

AFFILIATE MARKETING SECRETS

**A STEP-BY-STEP
GUIDE OF AFFILIATE MARKETING STRATEGY**



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Chapter 1: Introduction to Affiliate Marketing



1.1 The Background of Affiliate Marketing

As an ongoing way to create income opportunities, affiliate marketing has captured the imagination and attention of a number of entrepreneurs over the last decade. Here is some background on the development of affiliate marketing and how it continues to evolve today.

At its core, affiliate marketing is all about getting attention for a good or service by utilizing online resources that are managed by partners or affiliates. The most simplistic of all these methods is allowing advertising to be displayed on a web site that is the domain of the affiliate.

Typically, the advertisement will allow the prospective customer to click on and be redirected to a page or site where there is more information and the chance to order the good or service in question. In return for providing a doorway for that customer to discover the product or service, the affiliate is rewarded with compensation, usually via electronic transfer or check.

The concept of affiliate marketing is a natural outgrowth of the online marketing that sprang up in the early years of widespread Internet use. At first, online marketing was more of a business to business approach, since companies were the first to jump on the Internet bandwagon. Putting up a web site and sending emails out to solicit business was a cost-effective way to gather new business clients.

As Internet use began to spread into the home, a number of companies began to see that working with owners of personal web sites would be a great way to promote goods and services with very little in the way of investment in marketing resources.

The trick was to make the idea enticing to individuals, so they would be interested in allowing companies to advertise through their web sites. Out of this need to come up with a strategy that would appeal to a large body of people, the basics of affiliate

marketing were developed, and still continue to shape the course of affiliate programs today.

The vast majority of affiliate programs provide compensation through revenue sharing. In some cases, revenue sharing is referred to as a cost per sale transaction. Essentially, the affiliate earns either a fixed amount or a percentage of the purchase price when anyone locates and buys the good or service through the portal provided by the affiliate.

For example, a family web site that allowed businesses that produced infant care products to feature ads on the front page of the web site, complete with links, would pay the family for every sale that was made through that link.

Many affiliate programs require that the earnings reach a certain level before pay out takes place. Others will pay on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis, with no minimum amount of earnings required.

Another less popular means of generating revenue through an affiliate program is the cost per action method. This differs from the cost per sale method, in that cost per action simply requires that the prospective buyer see the ad on a web site and click on it to investigate for a minimum amount of time.

It does not have to end in a sale. As one can imagine, the amount of revenue generated from this sort of arrangement is much less than by a cost per sale revenue sharing plan.

With the cost per action world, the pay per click may be the format that most people recognize immediately. However, it is also the least popular method of affiliate marketing today.

While PPC began with a strong following, the method proved to be far too susceptible to fraudulent clicks, which resulted in little sales but a lot of money paid out by advertisers. Today's methods, which help to track addresses of the customers as well as require a minimum amount of browsing time, have cut down on the incidence of fraud a great deal.

Affiliate marketing today covers a wide range of products and services, from household items to telecommunications offerings. Any enterprising individual with some expertise in a given area could very well find an affiliate program that would generate some recurring income. All it takes is a look around the Internet.

1.2 Why Affiliate Marketing is a Lucrative Business

If you have been considering an affiliate marketing venture, there are some very good reasons why you should go with this method of generating recurring revenue. Here are some of the ways that affiliate marketing can be a lucrative means of creating income that will be stable and allow you to grow exposure over time.

One of the first advantages of affiliate marketing for the new entrepreneur is that the startup cost is very low. Most companies that offer affiliate marketing programs do not require any type of monetary investment on the part of the affiliate.

Expenses are limited to what you have to pay to connect with the Internet, the software you may need to load on your computer, and a web site where the ads associated with the affiliate marketing program can be placed. With web site hosting such an inexpensive service these days, setting up your own web site for the affiliate ads will be a breeze.

In fact, you may not have to set up anything, if you already have a web site up and running. As an example, you may already own a web site that is dedicated to your interest in alternative fuel options.

Signing up for an affiliate program that will place ads on your site that click through to companies that produce vegetable based fuel options would be a natural way to earn a little money. Associating your interests with the subject matter of the ads that appear on

your web site is one of the easiest ways to build up a steady web presence that result in a steady flow of income.

Another reason that affiliate marketing is such a moneymaker is the fact that there are so many different types of ways to set up the program. You can go with the pay per click option, which works out great when it comes to promoting special offers. Ads that lead to product review sites often are a way to allow product users to go through your portal and leave comments on the items they purchase.

Using ads to re-direct to opt-in email listings allows companies to build up qualified email lists to use in their promotions, and results in income for you when people choose to sign up. In fact, you could conceivably have a combination of these and other ads on your site or sites, all earning money for you on a continual basis.

A third reason why affiliate marketing is so attractive is that you do not have to quite your day job in order to work with the projects. Instead of going out on a limb with your affiliate business, it is simply a matter of setting aside a few hours each week to devote to signing up for programs, promoting the web sites where the ads will run, and allowing your business to grow.

As the affiliate programs get on their feet and begin to generate respectable amounts of income, you can expand the amount of time you devote to the project, eventually phasing out working for someone else and creating your revenue streams full time. Few income opportunities offer this type of flexibility.

Affiliate marketing is not a get rich quick scheme, although there is plenty of money to be made with the right programs. You will have to devote some time and energy to the programs.

But the nice thing is that once the web sites you manage and have ads placed on become prominent on search engine lists, you will begin to see recurring income from your efforts. In time, that could lead to a very attractive income that allows you both the

resources and the time to live the type of life you have always wanted for yourself and your loved ones.

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1.3 First Thing's First – Avoid These Silly Affiliate Marketing Mistakes!

While affiliate marketing is a great way to earn a living, the fact is that many people become discouraged and drop out of programs. In many instances, the failure to be successful with affiliate marketing has to do with making a few simple mistakes. Here are some examples of those mistakes and why they should be avoided.

Perhaps the most common misconception about affiliate marketing is that one can rake in huge amounts of revenue simply by slapping up a low-quality website with no original content and tossing in some affiliate links.

While it is certainly true that you need to have a web site up and running in order to participate in an affiliate program, there is also the need to apply some effort to getting the word out about your site. Otherwise, the chances of people visiting your web site and clicking on one of the links are pretty slim.

Promoting yourself and your web site is a big part of ensuring the creation of affiliate income. This will mean doing everything you can to raise your search engine ranking positions on Google, Yahoo, and MSN.

Far too many people assume that somehow the Internet magically will capture every lovely word on the web site and magically have it show up prominently when people do a search. This is not the case at all. Taking the time to carefully research keywords, craft content related to them, and the optimize your site for them is an absolute must.

And that's not it. Marketing is bigger than just SEO. A strong and comprehensive marketing effort includes getting out there and using every legitimate means of promoting your site, from leaving business cards on restaurant tables to posting a printed ad in the local supermarket to listing your site at online business and informational sites.

Choosing to consider this sort of activity a waste of time is more or less deciding you want the program to fail.

Another mistake many affiliate partners make is not choosing products that have some relevance to the content of your web site. For example, you run a wonderful web site about the care and training of dogs. People will visit your site to see the images of your pets, read your comments on various aspects of dog training, and perhaps to post a message or two.

Since your visitors will already have an expressed interest in pets, why not make sure the ads that reside on your site have to do with some aspect of pets or pet care? You will earn much more money if this is the case, rather than having ads that have to do with home decorating or some other subject.

Keeping your site content and the ads more or less relevant to one another will make it easier to generate revenue, and not fail as an affiliate marketer. Now, this may seem intuitive – but many make this mistake in subtle ways (i.e. they mismatch their customers with products).

One final mistake that many affiliate marketers make is not sprucing up their web sites from time to time. Keeping the content fresh is one way of building and keeping a loyal reading audience.

If there is a reason to check back with your site every week, then chances are repeat visitors will click on ads that appear to be new to them, or that they enjoyed looking at the last time they visited your site.

Keeping the same old look and the same old text with nothing new to entice people back is a sure way to limit your chances at being a successful affiliate marketer.

In short, most of the more common mistakes all track back to an attitude that you do not have to do anything in order to generate revenue.

The fact is that you do have to proactively promote your site, keep the content fresh, and make sure the ads have some connection to the subject matter of your site.

By taking the time and effort to do these three simple things, you will have much better chances at being a success with affiliate marketing.



Chapter 2:
How to Identify & Pick
Hot Selling Products

2.1 What You Need Before Getting Started

While there is not a lot of expense in starting up as an affiliate marketer, there are a few things that you need to do if you really want to make money marketing other people's products.

Here are some basic tips to help you line up all your things to do before you ever sign up for that first affiliate program.

One of the basic needs for any successful affiliate program is to have a web site of your own. While it is possible to purchase ad space on sites and to advertise through Google Adwords, this is short term strategy.

Setting up a basic web site that has a particular focus will make all the difference in the world to the success of your program. Keep in mind that your web site does not have to be complicated with a lot of flash media, animation or other fancy bells and whistles.

In fact, if you plan on focusing your attention on affiliate marketing strategies that target the home consumer, you are better off with a basic site that will load quickly on a dial up connection. After all, dial-up is still extremely popular in a number of locations.

While you could choose to go with a free web site, you will find it much easier to work with affiliate programs if you go with your own domain name. It is very easy and inexpensive to secure a domain name and space on a remote server these days. Some companies will provide you with both services for a low monthly charge.

Often, they may also have basic software to help you design and upload your pages to the server, even if you are not particularly savvy with the technology. One great place to check for this sort of thing is at <http://www.soloadmarketplace.com/>

Another important aspect is determining just what your contact information will be, regarding communication with your affiliate program. This would include an email address and physical mailing address. The email address should be one you have set aside specifically for your marketing business.

You may find it helpful to obtain a free email address, although you will certainly look more professional if the email address appears to be lead to a business of some sort. Often, you will have the option of having one email address when you secure a domain name. If that is the case, go this route and use that as your contact for any email correspondence.

As far as your physical mailing address, determine where you may want your affiliate checks to be mailed. If you are not secure having the checks come to your home for come reason, secure a post office box.

Online payments are a great way to easily receive your affiliate payments and keep track of your earnings. From this angel, you may want to look into opening an account with one of the more popular online services that send and receive funds.

PayPal is one example of such a service. Many people are familiar with PayPal, and just about everyone knows how to use it to send payments. Another popular option is ClickBank, which offers services that are almost identical to PayPal. Both these options are reliable, quick, and provide you with financial detail that will allow you to keep up with your earnings easily.

One last tool to set in place before you embark on your first affiliate marketing program is a promotion plan for the web site where the ads will reside. This will mean that you have a procedure in place to tie keywords and key phrases back to your site, publish the site on all the major search engines, and also have some content ready to add to the site periodically.

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