video game. If you were advertising through a blog you would want to find a section of the blog which deals with video games, gaming software, gaming equipment, etc. You could then create an interesting and informative blog post (or respond to someone else’s post) and include your affiliate link you were given in the signature section of your blog.

In fact, you can start your own blog by going to www.wordpress.com and clicking “start your free WordPress blog.”

This will allow you to become familiar with some of the aspects of blogging and incorporation of marketing efforts into it. Later, we'll cover a more effective, yet slightly more complicated way to use WordPress blogs in your marketing efforts.



When marketing on a forum, you would need to find a forum that was devoted entirely to video games; specifically, the genre of video game you are attempting to market. You could then create or respond to a post and include your affiliate link in the signature.

There are two things you need to remember when advertising on a blog or a forum:

1. Make sure that your postings are interesting and informative, and
2. Don't make it obvious that you are hoping to sell something.

Due to the rising popularity of social networking among Internet marketers (social networking being the process by which you use community sites to get the word out about stuff to as wide an audience as possible at no cost to yourself) most blogs and forums have very strict rules with regards to advertising on their sites; specifically, you are not allowed to do it. Many of them will remove your post or comment and restrict your access to the site if they catch you attempting to use their resources to gain free patronage.

“So wait,” you are probably thinking, “if we aren’t allowed to advertise through blogs and forums why are you telling us to do it?” Simply put, you are going to learn to be sneaky. No, you cannot specifically promote your products *but* you often can include your affiliate link with each post. Most blogs and forums will give you the opportunity to create a “signature” which will be included each and every time you create a post on their site. By adding your affiliate link you are essentially handing out your business card to every person who happens to read your post or blog comment.

Human nature is steeped in curiosity; at least some of the readers who read your post are going to be curious enough about you and what you said to check out your link (this is especially true if you have taken the time out to create a truly unique content). Word of mouth is your best friend when it comes to successful marketing; those that read your post and visit your site will tell their friends. Before you know it you will have an entire network of customers ready and willing to part with their hard earned cash.

A Quick Side Note...

Let us divert our attention from the topic of advertising for just a moment (we'll get right back to it, I promise!) and discuss the role that search engines play in an advertiser's career. If you have simply opted to slap your affiliate link onto blog postings and advertisements (and there is nothing wrong with that!) a great deal of this information does not apply to you. On the other hand, if you are attempting to sell your products through a website you are going to have to be very conscious of the role of search engines in your life.

Most people do not log onto the Internet looking for a product or a piece of information with the knowledge of precisely where it is that they need to go emblazoned in their minds. Instead, they employ the aid of a search engine such as Google or Yahoo! to surf through the web pages on the Internet and find the ones that contain the information that best suits their needs.

These people are not going to have the patience to search through hundreds of pages of results to find what they are looking for; the average Internet browser has an attention span roughly equivalent to that of a three year old when it comes to locating information. They want what they want and they want it now. Chances are good that if a web page is not listed in the two to three pages of results a search engine digs up while combing the Internet it is not going to be seen by that particular surfer.

Obviously, that means that in order for your website to bring in the greatest amount of traffic possible it is going to need to be located within those first two to three pages.

How can you do that?

There are a number of different processes that search engines use to organize their results. As Google is probably the most widely used search engine on the web we will use their system to demonstrate the ways in which a search engine will prioritize its search results.

A webpage is first brought to the attention of a search engine when it is spidered. A web spider will “crawl” through the page in all of its virtual arachnid glory, examining the content of the pages as well as the links it is attached to. It will take reference of certain lines of information that appear to be important (generally the first two lines and the title) as well as any keywords which are frequently repeated or specified in the Meta tag.

It will also take the time to follow a site’s back trail and view the pages which contain hyperlinks to the site. These hyperlinks are considered to be recommendations; a website with more recommendations is going to fall higher on the totem pole of search results than one without any recommendations to its name. Of course, not all hyperlinks are created equal. This is an important factor to consider when you are selecting sites to advertise on.

Think of it this way. Say you are a doctor, fresh out of medical school, and you are applying for a job at a local hospital. They ask you for your references. You give them the names of the doctors who supervised your residency, the name of one of your professors in college and the name of the mechanic in your home town that has known you since you were a child. Whose opinion do you think is going to carry the most weight?

Obviously, the answer to that is going to be the doctors who supervised your residency, then your professor, then the mechanic, not because they are not equally important as people but because their roles in the field you are preparing to enter are drastically different. While the mechanic in your hometown may believe you are a fabulous person because you always took good care of your car and helped out in the shop on weekends when you were in high school he is not going to be the best qualified individual to offer an opinion on your ability to cope with the pressures of working in a hospital on a daily basis.

The referral system of web pages follows much the same design. There are certain sites whose "opinions" and "recommendations" will carry more weight with a search engine than others; it is important that you locate these sites and do everything in your power to ensure that they endorse your site in order to ensure that your site is at the top of that two to three page field.

Continuing On...

Now that you know the role that search engines play it is important that you do everything in your power to move your site up in their ratings.

This can be done through both paid and organic traffic. Paid traffic includes Pay Per Click (PPC) ads that are displayed on the right side of the search results on Google for example. Organic Traffic includes the results that come up in the middle that are non-sponsored (not paid for) that the search engine naturally finds based on various factors of the web page that is being displayed.

One of the most notable differences between the two is the fact that PPC will bring immediate traffic when implemented and Organic Traffic based on SEO (search engine optimization) factors will render results that are much more indefinite and dependent upon factors that are never 100% understood due to search engine algorithms such as Google's.

The image is a screenshot of a Google search results page for the query "affiliate marketing". The search bar at the top shows the query and the search button. Below the search bar, the results are divided into three main sections: "Sponsored Links" on the right, "Pay Per Click or Paid Results" in the center (circled in blue), and "Organic Results" on the left (circled in red). The "Sponsored Links" section contains several ads, including "Online Advertising", "Affiliate Marketing", "Affiliate Management", "Top Affiliate Program", "Try Google AdSense", and "Affiliate Marketing". The "Pay Per Click or Paid Results" section contains a single ad for "Hydra Network™" with the text "1000+ Performance-based campaigns. Top affiliate advertising network." The "Organic Results" section contains several organic search results, including "Affiliate marketing - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia", "Affiliate Programs Directory", "Affiliate & internet marketing tools that help affiliates make money", "Affiliate Marketing Tips - how to make money with affiliate programs", "Affiliate Marketing News from DMNews.com", and "Affiliate Network | Affiliate Programs | Affiliate Marketing...". Handwritten blue and red lines and circles highlight the different sections and specific results.

Google

affiliate marketing

Search

Advanced Search

Web News Blogs

Results 1 - 10 of about 54,300,000 for affiliate marketing (0.15 seconds)

Sponsored Links

Hydra Network™
www.hydramedia.com
1000+ Performance-based campaigns. Top affiliate advertising network.

Pay Per Click or Paid Results

Organic Results

Online Advertising
Advertise online. Affiliate program
0 setup, Top commissions.
www.affnet.com

Affiliate Marketing
Affiliate Marketing Programs & Tips
Increase Affiliate Marketing Income
AffiliatePrograms.com

Affiliate Management
Affiliate Program Management
Need Affiliates? Get Management!
www.PartnerCentric.com

Top Affiliate Program
Earn money promoting credit cards.
Very high payouts. Join us today!
www.ncsreporting.com

Try Google AdSense
Earn money with Google Ad Programs.
Free & Easy Setup - Apply Now.
www.google.com/adsense

Affiliate Marketing
Build or Join An Affiliate Program
Drive More Customers To Your Site
www.clickgalore.com

affiliate marketing
We have Top Affiliate Programs
Come Join our Team
www.CommissionSoup.com

Affiliate marketing - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
Affiliate marketing is a method of promoting web businesses (merchants/advertisers) in which an affiliate (publisher) is rewarded for every visitor, ...
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affiliate_marketing - 93k - Cached - Similar pages

Affiliate Programs Directory
I've been in affiliate marketing for years but this one I'm really scared of trying. How does this thing work? What must I do to start with this? ...
www.affiliatescout.com/ - 32k - Cached - Similar pages

Affiliate & internet marketing tools that help affiliates make money
Affiliate Helper provides reviews of affiliate and internet marketing tools to help affiliates and webmasters increase sales and make more money.
www.affhelper.com/ - 49k - Cached - Similar pages

Affiliate Marketing Tips - how to make money with affiliate programs
Affiliate marketing resource site with affiliate program articles and presentations by Ola Edvardsson.
www.affiliatetips.com/ - 18k - Cached - Similar pages

Affiliate Marketing News from DMNews.com
Skinny Nutritional Corp. has launched its affiliate marketing program through Commission Junction, a ValueClick Inc. company with more than 50000 online ...
www.dmnews.com/cms/dm-news/affiliate-marketing.html - 19k - Cached - Similar pages

Affiliate Network | Affiliate Programs | Affiliate Marketing...
Two-tiered CPA Affiliate Network with high-paying affiliate programs and top quality affiliates.
www.incentaclick.com/ - 16k - Cached - Similar pages

What is Pay Per Click? Pay per click marketing is a process by which the marketing resource in question (i.e. the other website, generally a search engine) charges the advertiser for each time that a potential customer selects their advertisement rather than by establishing a set fee for a set length of time.

This charge per occurrence can be less than a dollar but over time will quickly add up and drain the resources of the advertiser if the number of sales is not sufficient to allow them to recoup their losses. Fortunately, most of these sites will allow advertisers to place a “cap” on the amount of money they are willing to pay for advertising. Once that cap is reached the advertisement will be removed from circulation and no further charges will be accrued. The process of developing a successful pay per click marketing campaign will be discussed in greater detail when we discuss the development of your advertisements.

Organic traffic and search results are dependent on a variety of factors. We’ll discuss a few here that you can use to achieve high rankings.

One way to generate organic results is through the use of SEO articles and a link building campaign. Many websites will use SEO articles in order to increase the quality of their web content and attract the attention of the major search engines to themselves. These are articles centered on a specific keyword that give information on various aspects of a service or product.

On occasion the designer of a webpage will not have time to create these articles themselves; after all, they do have a business to run. They will instead contract a professional to write these articles for them-for a fee, of course. The concept behind link building is that you will write these articles and provide them to various websites or article directories at no charge in exchange for the appearance of your name and website link at the top or bottom of the article. The principle behind this is that viewers will read the article, then be interested enough in what you had to say to follow your link to your website and view any other information you may choose to make available to them.

Of course, the attention span of the average web browser being what it is, there is no guarantee that a reader will read an article to its completion or be interested enough to select a random webpage printed on the bottom on the say-so of the writer of the article.

The more specific SEO reason for submitting articles (or now even videos) to respective directories is to get a link back to your website. As we stated earlier, the more links you have pointing to your site, the better (generally speaking). And more specifically, the more hyper-linked, keyword relevant, one-way inbound links, the better.

Taking the Next Step... Creating Your Website

Once you have familiarized yourself with the various marketing venues available to you it is time to create your website. Since you are working as an affiliate your website is going to be more of a selling platform than a sales site; the purpose is going to be to educate your customers in all matters relating to your product while making your affiliate link conveniently available to them at all times.

The creation of a website is another occasion in which the savvy marketer needs to pay close attention to the short attention span of the average web surfer; with the vast quantities of web pages available it is going to take a web page with a little something extra to attract and hold their attention. You are going to have approximately five seconds to convince them that your web site is worth looking at, and after you have their attention you are going to have to keep it. Below are some pieces of tried and true advice utilized by many of the biggest names in the Internet business for creating a successful website.

- Your website needs to convey the impression that you want your customers to have of you and your product(s). If you are attempting to make a sale to the business community and your webpage is done in big letters with lots of bright colors no one is going to believe that your product is anything more than a scam. On the other hand, if you are attempting to sell to parents or teens, bright colors and pictures will prove to be a successful attention grabber; they are looking for something fun and exciting.

- Attempt to keep the hype to a minimum. It's good that you want to drum up support for your product, but it is very easy to fill up a website with an excess of hype and come off sounding like a stereotypical used car salesman. This is going to both annoy and frustrate them, ultimately turning them away; after all, if you look at any of the hundreds of so called "success products" on the market today you will find that their information pages are full of hype in an attempt to bypass the fact that there is no substance. Your customers are immediately going to assume that you are attempting to involve them in a scam and walk away.
- Make your website the Wal-Mart of information with regards to your product and the topics which surround it. This is the time to employ those SEO articles we talked about earlier. Think about it. If you make your site a sales site you are going to have a number of people who visit once, decide they aren't interested and walk away, never to be heard from again.

On the other hand, Internet surfers are inherently lazy when it comes to looking for information. Again, they want what they want and they want it now. How popular would you be if you were able to provide that information for them? All of the information they would ever need in one central location. Even if they chose not to buy at that specific point in time they would be back, and at some point they would probably willingly make a purchase once your site (and by extension you) has been established as a reputable seller.

- Creating community features on your site is a great way to keep people coming back and it will give you an excellent opportunity to find out what they really think about your site and your products.
- Attempting to operate some sort of fun feature, such as a weekly challenge or trivia quiz, will keep people coming back week after week (even if it is from idle curiosity; after all, what they see will sooner or later translate into what they will buy).
- Try to keep your site content relevant to your niche.
- If you have access to the information (and chances are that as an affiliate you will) try to keep a "Coming Soon!" page giving some brief highlights on new products that are going to be released in the near future. This will sustain customers' interest and keep them coming back to find out more. This will also provide a great platform for you to build from when it is time for a full scale pre-launch advertising campaign.
- Include video and audio media on your website. This is particularly important now, as the new technologies which are being created every day have made the competition between various companies for customers particularly vicious. There are a number of resources online which will allow you to add this media to your site for free and will guide you through the process step by step.

(... Adding video to your site can be easy. It is possible to use YouTube to create videos and copy them to your website; it is essential that you clear this process with the site administrators every step of the way in order to avoid any type of copyright issue.)

Now, the easiest way to create a solid affiliate website is to create a blog. A blog is simply a convenient Content Management System (CMS). You can either host the blog with the blog company (i.e. www.YourBlog.wordpress.com) or host on your own with your own domain (www.YourBlog.com).

To get the most out of the SEO benefits we described previously, it is recommended you host your own WordPress Blog with your own domain name. This is relatively easy to set up and if you're not familiar it will not cost much to have someone do it for you. You want to think long term with your affiliate business and really treat it like a business, not a hobby. This is the first step to differentiating yourself from the masses of "hobby marketers" out there and to becoming a Super Affiliate.

When you have your own blog, this will allow for you to harness the power of other SEO features as you grow. Once you have your WordPress blog set up you will discover a plethora of "plug-ins" or additional features to help your blog get even more recognition.

Here is a quick list of some great plug-ins you can add:

- What Would Seth Godin Do

- Socialize It
- Headspace
- SEO Title Tag
- Subscribe Me
- Smart Update Pinger
- Auto Hyper-Link URLs

Plug-ins are a little more advanced, but once you're up and running you'll want to come back and explore these. You can search Google for each one.

Also, you'll want to search for a cool template for your blog that fits your niche well. Just do a Google search for "free WordPress templates" and you can start your search there. Another option is to have one made for you custom.

Either way, once this is set up it will go a long way in also creating a professional appearance for you!

Once your blog is set up, you'll want to add your opt-in form to the list... the ultimate secret of Super Affiliates.

Making The Most Of YOUR Mailing List:

“The Ultimate Super Affiliate Secret”

In addition to these small strategies you are going to want to use your website as a tool for creating a mailing list and newsletter. A wide consumer pool is essential for the success of a business; after all, if you do not have any customers who are you going to sell things to? Attempt to casually establish a location on your blog where they can sign up to be included on your email list. A great place for this would be at the top right of your blog. The opt-in form should also be located “above the fold” (or placed so that the user does not have to scroll down the screen to see it).

Now is the time to mention your offer to opt-in to your email list. Here’s the bottom line: It must be compelling! You have to offer them something for exchanging their name and email that they will find interesting and valuable. This all comes back to targeting your efforts to begin with and understanding your market. Clearly communicate to them and answer the question, “What’s in it for me?” Be sure to include a call to action and quantify or specify the value of what they will receive.

Here’s an example:

Opt-in To My FREE Newsletter And Get My Special Report “7
Secrets To A Healthier Lawn” (a \$47 value).

Then include a name and email opt-in box and a note “Information Kept 100% Confidential.”

Be sure to be clear about what they will be receiving if they sign up; SPAM is still very much a four letter word in the eyes of all of the consumers who use the Web. It is essential that they know this is not what you are attempting to do; you simply want to keep them apprised of changes in your new field of expertise and up to date on any new products you may be preparing to launch.

It is very important to ensure that when you send out mailings to the people on your mailing list you always include the opportunity to automatically opt-out of any future mailings you may decide to send. Not only is this a courtesy, compliance is required per the CAN-SPAM act. The fines for violation of this rule are stiff and are not justified by the small percentage of profit you may obtain through these extra mailings.

So if you're not going to SPAM your customers what should you include in your mailing list? As I said before, this is your opportunity to keep your customers apprised of various changes in the field, as well as any new products which your parent company may be preparing to launch.

The best way to do this is to create your own newsletter and release it anywhere from bi-weekly to monthly, depending upon how much time for newsletter writing you have. In this newsletter you should attempt to include at least one interesting and informative article pertaining to topics related to what you are attempting to market; for example, detailing the changes in current advertising

strategies to struggling young entrepreneurs if you are marketing a product pertaining to advertising or beginning a business.

In addition to these informative articles it would also benefit both you and the people on your mailing list to include some form of novelty item. This can come in the form of a game, a contest, a puzzle or an interesting piece of trivia (trivia is particularly popular around the holidays, when people love to dazzle each other with inconsequential facts to see who will win the battle of the brains). The novelties are what will keep your newsletters fresh and your customers excited about reading them.

Another note of mailing lists is the use of auto-responder services. Unless you are planning on keeping up with the latest in SPAM compliance and a plethora of other headaches, you'll want to use a third party auto-responder service. Subscribing to a third-party auto-responder service is one of the greatest investments you can make and will usually run around \$20 per month. When deciding to move forward with this, you really want to make sure you consider the cost of not doing it.

The greatest cost beyond potential liability comes in deliverability rates. The services listed below are working for you to make sure well over 90% of your emails will be getting through. If you do this on your own, you'll be lucky to get even half through the SPAM filters. So every time you send out a promotion you are automatically losing revenue if your deliverability rates are low because of fewer eyes on the offer and less people buying.

There are many auto-responder services out there but only a few that have stood the test of time and offer flat rates regardless of how many subscribers you have. These services are very affordable and are an essential part of any affiliate's web marketing efforts.

You only need to subscribe to one service and the recommended ones are:

- www.Aweber.com
- www.EmailAces.com
- www.GetResponse.com

Having a list of qualified prospects in your respective niche(s) is the ultimate secret to becoming a Super Affiliate. When you're looking to promote something, you simply need to send out an email blast to your list. So as a Super Affiliate, you want to make sure all your web traffic coming to your website has the opportunity and a compelling reason to opt into your mailing list.

Here's a killer affiliate tip: Go to Click Bank or the other listed affiliate directories and take some pre-drafted emails they give you, add your own flare and pre-load them into your auto-responder. This way, if Tony joins on X day, 5 days later he will get that promotion automatically... and the same for everyone else who joins the list. It's effectively on auto-pilot for you.

Just remember, build a strong relationship with useful information to create an incentive for your subscribers to stay on your list and also mix in your affiliate promotions from the standpoint of "I

found this resource and here's why I think you should take a look."
Always provide reasons why and you will see your results soar.

All of the other traffic methods are great and very effective, but nothing will prove as effective for long-term results as a mailing list with which you have built a solid relationship.

After Your Website... A Few More Tips

After you have established your website it is time to turn your attention to developing the actual ads you will use to spread the word of your product. As we discussed earlier there are two main types of ads which have traditionally dominated online advertising campaigns.

Banner ads were the wave of future not too long ago but are now finding themselves left in the dust due to the ever increasing popularity of video media in advertising. Regardless, banner ads are still an effective means of spreading the word of your product.

Shhhh.... Secret Affiliate Tip:

If you do find an affiliate program that offers a good product and decent copy, but not good affiliate tools (or none at all) this can sometimes create opportunity. Most marketers will simply move on to the next program. If you're willing to invest a few dollars or a little time, you may have found yourself a diamond in the rough by simply creating an effective banner for over-looked products or niches.

The process of designing a banner ad is not a difficult one if you are familiar with Flash player and Java Script. If those two phrases have absolutely no meaning for you then you need to stop reading right here and pick up the telephone. Chances are that you have a

spouse/child/friend/relative/co-worker/neighbor/nameless acquaintance who rides the bus to work with you every morning that is familiar with computer code and will be able to help you put together a working banner ad.

If you are not familiar with banner ads and you do not have someone to help you out, you may want to outsource this.

Given the many resources out there to buy banners from it can get overwhelming to decide who to do business with. Included here are two references for artists who will create your banners at a competitive rate and who have earned the trust of many Internet marketers.

They are:

- 'Design Guru' Ryan www.designgururyan.com
- 'eCover Expert' Stephen www.ecoverexpert.com

You can visit their websites and see what others have said about them and their services.

If you are determined to create your own banner ad there are a couple of guidelines for you to keep in mind. First and foremost, the primary objective of a banner ad is to spark interest in a product and convey the purpose or function of a product as quickly as possible.

The most effective way to do this is to find a graphic spin on the impression which you wish to convey and run with it. The graphics of a banner ad are going to be the first things that catch the attention of

your consumers, so they must be spectacular without being excessive; remember, as was the case with your website these advertisements are going to serve to give potential customers a first impression of your product. You are never going to get a chance to undo this first impression, so it is important to make it count.



When choosing the graphics for your ad attempt, choose ones which convey the mood you wish to relay to your customers with regards to your product. Take the advertisement above, for example. The Buy Me A Drink! campaign was intended to be lighthearted and fun; notice how the woman in the corner conveys the image of summer and lighthearted fun. Was this a coincidence? I think not. This was probably the end result of a large group of people pulling their heads together and making their image of Buy Me A Drink! into a reality.

The second thing you need to consider is the color scheme you choose to use. Again, attempt to base your color scheme on the mood which you wish for your advertisement to convey. While a small child may appreciate an ad with a veritable rainbow explosion it is not going to go very far in convincing the men and women of the business world that you are a professional. It is essential that you pick one or two colors and go with it.

Text Ads And Keywords

A text ad is another story altogether. Virtually the only time that an advertiser creates a text ad is for use in a pay per click marketing campaign such as that orchestrated by Google Adwords.

When an advertiser is writing a text ad they are seeking to orient the contents of that advertisement around a specific keyword. This keyword is the word which they believe that their target audience will enter into a search engine in an attempt to locate their product. The quality of the keyword chosen is the single most important factor in the success or failure of a pay per click marketing campaign.

Choosing a keyword is a simple process. Simply sit down and ask yourself, "If I was a customer and I was looking for my product what words would I use to search?" Once you have that list you can compare it to the list of recent popular searches contained in the database of each search engine. If the words which you have chosen are not on any of the lists do not lose heart. Many of the keywords found on these lists are far too general to allow the searcher to find what they are really looking for, and will quickly drive the browser to redirect their search.

A good keyword is one which is general enough that one need not have a college degree in order to associate it with the product but specific enough that it will decrease the number of false leads as much as possible (remember, you are going to have to pay the fee for the link whether the customer who came to your site made a purchase or not). Google has a number of tools available to help those finding

difficulty in selecting the proper keywords; advertisers are encouraged to take advantage of these, particularly those working in the safety net of Google Adwords.

However, you can also find keywords that have been overlooked. These keywords get high searches and may not be being bid on. A great tool for this process is at www.WordTracker.com. There is an investment required but is well worth the return.

Another free option for keyword research can be found here <http://tools.seobook.com/general/keyword/>.

After choosing a keyword you are going to have to choose how much you want to bid on it. No, this isn't an auction where the highest bidder will be able to lasso the keyword and take it home with him. Remember, an Internet browser's search will generally come to an end once they have viewed two to three pages of results. It is essential that an advertisement be among those two to three pages if it is to have a chance of generating the kind of revenue it needs to in order to yield a profit.

Those who are willing to pay the most amount of money per click are placed at the top of the list while those with a more conservative budget are bumped out of the picture. Finding the proper balance between a bid high enough to keep an advertisement in the running but low enough that the ad will be able to run for the proper amount of time is an essential and sometimes complicated process.

Let's Sum It All Up:

So to really become a Super Affiliate you need to:

- Find your niche(s) with good affiliate products to promote and that have decent demand (don't worry so much about competition)
- Create your blog
- Set up and start building your list
- Search the affiliate directories for lucrative affiliate offers
- Continue to promote traffic to your blog (and list)
- Stay up on the news in your niches and industry for upcoming product launches of which you can become a part as an affiliate

In the meantime, have patience. Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither was a successful affiliate marketing campaign. If you carefully manage your advertisement campaign, constantly monitor the proceeds your ads bring in and redirect your efforts as needed, you will inevitably find success.

Ask for help where needed. Here's a great free resource to ask for help and find people to help you with setting up your blog or other tech stuff www.warriorforum.com/forum.

Also, if you're totally stuck on tech stuff, hustle on over here www.scriptinstalls.net. You can get great deals on outsourced tech stuff that won't come close to breaking the bank.

Take action! NOW is the season for success!

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