

Affiliate Partner

Success Secrets

Discover How YOU Can
Make An Awesome Living
Selling *Other* People's
Products – *without*
Having to Create Them
or Offer Customer Support!



Affiliate Marketing in a Nutshell

What exactly is affiliate marketing? Affiliate marketing is the single fastest growth industry on the Internet. It's also true that affiliate marketing is one of the fastest and most creative ways to make money and have a career on the Internet.

Simply put, affiliate marketing is selling products on a commission basis. You own a business that advertises and sells products for other companies. You may have a product of your own to begin with or not. The things that a successful affiliate marketer must have are:

1. Your website is the jumping off point of all your marketing efforts. So the first step in any successful affiliate marketing business is building a good, credible and professional looking website. You must build a user-friendly website, which will attract your prospects and motivate them to click on the links to the products and services you are promoting and make a purchase. There are companies whose business is building websites that you can hire to build one for you.
2. You must find products to sell, you must be able to determine whether there is a demand for those products and if people will actually buy them. You may either have your own original product or products that are made by others. Which ever way you go, you must believe in the products.
3. It will be necessary for you to become an adept advertiser and be able to tell whether the advertising you are paying for is producing more income for you than the advertising is costing you.
4. It is necessary that you have good mathematical skills. You will need to be able to track your sales and determine profit, as well as, see to it that your suppliers are paid in full and on time.
5. You need the full and unwavering support of your family so that you can devote the time and energy necessary to launch your affiliate marketing business.

Affiliate Marketer Defined

According to The World's Glossary of Internet Terms, "Affiliate Marketer is defined as: "A business relationship with a merchant or other service provider who allows you to link to that business. When a visitor clicks on the link at your site and subsequently makes a purchase from the merchant, you receive a commission based on the amount of the sale, a referral fee or a pay-for-click fee."

This is a simple, straight-forward agreement between a merchant and an affiliate. Budding affiliate marketers run into a problem when they try to reverse the success process. Instead of starting at the beginning, they try to start at the end.

Making money is the end of the process. The beginning of the process is education and there are several steps in between. Too many people, who are just getting started in affiliate marketing, fail to take the steps necessary to get to the end of the process and actually make money.

Step #1: Educate yourself. This is the key, opening the door of opportunity. It's also the common thread connecting successful affiliate marketers. Education lays the foundation - the building blocks to success. Start by gathering the best information you can find about affiliate marketing and absorbing it.

Step #2: Turn that information into usable knowledge. Even the best information remains kind of worthless, however, until after you discover how to use it - how to make it serve your purpose.

Step #3: Start applying the knowledge ... take action ...start building your affiliate business. Will you make mistakes, even though you've invested all that time educating yourself? Yes, you most likely will make mistakes.

Step #4: Test and tweak, test and tweak. This one never ends. And it's often the dividing line between succeeding and failing. Attention to small details often returns big rewards.

Following these steps will define you as a successful affiliate marketer.

Are Affiliates in Demand?

Is there a demand for affiliate marketers today? Yes, there is a huge demand. One of the challenges faced in the affiliate marketing industry is that it sometimes sounds too good to be true: advertising that's guaranteed to work or it's free! Newcomers wonder if it's possible, and skeptics claim that the cost effective prices of affiliate marketing lower the bar for online advertising. But there is a good reason that affiliate marketing has experienced steady growth throughout the ups and downs of online advertising—it works. And affiliate marketing has evolved to become a reliable source of sales for a wide range of marketers.

Affiliate marketing has evolved from the early years when some touted it as the future of online advertising, and others claimed it was the downfall of the medium. It's now a sophisticated channel that generates anywhere from five to 25% of online sales for many of the world's biggest brands.

Almost all major multi-channel marketers have an affiliate program of some kind. The important thing to remember is that affiliate programs now come in all shapes and sizes. The concept of a wide-open affiliate program with an unlimited and uncontrolled number of affiliates is a thing of the past. Nearly all marketers agree that affiliates add value to an online marketing effort, but the program must be tailored to meet the marketer's objectives.

Affiliate marketing did not bring an end to other, higher priced forms of online media advertising. The success of the affiliate marketing in delivering sales cost effectively by way of a pay-for-performance model paved the way for other forms of performance-based advertising, such as CPA-based search and portal advertising, to create acceptance among direct marketers. Affiliate marketing has evolved, with affiliates and marketers becoming more sophisticated and programs more integrated with other forms of online marketing.

The Age-Old Question Do You Need a Website?

The most important and indispensable thing to assure your success in affiliate marketing is your own website. The first step in any successful affiliate marketing business is building a good, credible and professional looking website. Your website is the jump off point of all your marketing efforts. Therefore, you must first build a user-friendly website, which will attract your prospects and motivate them to click on the links to the products and services you are promoting and make a purchase. You must first focus your efforts in building a website that will cater to what your prospects need.

Above all else, make your website full of original, relevant and useful content. The most important thing you should consider is that almost all web users go online to look for information, not necessarily to go and buy something. People will love articles that are appealing and helpful. Keep in mind that, in the internet, content is still king and good quality content will not only build your credibility, it can also help you achieve a higher search engine ranking. By posting relevant and useful articles, you establish yourself as a credible expert in the field, making you a more dependable endorser of the product or service you promote. Establishing a good name is a good step in building up a dedicated consumer base. Dedicated customer bases are the life blood of affiliate marketers.

You must use every possible means on your website to motivate prospects not only to visit your site but also to click and proceed to the websites of the products and services you are promoting.

When you are creating your website, the possibilities are endless and are limited only by your imagination, originality, resourcefulness and resolve. You can always explore other ideas and adapt other strategies, which you think might help you become a high rolling affiliate marketer but not until you have a great website.

Identifying an Existing Hot Demand

Every small business owner knows that competition is tough, but he or she may not be able to pinpoint exactly what changes are needed in order to get to the top. Conducting business as usual may no longer be sufficient. Investing in the technology that is now available can be a great help or a bank breaker. It seems that most small business and home based business are either starving (they don't have enough technology) or they are obese (they have everything piece of new technology that comes down the pike).

There is, however, some fairly new technology that every small or home business owner needs. It can answer questions like; how can small businesses identify noteworthy trends, Identify an existing hot demand and make better decisions faster? Answer: business intelligence software. Business intelligence is the crystal ball of the 21st century.

Purchasing business intelligence (BI) software is one of the most strategic investments that a business can make. Using data mining, reporting and querying, BI helps businesses understand, monitor, manage and respond to specified situations. This software empowers decision-makers — and staff — to connect the dots around key business numbers in a way previously unimaginable. BI helps you figure out:

- Which customers are profitable?
- Which customers appear profitable but aren't?
- Are you close to — or far from — reaching critical milestones?
- When is the best time to launch a marketing campaign?
- What was the best performing product or service last quarter?

Business Intelligence software may be more of an investment than small businesses can bear. It can certainly be pricy. Small business or home business owners, however, can subscribe to BI services on the Internet at a fairly reasonable cost. There are several to choose from.

eBay also published a “Hot Items” list the first week of each month. It gives valuable information to eBay sellers who use drop shippers.

Protecting Your Commissions

Thieves are a problem out in the brick and mortar world is for business owners and thieves are a concern for cyber space business owners. Out in the brick and mortar world, thieves will take money and merchandise and it isn't any different online. The real world merchants use locks and alarms to deter thieves. Internet business owners need to use anti-theft software to protect their commissions. Here are some things you can do to protect yourself and your commissions:

1. **Use Meta Refresh:** A meta refresh is a simple bit of HTML code which automatically redirects your visitor to another page (your affiliate URL). It provides a neat way of presenting affiliate links in newsletters. It probably helps reduce commission bypassing and commission hijacking. A big advantage of using meta refreshes is that if merchants change their affiliate links, you can change links on dozens of pages quickly and easily by altering only one file.

One problem is that some search engines don't like meta refreshes because they're frequently used for unsavory purposes. So if you use this technique, use it with caution.

2. **Use a URL redirection service.** You can use free services or buy a unique domain name for each affiliate program you join. URL redirection makes affiliate links less obvious, so this will reduce some commission thefts.
3. **Use a web-based ad tracking service.** The ad tracking link initially hides the affiliate link, reducing thefts.
4. **Use an ad tracking script.** Good ad tracking scripts hide the affiliate link as well as being useful for tracking. It has the advantage that it doesn't promote someone else's domain.
5. **Use JavaScript redirect.** Because this initially hides the affiliate link, it should reduce commission thefts.

Be aware that thievery is a problem for online businesses and take the necessary steps to protect your commissions.

Where to Look for the Right Product Online

When you are just starting your online business finding the right products to sell online is the number one problem. Knowing where to look can help.

1. **Drop Shipper Directories** Drop shippers are wholesalers that will ship direct to your customers so that you don't have to invest in or store inventory. Directories of drop shippers are for sale online, but make sure you're buying a reputable one.
2. **Local Businesses:** You may find businesses in your backyard that offer just the right products, but are not yet into e-commerce. Offer to sell their product online in exchange for a percentage of any profits you make.
3. **Crafters:** Local crafters are a good source of unique products, and may be willing to reduce their prices for you if you purchase in quantity. Either buy the item outright, or set up a consignment arrangement with them.
4. **Garage sales and flea markets:** Garage sales are a good place to look for items to sell online. Do some research into categories that interest you, and then start scouring sales for good prices.
5. **eBay:** eBay itself can be a source for products. Look for wholesale lots that can be broken down for individual sale.
6. **Wholesaler Directories:** Your local library will probably have directories of manufacturers, wholesalers, and/or distributors. Most directories are organized by SIC code so that you can zero in on the product categories that interested you.
7. **Trade Shows:** Trade shows are a great way to source products. Lots of merchants gather in one place to look for resellers. To find trade shows in a particular industry, contact trade associations and industry publications.
8. **Importers/Exporters:** You might want to consider contacting companies that import goods from overseas. It's possible to source directly from overseas. This requires a lot of expertise, but many companies do it successfully.

Have a Mailing List of Your Own

No matter what type of email you send out, you'll need a mailing list. The basic way to build a mailing list is by capturing name and email address information for everyone who buys or shows interest in your product.

An email list that YOU COLLECT YOURSELF is worth its weight in gold. This can be accomplished by using a list manager on your site. List managers also provide the HTML coding for the form on the Gateway pages. A list manager collects the email addresses that are gathered with the form. Thus, your email list is collected. This might take some time so there are methods to use until you get your own email list built.

One way to build a mailing list is to do ad swaps with other list owners. The way this works is, you (as company A) have an email list that you send newsletters to and another list owner (company B) has a list they send newsletters to. Company A and Company B place ads on one another's mailing lists. Each of you is promoting the other's list.

You can rent or buy targeted email lists. The list you develop using your own customers' names is called your "house list." Of course, when you're first starting out, your house list is likely to be skimpy. To augment it, one way to go is rent or buy a mailing list. There are two ways to buy or rent a mailing list—approaching the company you want to rent from directly or using a list broker. Any company that emails information to its customers usually has a list manager, who handles inquiries and orders for the mailing list.

Another way to build an email list is to list your newsletter in all of the ezine directories.

Have Your Own Voice Through Creating Special Reports

You're probably searching for additional revenue streams to keep your business solid and secure in this contracting economy and uncertain world. Producing specialized content for sale is one of the fastest, most reliable methods of making extra income fast. Writing a "white paper" or a special report, is a great way to set yourself up as an expert in your field, and share valuable information with your prospects.

You may already have most of the ingredients for an e-book or special report in your files or archives. Find out which ingredients make customers willing to pay you for material available from other sources, and what elements you should include in your marketing copy to spark their interest in buying now.

Here are the steps to take when writing your special report:

- Have your end goal in mind before you start.
- Do you want to find a way to increase sales, while reducing your cost to acquire those sales?
- Who are you trying to impress and what is important to them?
- What distribution method will be best?
- How many people do you want to impact with this report?
- Make sure the layout of your special report looks pleasing, and is very easy to read.
- Keep in mind that it's basically salesmanship in print.
- Keep your facts accurate, very brief and to the point. The denser your information, the more valuable and more likely to keep the interest of your reader.
- Write an attention getting headline. 95% of your readers will decide if they will read your special report based totally on your headline, so make it great and make it benefit driven.

Get it on the web. When emailing others, include your white paper URL in your SIG line of your Email or include the URL when promoting your special report on Email discussion lists.

Setting Up your Affiliate Marketing System

There is much speculation about how much money you can earn online without your own product. Marketing your own digital product on the Internet can be very lucrative but there is no reason why you can't profit a great deal by using creative methods that offer real value to Internet surfers and have your own product as well.

An affiliate program is really not as difficult to set up as you may think. Thanks to the high demand for affiliate systems recently, there are now lots of ways to set up your own program.

Here's what you need to set one up:

1. A web site with your own domain name.
2. At least one product or service that you own completely.
3. A system to handle commission tracking and payment.

That sounds pretty easy, doesn't it? Well, actually it is! And it's getting easier all the time.

The first two items listed above are self-explanatory. Of course, you need your own website and your own product or service. You can't very well set up an associate program if you don't own the site or the product(s) you will be promoting. If you have not taken these two steps, you'll need to do them first. Once you've managed to get by these two steps, you can move right to step three, setting up your program.

You will need to search the Internet for a system that will handle commission tracking and payment. You can try to do this yourself but you will most likely miss some and missed ones are missed income. There are free ones, as well as, paid ones.

The positive aspects of an associate management system are many:

1. You can sign on associates more rapidly and grow a larger force of resellers.
2. You'll enjoy the automation and online management of affiliates.
3. These systems provide full sales statistics for both you and your associates.

Telling Good Traffic from Bad

Everyday that goes by you can bet that any serious website owner is wondering how to get more traffic to their site. This intense desire to generate more clicks makes virtually any online entrepreneur easy prey to many of the traffic schemes and scams that pervade the Internet.

Wild promises of high volume traffic and big bucks often separate even the most savvy business person from their money because they want to believe the promises made by these traffic hucksters. The problem is that high volume doesn't necessarily translate into a high sales rate.

The visitors who come to your website as a result of a desire to find out more on a specific, niche topic, not as a result of exit traffic or membership in a safe list where members simply pitch each other. Good traffic comes from people clicking links on topics targeted to their interests and getting directed to a website containing information they want and expect as a result of clicking the link. The bottom line is that when you get right down to it the best and most dependable sources of targeted traffic come from links that people click.

Being able to determine which clicks actually result in sales is vital. To track conversions from click to sales, depending on the type of shopping cart software you are using, you can then create a custom order confirmation page - i.e. the page that is displayed once the transaction is complete. This is very easy to do if you're using a payment processing service such as PayPal.

It's well known that each search engine and each web site has a particular type of user (age, interests etc.), and they'll all have different triggers leading them to purchase. All of these things are important for you to know so that your advertising dollars will be spent in the most advantageous places.

Other Notable Common Affiliate Marketing Mistakes

It isn't hard to set up a good website and start an affiliate marketing career. It isn't hard at all to find affiliate marketing opportunities on the internet. However, it is a very simple thing to make deadly mistakes that will insure your failure to thrive at affiliate marketing.

One of the most notable affiliate marketing mistakes is to think that all you have to do is find the ones that pay the most, sign up, drive traffic to that site through your affiliate link and you're all set right? Not exactly.

It's great to choose an affiliate program that pays a high percentage, but that's not most important thing to consider. It's much more important to find a quality affiliate program that meets certain criteria. Here are three mistakes you don't have to make:

1. You want to make sure the product is a proven seller. You don't want to waste your time and money driving traffic to a site that doesn't convert. Find one with a good conversion rate.
2. Make sure the site you become an affiliate for protects its affiliates, and has your best interest at heart. Look for one that provides banners, e-mails, and other tools you can use to promote the site. Also, make sure that there is only one payment option. As an affiliate marketer, you need to be sure that you will get credit for your referral. If there is more than one payment method, you can get shortchanged.
3. Do not choose an affiliate program that promotes an e-mail course. Nothing is worse than becoming an affiliate to a site that's first goal is to capture e-mail addresses, and then tries to make the sale second. As an affiliate marketer, you need to capture e-mail addresses, then to convert that prospect into a sale. Stick with affiliate programs that aren't focused on capturing leads because it's simply not in your best interest. Build your own list, not someone else's.

Choosing the Right Product

When you first start your online business, the first and most obvious question you will ask yourself is...what am I going to sell? Points to consider when deciding the answer to that question are:

- Is it light and easy to ship?
- Is it a digital good that is downloaded (e-book or software)?
- Is it perishable or fragile?
- Does it have to be seen and held (designer fabrics, perhaps)?
- Is there enough demand to make your venture profitable?
- Does it have little competition from large online companies (niche products)?

The last two characteristics are the ones that can be hard to pin down. Here is a generally accepted method of arriving at an idea of how heavy the demand and competition is for a product.

If you have a special interest in some products that meet the above criteria, great, but don't limit your investigation just to items you like. You are looking for a niche product with relatively good demand (enough to make it profitable), but without heavy competition.

One way to see what the demand is for products you are interested in is to look at search engines to see how frequently people search for the product you are considering.

The result of all this research should be that one or more products will fit into a niche market - products with some demand, and relatively little supply. For the best results, focus on one niche product category, and offer a wide selection. That way, you can become the best online source for that particular category. For example, instead of offering general craft supplies, offer the widest possible selection of needlepoint kits. This strategy will also allow you to rank higher in search engines because you can optimize your pages for fewer, more specific, keywords.

Making Back-End & Residual Commissions

Residual income puts money in an affiliate marketer's pocket without any work or effort on their part. It doesn't get any better than that. Sales of back-end products allow you to get paid for work that you do more than once. The idea here is to work smarter...not harder.

So what are back-end products? They are products/services you offer to existing customers, i.e. to people who have already bought a first product (front-end product. lead product) from you.

Most online marketers make much more money selling customers the second, third, fourth etc. product than selling their first product. The reason is that people who've already bought from you once are much more likely to buy again.

Strategies like back-end offers shifts the focus from the short sighted "take the money and run" strategy that is so much in use on the internet today. You've seen these sites all over. The focus is on getting a massive amount of traffic and then selling visitors an over-priced product that doesn't deliver what was promised. They might make money in the short run but they will only sell to each customer once and will have to continue spending a lot of money on advertising to get new suckers to visit their site.

More successful sites focus on building a strong relationship with their customers. Your main goal shouldn't be to just make sure your customers are somewhat satisfied...you want them to be extremely satisfied. If you deliver the goods, your customers will trust you more. If you have their trust, you can sell them anything. When you send your very satisfied customers an email offering another product that they would be interested in, they will flock to your site to buy it because they trust you. Trust is everything.

Age-Old Question Do You Need to Have Your Own Product

Whether or not you need to have your own product to become a successful affiliate marketer is a question that has been asked and answered every few minutes since affiliate marketing came on the scene. The reason it is asked so often is because everybody has a different answer. There are those who say you absolutely **MUST** have your own product to get started and to succeed in affiliate marketing and then there are those who say you don't need a product when you start or ever to be successful. So, which is it? Yes? No?

The fact of the matter is that everybody is right. Having your own product is great but it isn't absolutely necessary. Those who have their own product can build a website around that product and add affiliate links to it. Those who don't have their own products can still create a great website and be an affiliate marketer. Producers of products love affiliate marketers and products are not the least bit hard to find.

The thing that both those who do and those who don't have their own product have in common is that they both must be passionate about the products they sell. You will never be successful in selling something that you aren't interested in yourself. It takes drive and ambition to succeed at any endeavor and affiliate marketing isn't any different. You must be passionate about a product or an idea in order to keep your drive and ambition alive and well for the long haul.

Whether you are marketing your own product or a product produced by others your success is directly related to how effective your marketing techniques are, how focused you are, how well you manage your time, and how much you believe in the product.