

Affiliate Marketing:

The Fast, Easy and Inexpensive
Way to Start an Internet Business

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What is Affiliate Marketing and How Does it Work?

Affiliate marketing is a **Partnership** or **Joint Venture** with an online merchant to sell their products and/or services in exchange for remuneration.

Your affiliate link is coded with a special ID which is unique to you. When a sale is made through your special link, the merchant credits that sale to you.

Then you just wait for the check to arrive! 😊

15 Reasons to Become an Affiliate Marketer

There are HUGE benefits to promoting affiliate programs with your own home-based Internet business...

1. **No Production Costs** - The cost to develop and produce a new product is prohibitive for almost anyone who wants to start a home-based business. With affiliate programs, production costs aren't an issue. The product has been developed and proven - all on the merchant's nickel.
2. **Low Cost Set-Up** - Compared with building a brick and mortar store, starting a home-based Internet business is relatively cheap. You probably already have a desk, Internet-connected computer and word-processing software, which is all the equipment you may need.
3. **No Fees for Joining or Licenses to Buy** - I often compare doing business as an affiliate, with distributing a line of products in the real world. The biggest difference is that the distributor must often pay for a license to distribute products within a limited geographic region. Affiliate programs, on the other hand, are usually free to join, and geographic market reach is limited only by the affiliate's ability to promote his web site.
4. **Choose From Thousands of Products and Services** - What isn't sold online? That list must be shorter than the one describing all that IS sold online. There are thousands and thousands of affiliate programs selling every product under the sun. That makes it easy to find products related to your current or planned web site.
5. **No Sales Experience Needed** - When I started my affiliate business, I had absolutely no sales experience. That wasn't a problem, however. The companies I affiliated with provided excellent marketing material. Using their sales copy, I was able to get my first affiliate site up in less than a day.

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6. **No Employees** - The largest expense of most businesses is employee salaries. Although there might be times when you need or want someone to work for you as an affiliate, it's doubtful you'll ever have to worry about hiring full or part-time employees. When you have a project you want to hire out, it is easy to find specialists in every computer-related field who can work for you from the comfort of THEIR own homes. You pay only for the project, and never have to worry about ongoing employee-related benefits and deductions.
7. **No Expensive Merchant Accounts Needed** - Setting up a merchant account for any business is a time-consuming and costly business. It's even more tedious for Internet businesses. However, merchant accounts aren't a concern when you're an affiliate. The merchant bears that cost and handles all processing of payments. You never have to lose sleep over potential chargebacks, fraud or losing your merchant account when you're an affiliate.
8. **No Inventory to Carry** - Even if you live in a small one-bedroom apartment, as an affiliate you can sell large items without storage concerns.
9. **No Order-Processing** - Forget the problems associated with collecting and storing names, addresses, credit card numbers, etc. The merchant does all that!
10. **No Product Shipping** - The cost and hassle to prepare and ship products to customers worldwide could be staggering. Affiliates never have to worry about packaging supplies or postal rates.
11. **No Customer Service Concerns** - Do you hate the prospect of dealing with nasty people or customer complaints? Don't worry about it! The merchant handles the snivelers.
12. **Make Money While You Sleep** - What other business allows you as a sole proprietor to keep your doors open and keep making money even when you take breaks or after you go home for the night?
13. **The World at Your Doorstep** - The Internet is the world's largest marketplace. You can drive more visitors to your online store in a day, than many small-town merchants see in in a year.
14. **Minimal Risk** - The product you chose isn't making money? Dump it. Take down your links and promote another! It's that easy. There are no long-term contracts binding you to products that don't sell.
15. **High Income Potential** - If you have a job, your salary or hourly wage is probably pre-determined. Maybe there's not much, other than working overtime, that you can do to increase your income. With your own affiliate business on the Internet your income potential is limited only by your desire, effort and imagination.

How Much Will it Cost to Start?

Unlike building a new brick and mortar business in Downtown Anywhere, the things you'll need to start a business on the Internet are CHEAP.

Here's a list of the **basic tools** you'll need to become an affiliate marketer.

- Desk
- Chair
- Computer
- Internet Connection
- Email
- Text Editor

You probably already have all those things, right?

Even if you don't have the desk and chair, you can always throw the laptop on your bed and work from there.

Here are some basic expenses...

Register Domain	\$ 8.95/year
Hosting	\$ 8.95/month
Web Site Template	\$10.00 - \$50.00 (once)

With start-up costs this low, I don't know why anyone would consider starting a business anywhere other than on the Internet!!

6 Steps to Quick-Start Your Affiliate Business

In this section I discuss the 6 steps you will take to quickly, easily and inexpensively get started in your affiliate marketing business.

Quickly & Easily find High Demand Topics

The topic you choose should both interest you and have high consumer demand.

You already know what interests you, but how do you find out whether a topic has high demand?

Well, the first place I check is a free tool call the **Overture Search Term Suggestion Tool**. It is located at:

<http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion>

At **Overture Search Term Suggestion tool**, you simply enter a term related to your site and it will show you:

- Related searches that include your term
- How many times that term was searched in the previous month

So, let's assume for a moment that you are a **mortgage and insurance** broker who suspects that insurance might be a good service to sell online.

To find out how many people are looking for insurance online, I typed in the word 'insurance' and discovered that the keyword 'insurance' had been searched for **971,914** times at Overture and its search partners in just one month!

That's almost a million people! Wow!

As I consider any term that receives 50,000 or more searches in a month a subject with good demand and potentially viable, insurance looks like it might just be a winning topic for an affiliate web site.

Find High-Profit Potential Products & Services

Once you've determined that your topic is in high demand, you need to find out now is whether there are merchants selling related products and services online, AND how much commission they pay.

For that, I go first to Commission Junction.

Commission Junction is an 'affiliate network' that puts merchants and affiliates together. They refer to merchants as 'advertisers' and the affiliates are called 'publishers'.

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To see all the merchants with products and services at Commission Junction, you'll need to set up a **free account**.

To do that, go to [Commission Junction](#), then click on 'Solutions' near the top right-hand portion of the page, then go to the left side of the Solutions page and click on 'CJ Marketplace'.

At the very bottom of that page and you'll find a link for the application process. Where it asks you to supply a URL, just enter yahoo.com or geocities.com if you don't already have a web site.

Once your account is set up and you've logged into the Commission Junction interface, click on 'Get Links', and select 'Advertisers' in the drop-down box beside the word 'Search' near the top of the page. Next, type in the word 'insurance'.

My search came up with 51 merchants. Your results may be more or less depending on whether merchants have been added to, or dropped from the network.

In choosing merchants, you want to select those with the **highest EPC ratings and commissions**.

What is an EPC Rating?

3-month EPC: 3-month EPC (earnings per 100 clicks) shows how well an advertiser converts Web site visitors into commissions, over a three-month period.

7-day EPC: 7-day EPC (earnings per 100 clicks) shows the average commissions paid to publishers for every 100 clicks, over the past seven days. Use this number to see the most recent EPC trend for advertisers.

So how well did our insurance merchants do?

Zurich insurance had a 7-day EPC rating of \$250.88. That means that affiliates are earning an average 250.88 for every 100 visitors they send to Zurich Insurance.

Wow!

Now what about those commission rates?

Well, at the Good Sam Club, if the customer completes a form and becomes a member, Good Sam will pay you \$5.00. That's JUST to fill out a form.

And if they purchase an Emergency Road Service package, you'll get paid \$15.00.

Not bad!

You can find even MORE merchants at the following affiliate networks:

- **Linkshare**
<http://linkshare.com>

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- **BeFree**
<http://affiliates.befree.com>
- **Clickbank**
<http://clickbank.com>

Cheap Sources of Site Content

Because we want to leave the selling job up to the merchant, an affiliate's job is to 'pre-sell' their merchants' products.

To pre-sell, you need **site content**.

Content consists of articles and endorsements that explains how your visitors problems can be solved by using the products you promote. In most cases, webmasters write their own endorsements for the products they promote.

However, if you aren't inclined to write product endorsements, you can:

- **Find** Free Content
- Use **Merchants'** Ad Copy
- **Pay** for Content

I like looking for **free content** first.

Staying with our 'insurance' topic, I searched [Google](#) for the terms "Free Articles" + "Insurance" and found the following articles listed at legalwhiz.com:

- "How to Save on Title Insurance Costs"
- "Understanding the Terms of Your New Loan"
- "Common Sense Mortgage Tips!"

In many cases, the author will allow you to use his work on your site if you include credit to the author and a link back to his site.

This is even MORE effective when the author has an affiliate program and you can make money from that link.

To get approval to use the article, you'd simply email the author a request, and they will usually be very happy to have you use their articles on your site.

Another way to get free content is to use what the merchant makes available to their affiliates.

For example, here is an email promotion that Corey Rudl gives his affiliates to promote his very popular 'Insiders Secrets to Internet Marketing' course.

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Dear Friend,

This e-mail is extremely urgent so please read the entire thing... I would feel terrible if you missed out on this because you did not get my e-mail in time.

I just got an e-mail from Corey Rudl and he said there were only 150 copies left of the new version of his best-selling Internet marketing course, The Insider Secrets to Marketing Your Business on the Internet, that includes the \$952 in FREE bonuses!

Chances are, as you read this, a lot of those 150 copies are already gone.

Just to recap my last e-mail, Corey Rudl is literally "the" guru of Internet marketing... he's grown his online businesses to over \$7.6 million in online sales last year and he gets over 1.8 million visitors to his web sites every month!

And in the new version of his best selling course he is going to show everything from step-by-step instructions you can use to start your very own Internet business in as little as 48 hours to how to build a top-selling web site... for less than \$100!

No matter how small your budget is, Corey shows you the cheapest ways to build a web site that sells!

He is going to show you where to find hot products (in 20 minutes or LESS!) that you can start selling TODAY! These in-demand products will sell like hot cakes, no matter what your experience!

Corey will even reveal his personal rolodex with 100s of FREE and cheap online tools, resources, and software that you can use to automate your web site (and save yourself at least 35 hours every week)!

And if that's not enough, he is going to even reveal, for the first time, some of his most advanced strategies like how to get #1 rankings in the search engines and get tons of free traffic from the "Big Guys" like Google... and his secret to writing sales copy that increases sales by 400% (or MORE)!

Like I said before, I know these strategies are going to make my business tons of extra money in 2004 and as my subscriber I want to make sure you experience the same rewards, so go to...

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<http://www.marketingtips.com/t.cgi/3885>

... if the page is still there, this means you made it in time and he still has some copies of his course with the additional \$952 worth of FREE bonuses!

So please hurry! And if you have any questions, just let me know.

All the best...

YOUR NAME HERE

As you can see, that copy is written in the first-person, so it looks like it is coming directly from you. Use merchant copy judiciously however, as your credibility will take a beating if your subscribers and visitors have seen the exact same copy in other newsletters and on other affiliate sites.

Lastly, you can **have articles written for you**, sometimes very inexpensively.

To find ghost writers on the 'net, check out some of these sites:

- Guru.com
- FreelanceWriters.com
- Elance.com

Once you have organized your content, it's time to start putting you're your site together.

The Fastest Way to Build Your WebSite

There are 3 steps to quickly build your website. They are:

- 1. Register a Domain**
- 2. Domain Hosting**
- 3. Buy Template**

Domain registration is painless, and CHEAP. Go to Godaddy.com where it will cost you 8.95/year for each domain. You can get them even cheaper when you register for more than one year.

Here are two good, yet inexpensive, **hosting services** that I recommend.

- GoDaddy.com - \$8.95/mo.
- HostRocket - \$9.95/mo.

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