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Making Money With Affiliate Programs
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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ABOUT THIS BOOK

Making Money With Affiliate Programs is written by a successful affiliate. It's a book for anybody wanting to learn how to be successful with affiliate programs.

David McKenzie takes the reader, step by step, through the necessary processes to work successfully with affiliate programs. He also shows the reader a number of novel techniques/strategies that will maximize any affiliate's income.

These affiliate success processes are universal. David knows the pitfalls, as well as the joys and rewards of working with affiliate programs.

Chapter 1 – What Is Affiliate Marketing?

For those who don't know what an Affiliate Program is please read this chapter.

However, if you do know what Affiliate Programs are then skip this chapter and move straight onto the next chapter.

Affiliate Programs

There are many ways to make money on the web. However, one of the quickest and easiest ways to start a web business is by working what are called Affiliate or Reseller Programs.

An Affiliate is essentially a commissioned agent for a product or service. What happens is that as a commissioned agent, you (the Affiliate) get a percentage of sales after you (the Affiliate) have made those sales.

Affiliates are also called Resellers, so you may come across this term as well.

You can easily find Affiliate programs by going to the numerous Affiliate Directories that are on the web. You'll find these directories by going to any Search Engine and typing in the phrase "Affiliate Directory." Alternatively, if you're surfing the web and come across a site that you like with a product or service you believe is valuable or useful then take a closer look at the site for links to their "Affiliate or Reseller Program."

Affiliate programs are usually free to join, and good affiliate programs will always have all the necessary tools for you to sell the site's products or services.

Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing is the way that you market the affiliate programs in which you're involved. It is the main subject of this book.

Chapter 2 - Choosing Your Affiliate Program

There are many affiliate programs available to you on the net. However, to improve your profitability as an affiliate you need to choose the programs you market wisely, as not all affiliate programs are created equal.

Tips For Joining Affiliate Programs

Before you merrily join any affiliate program it pays to consider which affiliate programs are the best to join.

These are the crucial program features that I consider necessary inclusions in any affiliate program.

- ❑ The affiliate program must have a generous payment structure. For me, this means a high commission payment, which is a high percentage of the purchase price - *nothing under a 25% commission*.
- ❑ Make sure the affiliate program you're about to join has a professional looking site. You don't want to send visitors to a site that looks unprofessional.
- ❑ Make sure that the affiliate program has a comprehensive affiliate statistics page, which lists the number of click-throughs, the number of sales, and the amount you've earned to date. This should be broken down by month.
- ❑ Make sure that these affiliate statistics are "real time". This means statistics which are updated automatically and immediately. You do not want to find out today about a sale you made a week ago.

- ❑ Ensure that the affiliate program provides you with a wide variety of text links, banners and graphics to put on your web page. Personally I prefer to use text links. However, certain other types of banners and graphics still work well.
- ❑ Know how often you are going to be paid. If you're tossing up between 2 programs and one pays monthly and the other pays quarterly, the one which pays monthly is a better arrangement. You don't want to wait months before you get paid for your hard work.
- ❑ See if the affiliate program gives \$ examples of how their top affiliates are doing. This can be a great indicator as to whether or not it is a good affiliate program. If some affiliates are earning many thousands per month, then it is a good affiliate program.
- ❑ If the affiliate program has examples of which marketing methods these successful affiliates are using to get their results, then this information is also most beneficial.
- ❑ An affiliate program, which offers a special monthly newsletter just for its affiliates is also great. Here, you'll also get extra tips and information on techniques that are working well.
- ❑ See if the program notifies you by email when you make a sale, or you have an affiliate sign up under you (if it is a 2-tier program). It motivates you when you see 'You've made another sale, or another Affiliate has signed up' in your email inbox.
- ❑ Ensure that the program provides top-level support for its affiliates. If they cannot answer your query immediately make sure they respond within 48 hours. Good, timely support is critical to your success.

There is a huge selection of Affiliate Programs available to you on the web. Choosing the right one for you to market is never an easy task. However these features (described above) are necessary components of a professionally managed affiliate program.

Remember Affiliate Programs are a “buyers market.” So choose programs which have these preferred features, and a product or service you believe in.

Make sure you do plenty of research before joining any affiliate program.

Commissions - The Higher the Better

A good way to identify if the management of an affiliate program you’re thinking of joining is serious about their affiliate program is by the commissions (percentage of sales) they’re willing to pay you for your effort.

If someone is offering you 10% commission and they are keeping the rest, then you need to ask yourself this... *“Should I really be in this affiliate program?”*

An affiliate program I recently joined called ‘E-Book Marketing Explained’ pays out 45% commission to their affiliates and another 10% on the 2nd tier.

That’s 55% of the sale price!

The owners of the program only keep 45% of the sale price, and it’s from this percentage that they also take out their costs. Now, either they’ve gone completely mad, or they are very smart.

I suspect they’re very smart.

Why?

Well, by paying out such high commissions they're attracting many serious affiliates into their program. This means that they'll sell in much higher volumes. With these higher volumes of sales they can afford to give away such a high commission.

AND... because they give so much away to their affiliates with their high commission rate it shows that they're supremely confident about the worth of their own product or service, and its ability to sell itself. Their product or service is that good, and this is why they offer these high percentages to their affiliates.

Affiliates do all the pre-selling and all the hard work to get the prospect to view the program's web sites pages. Therefore, they want to be paid well for their effort. So, as an affiliate, do not accept miserly 10% commission rate payments. Set yourself a standard of nothing less than 25% and make sure that this 25% represents more than just a few dollars in payment.

It is with the bigger percentage payers that you'll make decent commissions, the 40%-plus hitters. These BIG affiliate program commissions are the ones that will create an income burst to your bank account balance each and every month. *Focus on these to get a better return for your effort.*

Chapter 3 - Affiliate Marketing Principles

Spend 75% of Your Time Marketing Programs

How important do you think it is to market your Affiliate programs? Well, most people would probably say that it's *quite* important.

I would say that this is the main difference between success and failure for anybody marketing Affiliate programs. The more time you spend marketing your affiliate programs the more successful you'll be... and the more money you'll make.

'Super Affiliates' spend 75% of their time marketing their affiliate programs. This means that they only spend 25% of their time working on their affiliate programs. The bulk of their time is spent in promoting them.

Now, compare this with most affiliates who spend about 10% to 20% of their time marketing their affiliate programs, and the rest of their time "fiddling."

You may have read the statistics that indicate that between 80% and 90% of all affiliates make little or no money each month from their affiliate programs.

A big reason for their lack of success is...

LACK OF MARKETING.

Just because it's an affiliate program does not mean that you do not have to spend time marketing it.

Treat each affiliate program you belong to as if it were your own product. This will force you to concentrate more of your efforts on marketing. By thinking like the "owner" rather than the "affiliate" you'll automatically focus on what is important to make those sales.

In fact, you could say that you have to spend MORE TIME marketing your affiliate programs than if you were the owner of the product, because not only are you trying to get people to buy a product, you are also competing with other affiliates marketing the same product.

Spend more time marketing your programs than your fellow affiliates and you'll earn more money. If others spend more time than you marketing their programs who do you think is going to succeed?

However, when I talk about marketing affiliate programs this doesn't mean that you have to go out and spend a whole lot of money doing this.

There are numerous, effective, low cost and free marketing methods that work very well.

Try the following free marketing methods to improve your affiliate program results.

- ❑ Write your own articles
- ❑ Use ezine ad swaps
- ❑ Use sig files in your emails

To be successful with affiliate programs you need to be disciplined and consistent with your marketing. Set aside a couple of hours each day for the marketing of your affiliate programs, and I guarantee you that your monthly affiliate check will begin to increase.

You may even become a Super Affiliate one day!

Affiliate Marketing Techniques That Get Results

These are techniques that (when used consistently) bring good results.

- ❑ Spend time trying to get a higher ranking in the various search engines for your web sites. Learn as much as you can about search engines and make it a weekly task to try to improve your rankings in them.
- ❑ The word "free" and especially when written "FREE" is over used. Use it only occasionally on your site. For example you could use it to give away a free E-Book or free article you have written.
- ❑ Spend 75% of your time marketing your web site and affiliate programs and 25% of your time working on them. Most people spend about 10% to 20% marketing their web site and affiliate programs. Then again, most people online do not make any money.
- ❑ Use text links rather than banners for your affiliate programs. Text links have a much higher click through ratio. People have trained themselves to ignore banners.
- ❑ Write you own articles and post them on a separate page on your site. Then submit them to the following article resource sites:
 - http://www.ezinearticles.com/add_url.htm
 - <http://www.ideamarketers.com>
 - <http://www.marketing-seek.com/articles/submit.shtml>
 - <http://www.web-source.net/articlesub.htm>
- ❑ Check your clicks and sales regularly at your affiliate web site. If you see a slowdown in clicks and/or sales then alter your marketing tactics. Try

something different. Do not continue using the same techniques if they're are not working.

- ❑ Use Newsgroups, but do this in a clever way. Stand out from the crowd. Use Newsgroups to announce new articles that you've written. However, make sure that you read the rules of each newsgroup before you post to it, and never, ever spam.
- ❑ Do not use graphics that will slow down the loading of your web page. If your selling or pre-selling information is predominantly text, your site will load much faster. My site has one graphic on it. That's right, just ONE.
- ❑ Subscribe to a number of newsletters, which are related to the theme of your web site. You can always get a lot of valuable affiliate tips from good newsletters.
- ❑ Post articles that other webmasters have written on your site, but ask them first. You can even do your own review of other people's articles.
- ❑ Find out whether any affiliate programs you belong to have articles on their site, and find out if you can post them on your site. Then include your affiliate link back to the affiliate site at the end of the each article.

Be an Affiliate Site AND a Sales Site

Are you just a sales site reselling affiliate products and services?

You've probably seen sites that sell a product or service and noticed that they also have an affiliate program, which you can join. There is often a link at the top left or at the bottom of the site, which says "Affiliate Program".

Not only can you buy the product or service, but you can also sell it and earn a commission.

Well, how about using this very same concept for the affiliate programs you're promoting. How about setting up your site like this but not actually developing the product or service yourself.

You can use this technique with 2 tier programs!

Not only will you directly earn commissions through the sale of products or services at your site, you can also sign up second tier affiliates to earn commissions for you as well.

Many of the best affiliate programs are 'Two Tier' systems. In fact, it is advised that you join affiliate programs that have two tiers.

So, how should you design your site to accommodate sales and promote affiliate sign-ups? There are 2 ways to do this:

If you have a number of products or services that you are selling at your site, then underneath the "To Buy" affiliate link place a "To join affiliate program" link. Most likely your affiliate program will provide you with 2 different affiliate links, a "Buy" link and a "join program" link..

Chances are, people you sign up on the 2nd tier via your affiliate program link will also end up buying the product themselves. So, not only do you get a direct commission from the sale to this person you'll also get 2nd tier commissions from any sales they make in the future.

Affiliate mini-sites

Set up a mini-site for each one of your main affiliate programs, so that you're only reselling this one product or service on that site.

This would be a site with only two pages. On the first page place the link to the product itself. On the second page include a description of the affiliate program, and place the link to the affiliate program sign up page.

Your main goal is to actually direct visitors to the second page where they can sign up for the affiliate program.

Why?

You'll get more commissions from signing up affiliates in your 2nd tier than from visitors directly buying the product through your affiliate link. This is because more people will be interested in the affiliate program rather than the product. However, when they join the affiliate program, many of them will actually buy the product or service.

In summary, think about using your site as an affiliate program site AND a sales site. It gives you two bites at the cherry, and having 2nd tier affiliates means you can be earning commissions for many years to come.

Fewer Links = More Profits

Have you got too many links on your site?

I saw a site today that had only four visible links on its home page. Three of those links were text links and linked to other pages within the same web site. Therefore there was actually only one link to a different site.

Is this site operating profitably?

I'm really not sure but the information on the site was very good, and this got me thinking.

Everyone is talking these days about link popularity and getting as many people to link to your site. Often this means you have to give reciprocal links back to them. The theory goes that the better your link popularity the better you'll rank with the search engines.

Well some people appear to be taking this idea to extremes. Suddenly you've got 473 links to other sites all sprayed across your web pages. Your visitors are bombarded with banners and text links on totally different subjects.

So, visitors do not know what to click on next... Arrrrggggghhhh !

Sure, you might jump up a couple of places in the search engine results but is it really worth it?

Also, there is a real possibility that the Search Engines will actually dump your site. It's theme-focused links which actually improve rankings with the Search Engines, not random, unrelated links from Link farms and link exchanges.

With so many links these sites are not focused.

So, what's the answer here?

Fewer links might mean more profits.

When your visitors come to your site and see only a few links there will only be a few places for them to click on. This means that they'll spend more time reading the actual content on your site.

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