



Doug's Reviews

Reviewing and Revealing Online Opportunities

Affiliate Marketing Revealed:

25 Things You MUST Know!

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Online Opportunities Reviewed

Doug's Reviews

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Affiliate Marketing: What It Is

Affiliate marketing is different things to different people, but essentially, affiliate marketing is the act of marketing someone else's products or services for a portion, or commission, of each sale that you make.

Some people do affiliate marketing as their full time jobs. That's it. That's all they do – they market other people's products or services, collect their commissions, and live their lives as they wish. They do not have to deal with customer service, shipping orders, or anything else. All they do is promote other people's products or services, everyday.

Other people use affiliate programs in conjunction with their own products or services, using affiliate programs as front end products, upsells, and back end products. For example, if you had an information product about weight loss, you might want to market exercise equipment, exercise clothing, vitamins, or other items or services that are related to weight loss along with your weight loss information product – to increase your revenue.

Obviously you would not want to create these items, so you would find these related products or services, and sign up for the affiliate programs, allowing you to promote them. Some people even low cost information products, such as ebooks, in order to sell high ticket affiliate products or services. Alternately, some people just use inexpensive affiliate products to enhance their own high ticket products or continuity programs, such as membership sites.

Some people are confused about what affiliate marketing actually is. For instance, many people who have products and offer affiliate programs for those products might say that they sell their product through affiliate marketing. What they mean is that they have affiliates who sell the product for them, but they are actually merchants or affiliate managers, in affiliate marketing terms.

But basically, affiliate marketing is selling someone else's products or services through various means, for various reasons – either to earn an income, to enhance a product, or even to sell an additional product. In fact, many people use low end affiliate products as lead ins, or entry level products, for higher end affiliate products – never actually creating or promoting a product or service of their own.

Is money being made? **You better believe there is!** If you include all products and services that are sold through affiliates, affiliate marketing is essentially a billion dollar industry, even though it isn't technically considered an industry in its own right. Many people don't even consider it a career, but they are mistaken.

Right now, at this very moment, there are thousands of affiliate marketers that you have never even heard of quietly promoting affiliate products and collecting huge commission checks every month. Why haven't you heard of them? You haven't heard of them because they are not in the Internet Marketing products market. They are in other 'consumer' niches, such as weight loss, healthcare, sports, gambling, education, financial products, etc.

Now, if you have an active interest in those things, or any other conceivable thing, you have probably searched for information or products related to your interest on the Internet. If this is the case, you have most likely come into contact with an affiliate marketer, without even being aware of it. You may have even purchased a product through an affiliate marketer without ever knowing it.

Even Google has an affiliate program. That's what Google AdSense is all about. It's an affiliate program, but it isn't technically called that. EBay has an affiliate program, as does Microsoft. There is an affiliate program available for just about any product that you can imagine, but not all 'brands' have affiliate programs – which of course is their mistake.

Affiliate marketing presents a win-win-win situation. The owner or maker of the product being sold is making money. The affiliate marketer is making money, and the customer is getting what they want or need. Everybody wins. Affiliate marketing has been around longer than you think it has as well.

Many people think that affiliate marketing started sometime after the Internet came into existence. This is wrong. Amway, Avon, Mary Kay – all of these are essentially affiliate programs, but the people who were actually doing the affiliate marketing were called distributors or representatives – and they are still called distributors or representatives to this day.

Affiliate marketing can even entail network marketing. Affiliate marketing is the act of selling a product for a commission. Network marketing also involves selling a product for a commission, but also focuses on bringing other resellers (or affiliate marketers, distributors or representatives) into the program as well. Sometimes, however, affiliate marketing also allows and encourages you to bring other affiliate marketers into the program.

Again, affiliate marketing is different things to different people, but the goal is the same – **to make money**. Affiliate marketing offers you the opportunity and ability to make money without creating a product of your own.

Affiliate Marketing: Getting Started

Getting started in affiliate marketing is really quite easy, but too often, many people mistakenly think it's a lot easier than it actually is. In most cases, the only thing you need to do to join an affiliate program is to fill out a form. That's the easiest part that there is. But there is still work to be done if you are to be successful.

The first objective is to find a profitable market or niche. This can easily be done in Google or by reading magazines. Let's start with Google. Do a search for any topic that interests you. Interest in what you hope to sell is important, and later, you will learn why. Make a list of things that interest you, and do a simple search in Google for each thing.

Pay close attention to the sponsored ads. This tells you that money is being spent in this market. Now, do a little logical thinking. As a business person, would you spend money on advertising that is not making you money? Absolutely not. So, if there are sponsored – paid - ads for a topic in Google, money is being spent in this market, which means that there is profit.

The same is true with magazines. Visit your library and look at the past three issues of a magazine that relates to your interest. Pay attention to the ads. Do the same ads keep appearing? If the answer is yes, this is a profitable market, and you are ready to move forward.

What about the competition? What about them? 90% of all people who sign up for an affiliate program will not do anything to market it at all. Of the 10% that will market the product, 90% of them will do it wrong, and won't make much money, if they make anything at all. The competition just decreased in size by leaps and bounds. Don't worry about the competition. Concentrate on promoting your affiliate products and services to the best of your ability – let the competition worry about you.

Once you've chosen your market, or your niche, you are almost ready to get started, but there are several other things that you need to do before you can call yourself an affiliate marketer. First, you need to make sure you have the right tools. Then, you must find the programs, understand the terms of the programs, and finally understand how to choose the right programs.

Point 1: Have The Tools You Need

You can't do any job successfully without having the tools you need to do the job. This is also true for affiliate marketing. Here is a list of the tools that you will most likely need to get the job done and become a successful affiliate marketer.

- **An email account** – You want to appear as professional as possible. Do not use a free email account such as Yahoo or Hotmail as your business email account. If you have a website with a [domain name](#), you should be able to set up an email account associated with that domain in Microsoft Outlook or Outlook Express.
- **An Autoresponder** – An [autoresponder](#) is web based software that sends out one email or a series of emails to people who sign up to the autoresponder. This can be used to manage your ezine, which will be discussed later. A good autoresponder will also give you the ability to send out broadcasts to your list.
- **Keyword Research Tools** – If you will be doing PPC campaigns, which are discussed later, you will want Keyword Research Tools. Google has free tools that you can use, but stand alone web based software, such as that found at www.wordtracker.com is also recommended.
- **A List of Resources** – You will definitely need to start gathering a list of resources that includes a list of article directories, PPC search engines, affiliate program directories, and directories of ezines.
- **Word Processor** – Word processing software is essential. You will use it to write articles, sales letters, ads, and newsletters. Microsoft Word is recommended, Microsoft Word Pad will do if you don't have Microsoft Word.
- **A Website and Domain for Each Niche or Market** – Some affiliate programs will give you a replicated website. You will eventually send prospects to that website, but not sending them to your own website first is a mistake. You need a website for each niche with it's own domain name. The website should be full of content, with affiliate links worked into the content. Ideally, each website will also have a squeeze page, where you will collect the names and email addresses of your visitors as well, in order to build your lists. You will need a [professional host](#) for your website.

- **Commission and Campaign Tracking Software** – Keeping up with affiliate products, affiliate links, commissions earned, commissions paid, advertising campaigns, and affiliate tracking report sites, logins, and passwords can easily become a full time job without software to organize it all. Affiliate Organizer at www.affiliateorganizer.com is highly recommended.

There may be other tools that you find you need in the future, but all of these things will get you started. Some of them do cost money, but if you aren't prepared to pay for them, you can find suitable replacements that don't cost anything. Just be sure to upgrade at your first opportunity.

You may also find that you need web page building software, and an ftp client to upload webpages to your website. You will definitely need an up-to-date web browser, and you obviously need a good computer with an Internet connection.

You also need a filing system to keep records. While you can – and should – back up all of the information on your computer on a regular basis, you should also print information out in hard copy and file it away for future reference. This includes emails that contain your user and password information, notices of sales that have been made, and any other information that is pertinent to your affiliate marketing business. Quite a bit of this information, in hard copy, will be needed to file taxes.

Ideally, you should have a home office. This will not only give you the space and proper atmosphere for success, it will also give you a home office tax deduction. If you don't have the space for a home office, try to set your desk and computer up in a low-traffic area of your home, where you can work with fewer interruptions.

Point 2: Know Where To Find The Best Programs

Now that you have the tools, and you know what type of products you want to market, where do you find the best ones that have affiliate programs? Well, there are multiple places that you can start looking, depending on what your objective is. You must know what your objective is first.

If you plan to use affiliate programs as add-ons, such as upsells or backends to a product that you have, or another high ticket product that you are promoting, you may want to look for inexpensive 'lead in' or entry level products, such as ebooks. ClickBank at www.clickbank.com is one of the best places to find affiliate programs for information products.

If you want to promote hard goods, meaning goods that are delivered via a shipping company or postal mail, there are many different places you can look. First, let's cover sites that are essentially directories of affiliate programs.

- AffiliatePrograms.com
www.affiliateprograms.com
- Link Share
www.linkshare.com
- Commission Junction
www.cj.com
- Share-A-Sale
www.shareasale.com
- Performics
www.performics.com
- Fine Clicks
www.fineclicks.com
- Web Sponsors
www.websponsors.com
- ClixGalore
www.clixgalore.com
- QuinStreet
www.quinstreet.com
- MaxBounty
www.maxbounty.com

The majority of these sites are networks, where many different affiliate programs are managed. This allows you to promote a large number of affiliate products and services, and to receive one check for all sales across the network.

Alternately, you can use Google to search for products that you are interested in promoting, and visit those sites to see if they have affiliate programs. This is usually ideal for more specialized products. Also, if you don't see a link for an affiliate program on the site you are interested in promoting, use the contact email that is usually provided to inquire about the possibility of an affiliate program, or an affiliate arrangement with the company.

Point 3: Understand The Language

You are about to encounter a language that you have never heard before – the language of Internet Marketing, as it relates to Affiliate Marketing. It is important that you understand what it all means, to ensure that you are signing up for programs that are worth your time.

As you will learn later, it is important to read the terms and conditions for affiliates. Sometimes, you will be presented with those terms before you sign up, and sometimes you will be presented with them after you sign up – but it is important that you read them, and it is important that you understand what is being said.

It is also important that you understand what the following terms or abbreviations mean:

CPC – Cost per click. This relates to how much it costs for each click an ad or link receives when advertising on a CPC basis. In other words, instead of paying a flat rate for the advertisement, you would pay a certain amount of money for each click the ad receives.

PPC – Pay Per Click. This relates to CPC, where you pay for each click that your ad or link receives. Google AdWords is an example of Pay Per Click advertising.

CPA – Cost per action, or cost per acquisition. Basically, this means that you will pay each time an action is taken. The action may be a click, a sign up, or a sale. In fact, many affiliate programs also pay on a CPA basis, meaning that each time someone clicks on your link, or signs up to receive information through your link, you earn a little money. Google AdSense is an example of this.

CTR – Click Through Rate. This number is usually represented as a percentage, and it refers to the number of times your ad was clicked on, in relation to how often the ad was viewed.

CPM – Cost per thousand. The amount of money you pay for every one thousand ad impressions.

URL - Uniform Relay Link, otherwise known as a link, or a website address.

Affiliate Link – A URL or link that is assigned to you by the affiliate program. This is the link that you will promote, as it is used to track your clicks and sales.

Contextual Link or Text Link – A contextual link is a link that looks like content, because it is all text. It may be several words long. A text link is a link such as www.link.com , as opposed to a banner ad.

Charge Back – This will be an important term to you. This refers to when customers cancel their orders, or have their credit card companies reverse the charges. It basically means that you lose a sale. Some affiliate programs will hold money back each pay period to cover potential charge backs/refunds, and release that money to you after a specified period.

SPAM – Unsolicited Commercial Email. This term also refers to commercial posts on forums and blogs. Most affiliate programs will have strict anti-spam regulations that you must follow.

Revenue Sharing Program – This is the same thing as an affiliate program.

Co-Branding – Some affiliate programs offer co-branding options, where your company name or logo is placed on a reseller's website, or on the product itself.

Referral Link – The same as an affiliate link.

Tracking – The method or software used to record sales, clicks, leads, and other information that has to do with your affiliate link.

HTML or HTML Code – HTML stands for Hyper Text Markup Language. This is the programming language used to build webpages. HTML code generally refers to a small portion of HTML code, such as that needed to place affiliate links or banners on your webpages.

Partner Program - This is the same thing as an affiliate program.

Super Affiliate – This refers to anyone who is making a lot of money in affiliate marketing, if you are an affiliate. However, if you have an affiliate program for your own product, this refers to your top affiliates – the ones who are making the most sales for you.

Opt-In – This refers to ezine subscriptions, newsletter subscriptions, or email lists in general. Basically, it means that the subscribers on any email list have chosen to receive the information the list owner is sending. Typically, they have confirmed their email address and their request by clicking on a link in a confirmation email, which is known as double opt-in.

1st Tier and 2nd Tier – If you are signing up for an affiliate program, directly through the company, you are first tier. If you are signing up under someone else, you are 2nd tier. However, when someone signs up under you, you are first tier, and they are your 2nd tier. Each tier gets a different commission rate for sales. In other words, when you sign up under someone else, when you make a sale, you get a full commission, and the person you signed up under gets a partial commission.

Joint Ventures – Joint ventures are similar to affiliate programs, but they operate a bit differently. The concept is the same – one person promotes another person’s product for a commission. However, usually the commissions are bigger, and the person doing the promoting is working directly with the owner of the product.

Direct Mail – This refers to advertising that is done via postal mail. There are strict laws about direct mail, and many affiliate programs will have terms and conditions relating to direct mail to promote their product.

Cookies – A cookie is a piece of code that is written to the cookie file on a person’s computer when they click on an affiliate link – or when they visit sites that use cookies, such as sites that require a login. The cookie does not harm your customer’s computer at all, and is simply there to make sure that you get credit for the sale if they come back later to make a purchase.

Affiliate Agreement – The agreement that usually lists the terms and conditions related to an affiliate program. In most cases, you will agree to the affiliate agreement by checking a box when you fill out an online form to join the program. Some affiliate programs, however, will require you to print out, sign, and fax the agreement. Make sure you read these agreements.

Conversion Rate – This is the number of sales in relation to the number of clicks received. Usually portrayed as a percentage.

Commission – The amount of money that you as an affiliate will receive per sale. Some companies will list this as a percentage, such as 50%, while others will list it as a dollar figure.

Associate or Associate Program – This is the same as an affiliate program.

Banner Ad – A graphic that is placed on your website and linked with your affiliate link.

If you come across other terms or abbreviations that you aren’t sure of the meaning of, make sure that you stop and go find out what it means before agreeing to anything – or before doing anything. Not knowing can cause problems later on.

Point 4: Get The Best Commission

“How much money will I make?” That is always the burning question. Well, the sky is virtually the limit, but let’s start by making sure that you get the best commission possible.

When you look at affiliate programs, this should be one of the first things you look at – the commission per sale. Again, this may be portrayed as a percentage, or as a dollar figure. If the commission is presented as a dollar figure, it is important to locate the sale price of the product, and figure the commission percentage.

Typically, you want to go with affiliate programs that offer a 50% commission. If the product is high priced, you may consider going as low as a 20% or 30% commission. But for lower priced products, don’t accept anything less than 50% on the 1st tier.

You should also consider how many sales it will take to earn the income that you desire or require. 100.00 per sale may sound like a lot, but if you require 4000.00 a month to live, you will have to make forty sales each month. This is very realistic for some products, in some markets, and not realistic at all for other products in other markets. Consider what you are selling, and whom you are selling it to, and determine whether the number of sales needed to make the money you require is indeed realistic.

If the number of sales required is not realistic, you will need to either look for something different to sell, or look for additional products to sell. You could also start small – with smaller commissions – and work your way up. This is what many super affiliates do.

Super affiliates often show the product owner/affiliate manager that they have the ability to make a large number of sales each and every month, consistently, and then they negotiate directly with the product owner for a higher commission. They prove themselves by making those sales first, and then they are in a position to negotiate.

When looking at the commission, also consider what it will cost you to promote the product. You cannot afford to spend more on promotions than you are making in commissions – obviously. Know your numbers!

Affiliate Programs: One-Time or Residual?

The difference between one-time commission affiliate programs and residual affiliate programs is astronomical – in terms of income. Essentially, a one-time commission affiliate program pays you one commission, one time – upon the initial sale. Residual programs, however, continue to provide you with an income, either for the life of the customer or for a set term.

Point 5: Residual Programs Are Often Best

When choosing between one-time commission programs and residual programs, always choose residual programs. These allow you to make one sale to a customer, and then to profit from that customer's repeat or ongoing business with the company, usually for the life of the customer/business relationship.

Where you may make \$100 for a one-time commission, with a residual program, you may make \$100 per month, every month, just from making one sale. The choice is obvious – residual programs typically provide you with more income for less work.

Residual programs that pay for the life of the customer are better than residual programs that only pay for a set term. You want to have the income from one sale for as long as possible.

Generally, a residual income potential exists when you sell services, such as webhosting, where the customer pays a monthly fee for the service. Every month that the customer pays the fees, you earn a commission. However, when the customer stops paying the fee, you no longer receive a commission for that customer.

For this reason, it may be best to look for services that are vitally needed by your potential customers. For instance, anyone who does business on the Internet has a need for webhosting, and they don't want their site to go down, so the chances are good that this will be a very long residual income for you.

Telephone services also provide a nice residual income. Everyone needs their telephone, and most need long distance services. If you are promoting a company that provides such services at great prices, then again, this could provide a very nice long term residual income for you.

However, services that are not long term in nature can also be good if the commission is high enough. For instance, membership websites that provide customers with some type of course or learning experience may provide you with a residual income while the customer is a member of the site. However, once the

customer feels that they have gleaned all that they can from that membership site, they will most likely cancel their membership, which cancels your residual income from that customer.

Certain types of products can also provide you with long term or life time residual income. Health care related products, such as vitamins and medication are good examples of this. Also, many companies give life time commissions to the affiliate for every purchase the customer makes – from the very first purchase – even for different products that the company sells.

Keep these things in mind when you are searching for programs to promote. Residual is better than one-time, and life time residual is better than termed residual. Look for products or services that will provide you with life time residual income.

Point 6: Promote the Product and The Program

One mistake that affiliates often make, in terms of two-tiered programs or multi-tiered programs, is that they tend to spend most of their time trying to get others to sign up for the program, as an affiliate, and less time actually promoting the product.

Ideally, you should promote the product more and the affiliate programs as you go along, bringing your customers into the affiliate program after you've sold them the product. This tends to get you the most income in the long run.

Furthermore, with multi-tiered programs, residual income is not always available. For instance, if Joe signs up under you as an affiliate in a two tiered program, he may have residual income from a sale, but you may only get a one time commission from that sale he makes. In this instance, you are better off selling the product, not the program, because you would make more in residual income from your own sales in the long run.

While it is nice to have others doing the work for you, the greatest income will come from the work that you do yourself. This also keeps the company that you are selling for stable. For example, if you only promote the program, which is free to join, and everyone that joins under you only promotes the program, nobody is going to make any money, including the company!

Find a balance between promoting the program and the product, promoting the product first, then promoting the program to those who have purchased the product.

Affiliate Promotion: Your Ezine

Ezine marketing is quite effective, if you have a quality list, and if you have a relationship with the subscribers on that list. The relationship you have formed is very important. Ideally, your subscribers should look to you for recommendations, viewing you as an expert in your niche.

Point 7: You Must Have A List

If you haven't already heard it, you will. The money is in the list. If a successful Internet Marketer had to start completely over from scratch, and he could only have one tool that he now uses, you can bet it would be his email list.

Building a list is a lot easier than you think. Do not buy subscribers from list building companies. These will not be qualified leads. Instead, build your list with squeeze pages. This is a page that you advertise in Google AdWords, typically giving something away, such as an ebook or a free report that is of interest to your list.

When the visitor arrives at this page, they are presented with a very short page that tells them how this report or ebook will benefit them – using just two or three paragraphs. You don't want the visitor to have to scroll or spend a long time reading. They are in a hurry. Sum it up in two or three paragraphs at the most, and then provide them with an opt-in form to receive the information.

This opt-in form should be attached to your autoresponder, which should send them an email telling them where to receive their free ebook or download, and then adding that name and email address to your opt-in list for future use.

If you do not have a list, you need to contact those who do until you can get one built. Consider joint ventures with list owner's, offering them a percentage of your commissions. Also, try to arrange it so that those list owner's subscribers are going through your squeeze page to help you build your own list.

Respect your list. Never rent, sales, or share their information with others. Never send them spam, and make sure that the content you are sending is actual content, and not just sales letters. Also, back up your list often! If you are using an [autoresponder](#), you should have the ability to export the list to your computer. Do this on a regular basis, then back the list up onto a disk. Put that disk in a fire proof safe in your home, or store it in a safety deposit box at a bank!

Point 8: You Must Provide Your Readers With Content

After building your list, or as you are building your list, it is vital that you start building a relationship with your readers/subscribers by providing them with content. You cannot simply collect their information and then send them sales letters – this usually will not work.

Instead, provide them with good content or information on a regular basis, regarding your niche. Not only will they appreciate the info, but they will also learn to trust you and to count on your recommendations for products.

Finding and/or producing content for your list isn't difficult at all. First, determine what product you want to promote to your list. Obviously, you can't just write a sales letter and send your list to the order page, unless that is the kind of relationship you have worked to build with your list.

Some people actually do have this type of relationship, but they worked hard for it, and in between sales letters, they are providing content and giving away resources to their list members.

Instead, write an article that pertains to the problem, need, or desire that the product addresses. At the end of the article, recommend the product. You could also provide list members with a review of several different products that relate to this problem, need, or desire.

If you don't write, that is not a problem. You can typically hire a ghost writer to write content for you, and this is much cheaper than you may realize. In fact, there are ghostwriters who will produce newsletters and send them to your list, with your affiliate links in the content, on a regular basis.

In this instance, all you have to do is provide the writer with your list of affiliate links, and they will take care of the rest, sending the content out to your list on a schedule that you specify. Generally, the writer will also need access to your autoresponder to load the email or newsletter into the system for distribution, so make sure that you are working with a writer that you can trust with that information!

Also, work with the writer closely in the beginning so that they can learn how to communicate with your list in the same fashion you would if you were doing it yourself. It is important that the email is from 'you,' and ghostwriters do not take credit for the work that they produce for their clients. The clients name goes on the work as the author.

Affiliate Promotion: Your Blog

If you aren't already blogging you need to be. Furthermore, you need to blog within the niches for the products that you are promoting. For instance, if you are promoting cat care products and gardening supplies, you need a blog for cats, and a blog for gardening. Blogs have become very useful and effective marketing tools.

Not only are blogs effective, if you look around, you will find that everybody is blogging. Some marketers think that blogging may be a waste of time simply because everyone else is doing it. This isn't the case. It is because everybody else is doing it that you should blog as well. The exposure that you will receive from blogging is astounding, and it can even become viral.

Point 9: You Need A Blog

Blogging software is usually available with [webhosting accounts](#). You should definitely have webhosting for the domain name that you should also have. You can typically install blog software with the click of your mouse in this case.

Some marketers have a blog hosted on their website, and an identical blog hosted at a hosted blog site. This way, they are providing links to their website every time they make a blog entry, which enhances search engine optimization.

If possible, add a new blog entry every single day. If you just cannot do that, make sure that you post at the very least once a week, or a few times a week. The more often you post, the more exposure your blog will receive.

One way to find something to write about is to visit other people's blogs, or to read industry trade magazines. For instance, if you are promoting cat products, you might get blog ideas from Cat Channel, which is an online cat magazine, as well as from cat blogs that have a lot of readers.

Forums about cats may also give you lots of writing ideas. Another option is to use the same method that you use with writing content for your list. Hire a ghostwriter to blog for you. Many people do this, and your blogger will be adding content on a regular basis, coming up with appropriate topics for your affiliate links, as you specify. This will free up your time considerably.

Point 10: You Need Blog Readers

Just as a website won't do you any good with visitors, a blog won't do you any good without readers. However, getting blog readers is often easier than getting website visitors. There are several ways to go about this.

First, make sure that each time you make a blog entry, you ping the blog. You can do this by going to Ping-O-Matic at <http://pingomatic.com> . Also, make sure that your blog has RSS capabilities. This will allow readers to load your blog in their newsreader, and it will also allow them to syndicate what you write on their own websites, which gives you more exposure.

Read and contribute to other blogs! This is vital if you want to succeed with blogging. Blogging itself is a community – no matter what the topic is. For instance, if you have a blog about cats, you should visit other people's cat blogs. Read the posts, and when you can, add a comment that is relevant to the post, and link to one of your blog posts that is also relevant. Avoid blog spamming!

Alternately, you should quote other people's blogs and provide Trackback links in your own blog posts. Those Trackbacks will appear on the other person's blog, leading back to your own blog.

List your blog in the search engines! You should only need to do this once, as spiders will then crawl your blog regularly and will find and index your blog entries. Even though you will be pinging the blog directories, you should also visit the directories initially to get your blog listed there as well.

Look for sites that allow you to add a link to your website, and list your blog and your website. Look specifically for sites that relate to your topic. A reciprocal link may be required, but you can easily do this with software that is provided by your hosting company.

Finally, put the link to your blog in your signature file. When you post to newsgroups and forums, and when you send email, make sure that you include that signature file!

Just remember, it is easier to promote a website than it is to promote a product, and it is easier to promote a blog than it is to promote a website. For this reason, make blogging a priority, and you will be astounded at the results.

Point 11: Do Not Leave Money On The Table

You can profit with your blog in more than one way. The first way is to get readers to your site to read your sales letter, or to your affiliate site.

Unfortunately, many people leave it at that, not using the blog for any other purpose. They are leaving money on the table!

First, add [Google AdSense](#) to your blog. You will profit from clicks on the ads, and there is no reason not to do this. Remember, the important thing is that profit is made, and it ends up in your pocket. You should have one Google AdSense unit on the border of your page, and then paste in the code for each blog post as well.

Add affiliate banners around the borders of your blog. Don't use annoying banners, and make sure that all affiliate programs are relevant to your main topic. Also, promote affiliate programs within your blog posts, using your affiliate links or directing the visitor to your sales page. When doing this, however, make sure that the post is informative. Avoid just posting an advertisement as a blog entry.

If your blog becomes very popular with a high readership, sell advertising to other people on your blog! It may take a long time to get to this point, but with time and effort, you will get there.

Always be on the lookout for ways to profit from your blog. Use every opportunity for profit as it presents itself. Just remember that while people like to buy, they do not like to be sold to. Use your blog to inform people about your niche, and also use it to build a relationship with your readers.

Once the relationship is established, and you've proven yourself to be an expert in your niche, you can easily make recommendations to your readers, and your most loyal followers will buy the product – solely based on your recommendation. This is very powerful.

Think about this. Is it better to market to a huge list or readership of people who really aren't all that interested in what you are saying, much less in what you are selling – or is it better to market to a small list or a small following of devoted readers, of which the majority will make a purchase every time you make a recommendation? The second option is the one you want, and this is where you should focus your time and energy.

Affiliate Promotion: Using PPC

As mentioned earlier, PPC stands for pay-per-click. PPC is an effective option for affiliate promotion, if it is done correctly. You should be aware of the word 'pay' in PPC. You will be required to pay for every click you receive on your link, and if you don't pay close attention, your PPC costs can become astronomical!

Point 12: PPC Doesn't Always Work

PPC doesn't always work for affiliate marketing. First, you must be aware of the rules at the site where you are getting your PPC. For instance, Google has rules about promoting affiliate programs with Google AdWords PPC program.

Google does permit affiliate links in their AdWords, but they will only display one affiliate ad per search query, and this includes that of the parent company. They also will not allow links to replicated affiliate websites.

So, what you must consider here is that since there are other affiliates selling the same product you are selling, the chances of your ad actually being seen and clicked on are very slim. Second, if you have a replicated website for your affiliate programs, your ad won't show at all – ever.

You must get more creative if you hope to profit from your affiliate programs using PPC. First, don't use an affiliate link. Use your own link for your own domain, and send the visitor to your website first. You should also have them pass through a squeeze page first to collect their name and email address!

Start small with your PPC campaigns. Do your keyword research, and set yourself a budget. Work within that budget to test different ads. Also, avoid using long affiliate links. These links are obvious to people, and many people avoid them. Again, people do not like to be sold to.

Instead of using PPC to sell a product, use PPC to get qualified leads and to build a list. You will find that this is a much more economical and effective use of PPC in the long run. It may take just a little longer to make the sale, but if you are patient, you will earn more money than you would have otherwise.

Point 13: Drive PPC Traffic To The Right Place

Even if you use a PPC company that does allow the use of replicated websites, or will show more than one affiliate ad at a time, where your ad does have more potential for being seen and clicked, it is important that you drive your PPC traffic to the right place.

Again, the squeeze page is essential, as this will help you build a quality list of qualified leads. Many successful marketers use PPC for this purpose and this purpose only. If you drive the traffic straight from the PPC ad to the affiliate link, you won't have any way to contact that visitor in the future.

Further more, you will most likely be driving the visitor to a sales page that may or may not convert the visitor. It is better to bring the visitor to your site and prep them for the sale. By the time they click on your affiliate link, they should have their credit card in hand, ready to make a purchase. This typically won't happen if they are going from Google Search to your affiliate sales page.

The majority of buyers do not start out with the intention to buy – this is especially true on the Internet. On the Internet, where everything is free (according to many people), what buyers are looking for is free information or help.

If you can provide these people with the free information that they are looking for, or free tools that help them with their problem, you've won half the battle. Now, you are building a relationship, and you will profit greatly from that relationship over time.

When setting up a PPC campaign, become the customer in your mind. What does the customer want or need? How can you provide them with this free of charge in order to build a relationship? At what point is the customer primed to buy?

Only you can answer these questions, based on your niche, but in answer to the last question, you can bet that in most cases, the customer is not ready to buy when they click on your PPC link! You've got to get them into your process, and groom them for the sale.

Affiliate marketing isn't just a question of signing up and then using PPC to sell the product, no matter what you've read elsewhere. Again, it's about building a relationship with your future customers, so that they become life long customers.

Point 14: The Top Keywords Are Not Always Best

There are people who literally spend their entire days analyzing keywords, tweaking and tuning their PPC campaigns based on their findings. Many are successful, and many are not.

Keeping in mind that many PPC services won't show more than one affiliate ad per search, the top keywords are not always the best keywords. The beauty of PPC is that you only pay for the advertising when someone actually clicks on the link. There is no time limit for your ad, and you can afford to be patient and wait for the click. Therefore, if you are selling a weight loss product, weight loss, lose weight, and other common keywords that people search for are probably not your most profitable keywords.

First, you will have big time competition for those common keywords – and this is true in any popular niche. You will be competing against companies who have the big advertising budgets – and you cannot compete with that, not to mention the large number of other affiliates within the niche.

Don't waste your time competing with that. Instead, look for another door or window to climb through. For instance, children's weight loss or weight loss for children may be more targeted to what you are promoting, the keywords may not be as expensive, and most other affiliates probably won't consider looking for that other door or window.

Think about your product, and choose keywords that are tightly connected with it. In the weight loss niche, some less common keywords might be weight loss foods, low calorie foods, low carbohydrate foods, or even low carbohydrate food for women – or men, or children, or even dogs if that applies to your product.

The key is to narrow your niche as much as possible to choose keywords that relate as closely as possible to what you are trying to promote. You will receive fewer clicks, but from the clicks that you do receive, you will find that you make more sales than you might have with the more popular search terms or keywords – simply because the market you targeted was more qualified. The people who find you in this fashion are literally looking to buy exactly what you are selling.

Affiliate Promotion: Teleseminars & Webinars

Teleseminars and Webinars have become quite popular recently. This is because they are highly effective. If they didn't work, Internet Marketers wouldn't be wasting their time with them. But they do indeed work, if they are done right.

It is important to understand the difference between a teleseminar and a webinar. First, a teleseminar is held over the phone, and an active Internet Connection during the call is usually not required. A webinar, however, may be held 100% on the Internet, or held via telephone with the ability to view webpages or slides over the Internet during the call required.

Point 15: Why Teleseminars Work

Teleseminars work because people feel like they are getting content from experts that they can't get from a website. If you have built a relationship with your potential customers, and you have established yourself as an expert in your niche, then those people want to hear what you have to say.

They also like to hear from other experts in the field, so doing interview type teleseminars is also a great option. Before the teleseminar, simply send an email to those who have registered for it, and ask them what they would like to learn on the seminar. Use those answers to ask questions of your guest speaker on the call.

Getting experts to do a call is usually easy. They are not paid for this. Instead, they get to promote their product, for which you are hopefully an affiliate. Ideally, you would ask the guest to use your affiliate link during the call, and they will agree to this.

Teleseminars can be a one-time thing, which may last an hour or two. But ideally, a teleseminar series works best. This is where you have a call every week for a certain number of weeks, and you literally teach the callers something during the series.

If you are worried about the cost of a teleseminar, don't be. You can use free services, such as Free Conference at www.freeconference.com . You only pay if you want the service to record the call, which is a good idea, and doesn't cost very much at all.

Other than promoting the call, there are not other costs, and there may be no costs involved in promoting the call either.

Point 16: Why Webinars Work

Webinars work just as well, if not better than teleseminars. Webinars are ideal when courses are being taught. However, hosting a webinar is not free, and usually takes quite a bit more work before the presentation.

Typically a webinar will have callers on the telephone, where they will listen to a presentation or instructions that are visual as well, with the use of web conferencing software, on their computers.

With a teleseminar, all you need is your voice, and a plan for what is going to be said or discussed on the call. Again, a webinar takes a great deal more planning. You will need visuals as well, which will be used in conjunction with the web conferencing software so that your callers can see the visuals during the call, as you are talking.

Usually, the callers will need to download software before the call, however this usually doesn't take very long at all, and instructions should be sent to them well in advance of the call.

While teleseminars may or may not be free for the participants, Webinars often have a fee for the participants to help offset the cost of the event. This of course will reduce the number of people who will be on the call.

If you do charge for your Webinars, it is important to keep the cost as low as possible, only charging what you need to in order to cover your costs – unless of course the webinar is the product. But, if the purpose of the webinar is to sell something else, try to make it free or very low cost for participants.

Overall, teleseminars are the way to go when promoting affiliate products. Again, a teleseminars series is best for high ticket items, while one call is usually sufficient for inexpensive items such as information products.

Depending on how content packed the teleseminar series will be, you could charge for participation, and use the teleseminar as your product, with the related affiliate products as cross sells or back end products. The same is true for Webinars.

Point 17: Know How To Get Participation

You're all set to do a teleseminar. You've lined up some experts, you've outlined some great content for the call, and you have a product that your target market really needs. But how do you get participation?

Start with your list. Set up a page where people can register for the call, and then contact your list, letting them know the date, time, and topic of the call, and where to register. Consider throwing in some bonuses, which will be given out at the end of the call, such as a free ebook or report.

If you have an expert that will be on the call, ask them to notify their list, if they have one, about the call as well. Also, consider purchasing ads in related ezines to inform those ezine readers about the call as well. You should start notifying people no more than a week in advance, and no less than a few days before the all is to take place.

Don't expect thousands of people on the call. You really don't want more than 100, and free conference services usually won't allow more than this without charging. Even if you just get five or ten people on the call, you are good to go.

Remember, these people are interested enough to dial a long distance number and listen to what you have to say. Your sales ratio from the people on the call will most likely be high, if the information presented was good.

You can also promote the call with PPC, and use the registrations from that to build your email list, if you don't already have one. Again, this is a great way to build a quality list of qualified leads.

Finally, get the participants pumped up about the call. After they register, send them an email telling them in more detail what will be covered on the call, and how they will benefit from the information presented. A day before the call, send another email reminding them of the call, and again a few hours before the call is to start. People sign up for things and then promptly forget, you must remind them!

Have your next call in mind before the end of each teleseminar series, and let the participants know what is coming up in the future. You may already be able to send them to a registration page for the next teleseminar series. Registration for each call in a series should not be required – one sign up for the whole series is all that is needed, but registration for future series should be required.

Affiliate Programs: Setting Up Your Own Affiliate Program

After you've been an affiliate for a while, you may develop your own product, or purchase master resell rights to a product, which would allow you to start your own affiliate program, where other people sell the product for you, for a commission.

Getting an affiliate program set up for your product is easier than you may realize, and in some cases, there is no cost involved in setting up such a program, if you know where to look and what to do.

Point 18: Understand The Importance of An Affiliate Program

An [affiliate program](#) for your product gives you the ability to reach people in your market that you may not have reached any other way. While you will be paying out commissions to your affiliates, and there may be some initial cost in getting the program set up, you will find that you profit more by having an affiliate program.

An affiliate program essentially gives you your own private army of salesmen, all selling your product. Of course some affiliates will sell more than other affiliates, and some affiliates won't sell anything at all, or even take any steps at all to sell your product – but the ones who do make an effort will earn you profits.

Imagine trying to contact the entire world all by yourself. There would be a massive involvement of time, money, and energy, and you probably still couldn't reach everybody that you need to reach. With an affiliate program, you don't have to. Your affiliates will go out and spread the word for you. They can reach more people in a shorter amount of time than you can by yourself, and this means that you make more sales faster.

Depending on your product and the countries that can make purchases through your merchant processor, you can literally have orders coming in from around the world in a matter of a couple of weeks after launching an affiliate program for your product.

While affiliate programs are virtually automated, there will be some effort required on your part not only to start the program, but also to keep it running smoothly so that you and your affiliates continue to profit. Don't be a bad affiliate manager! Make sure that your affiliates stay motivated, commissions are paid on time, and that you provide your affiliates with the tools that they need for success.

Point 19: Use The Right Affiliate Management Software

There are many options when it comes to affiliate management software. It is vital that you use software to monitor affiliate sales and commissions. Trying to keep up 'manually' is not an option.

You simply set up your affiliate program using web based software. Then, you write the affiliate terms and conditions, as well as the affiliate agreement, and get that posted on the site.

When writing the terms and the conditions, you determine what the commission structure will be for your program, including whether you will have a two-tiered or multi-tiered program, and what the commission payout will be for each tier. Following this, you list your program with the various affiliate directories online.

There are many different software titles that can be used to manage your affiliate program. Affiliate Wiz is good software, at www.affiliatewiz.com , as is All Affiliate Pro at <http://www.allaffiliatepro.com> . There is also web based services that can be used, to run an affiliate program, such as 1ShoppingCart at www.1shoppingcart.com .

There are even easier ways to set up an affiliate program by using an affiliate network, such as ClickBank at clickbank.com, Commission Junction at www.cj.com , or PayDotCom.com at www.paydotcom.com . Again, there are many to choose from, and using a network to manage your program is usually the easiest and fastest way to get an affiliate program up and running.

The important thing is that the network or the software used should provide each affiliate automated sign up, and assign them an affiliate link. The software or service should then track clicks and sales, and record commissions earned by affiliates, based on the information you put into the system at the very beginning.

Ideally, affiliates should have the ability to log into a website to view their affiliate statistics, to retrieve creatives such as banners and ads, and to change their own contact information as needed. You will find that the more automated the affiliate program system you use is the more smoothly the program will run.

Use caution when selecting software or services for your affiliate program. Some services and software are very high priced, while others are very low priced – but not all affiliate program management services and/or software are created equal, and some are better than others. Read customer reviews and try to contact people who are using the software or service personally for a recommendation before buying one.

Point 20: Keep Your Affiliates Motivated

Keeping affiliates motivated is most likely the biggest hurdle you will face while operating your own affiliate program. Again, some people will sign up for your affiliate program, and then never take any action to promote the product – no matter how much you try to motivate them.

On the other hand, there are those that will sign up with every intention of following through and becoming successful. These are the folks that need your attention, and you must work to keep them motivated.

Start by giving them the tools that they can use to successfully promote your program. Provide them with banners, ads, sales letters, ebooks they can re-brand with their affiliate links, and articles that they can re-brand as well.

Direct them to information that teaches them how to market online, or provide them with this information yourself. You may be able to work out a deal with someone who has a marketing course to allow your affiliates to take the course at a reduced rate, or, depending on the deal, for free.

Stay in constant contact with your affiliates. Send them newsletters that suggest new ways to promote the product. Provide them with marketing related content that they can use. Update them on new creatives, and new promotions such as sale prices and bonuses.

Consider running contests, giving the affiliate who makes the most sales in a given period of time a great prize. Make the prize worth while, such as a television, a computer system, or something of that nature. The more valuable the prize is, the harder the affiliates will work at promoting your product.

Send personal notes to those affiliates who are making the highest numbers of sales. Also recognize these people in your newsletter. When high sales are being made, it means the affiliate really knows what they are doing, and they may have tips or ideas to offer to other affiliates.

Likewise, when you have an affiliate who is obviously trying, but not making many sales, contact them personally to give them tips and advice. Help your affiliate be successful – this simply increases your own success.

Once your affiliate program is really raking in some cash, plan an event for your affiliates. You can even give away all expense paid trips for the event as contest prizes throughout the year, and those who do not win throughout the year that wish to attend should pay their own travel costs, hotel costs, and meal costs.

Point 21: Find Super Affiliates

Generally, you don't have to find super affiliates. They find you by becoming your affiliates, then by outselling all other affiliates. Simply pay attention to your monthly sales reports, and see who is doing well consistently. Your super affiliates may approach you before you approach them, wanting a higher commission. When this happens, give it to them!

You can also go out in search of super affiliates, and the best place to start is with your competition. Let your competition know about your affiliate program, and work with them personally. Let them know that if they wish to promote your product, you will be happier to give them a higher commission than you are offering other affiliates.

Also look for those who are successfully promoting products that are related to your product, but that are not in direct competition with your product. If your product was a vacuum cleaner, you would be seeking those who sell vacuum cleaner bags and carpet powders. Again, offer these people higher commissions for sales of your product than you are paying ordinary affiliates.

Finally, look for those people who are in your niche, but not in direct competition, that have large email lists. Offer to be a guest speaker on a teleseminar, with them, again, receiving larger commissions than usual for sales made during the teleseminar.

Super affiliates almost always get higher commissions than those who are not super affiliates. They deserve it. They generally put their hearts and souls into their promotions, and they keep themselves educated concerning marketing trends and tactics.

You may choose to structure commission payouts based on the number of sales being made within your affiliate agreement. This often motivates affiliates to reach those higher numbers, to collect higher commission payouts. For instance, if affiliates make between one and five sales per month, the payout may be 30%. If the affiliate makes between 5 and 20 sales, the payout may be 50%, and so on.

Affiliate Marketing: Caveats To Watch For

If you are an old hand at affiliate marketing, you probably know what all of the pitfalls are. However, if you are new, you may not know where those pitfalls are until you fall into them. Here are some common problems that you can avoid in your affiliate marketing endeavors.

Point 22: Avoid Bad Programs

People who are new to affiliate programs don't generally know how to recognize a bad program. In order to figure out which programs are good, and which are bad, you have to be paying attention from the very beginning.

First, consider how you found out about the program. Did you learn about it from a piece of spam email you received? If so, it may be a bad program. Even if it is not a bad program, it is about to quickly become one, because if you were spammed, you can bet others were. This can literally ruin a program for everyone involved, including the owner of the product.

Is the information, such as the terms and conditions, the affiliate agreement, and the commission structure made available to you either before or during the sign up process? If so, continue on, after reading that information of course. Next, do you receive an email immediately upon sign up?

You should receive an email – even if the email is just to inform you that the company has a manual selection process for affiliates (which would be good for you if you are selected). If there is no manual selection, and the whole thing is automated, you should immediately receive your affiliate link information, as well as login information for the affiliate area of the company's website.

In the affiliates area you should again find your affiliate link, as well as a way to edit your contact or payment information, and a way to see how many sales you have made, and possibly how many clicks or leads came through your affiliate link. Of course, you should also see records concerning commissions that are owed to you, as well as commissions that have been paid to you.

A good program will provide you with creatives to use, even if you opt not to use them. These include banners, text ads, articles, sales letters, ebooks, and other promotional materials. If these things are not provided, it does not necessarily mean that it isn't a good program – but the best programs do provide these things.

The biggest test, of course, will come when it is time to receive your commission check. If the check comes on time, and in the right amount, and all of the above conditions apply, you've found a winning program.

Point 23: Avoid Low Commissions

Money is what it is all about. Why else would you promote someone else's product? If it wasn't for the money, or the potential to earn the money, you wouldn't do it, and neither would most other people.

So why would you go with a program that offers low commissions on already low-priced products? Remember that you will put forth a lot of time and energy, and possibly even your own money, to promote this program. If the commission is low, such as 20%, of a product that is already low priced, such as \$50, this probably isn't worth your time, unless you consider \$10 worth the time and effort you are about to put forth.

Ideally, you should look for a payout of 50% to 75% for low priced products. Some affiliate program owners will offer an even bigger commission because they will make their money on a backend product.

High ticket items should have a commission payout between 20% and 50%. As above, for a \$50 product at 20%, you would only make ten bucks. But for a product that costs \$1000, you would make \$200 per sale, and this is worth your time, especially if you can make four or five sales per week.

Again, figure out how much you need to earn each month. Get a total figure, then determine what products you can realistically afford to market, and how many sales will be required to make your needed income. You really just cannot afford to market some products simply because the commissions won't pay you enough.

If you find a product that you really believe in, and you feel it would be beneficial to your customers, contact the product owner. Tell him what you can do, and ask him if he or she is open to a higher commission rate agreement with you. Better yet, join the low commission affiliate program and show them what you can do for a couple of months. Just don't do this for more than a couple of months without getting your commission percentage raised!

Also look to see if higher commissions are offered for a higher number of sales, and see what the payout is for sales made by affiliates who sign up under you. Take all of this into account when making your choices, and also consider whether or not there will be residual income.

Point 24: Read The Terms and Conditions

This is where a lot of affiliates fail. They simply don't take the time to read through the terms and conditions, as well as the affiliate agreement. This is often called 'fine print.' Even if you have to squint or use a magnifying glass, make sure you read and understand every part of each of these legal documents.

The terms and conditions will most likely let you know the company's policy regarding spam and/or the use of spam to promote their products, their tracking system, their liabilities, and what they will not be held legally responsible for – such as failure of the tracking system to track a sale. It should also tell you under what conditions you will be removed from the program, and what would give them the right to not pay you commissions that you have earned.

In most cases, you don't need a lawyer to interpret these things for you. You can read through the terms and conditions and make sure that it is at the very least 'standard.' If there is anything within the terms and conditions that you do not understand, you should contact the company for clarification before you promote the product.

The affiliate agreement, on the other hand, simply states that you agree to the terms and conditions and that you understand them. The commission structure may be part of either the affiliate agreement or the terms and conditions. You should also be able to find out how and when commissions are paid in this information as well.

In most cases, you will have to check a box stating that you have read and understand the terms and conditions, and possibly the agreement, and that your submission of the sign up form is evidence of that.

Things that you really want to watch out for in these legal documents is the information that tells you why the company may not pay you. Not paying for the first x number of sales should give you reason to pause. A sale is a sale, whether it is the first or the tenth, and you should be compensated for all of them.

If you see that the company will not pay you until you've earned a large amount in commissions, this is also a cause to pause. It is realistic for a company to hold your commissions until your sales reach \$25 or even \$50. It costs the company money to issue checks, and when you consider paying a payroll department, the cost of mailing the check, bank fees, and the cost of the check itself, it isn't reasonable to issue a check that costs more to issue than the company earned from the sales you made. But to withhold commissions until you've reached \$500 or \$1000 in commissions isn't reasonable.

Point 25: You Get Out What You Put In

This is the most important information of all. You get out of it what you put into it. This is true for just about everything in life, and this includes affiliate marketing. People who know little or nothing about Internet marketing tend to sign up for programs, get replicated websites, and wait for the traffic to come and the sales to happen.

Of course, if you know the slightest bit about how business is done on the Internet, you know that people like that never earn a single dime from affiliate marketing. You have to promote the products. It's just that simple. The more you promote the products, the more money you are likely to earn in commissions.

If you want to earn more, do more. Take your affiliate marketing business seriously. It *is* a business. If you don't think that right now, then you will most likely fail. It is a business, and it should be treated as a business.

You should set aside regular business hours, when you will be doing your marketing, as well as administrative work. During those business hours, you should also include time for research. This research may include learning new marketing techniques, or learning about new products in your niche.

However, as an affiliate marketer, 99% of your work hours should be spent on marketing, whether this is writing sales copy, writing emails, placing ads, or developing new products to promote other products, such as ebooks or free reports.

The quickest way to fail is to not do anything at all, and statistics show that 90% of the people who sign up for affiliate programs that don't have any screening processes will do absolutely nothing. You need to strive to be one of the 10% that will do what is necessary to promote the product.

Don't believe for one minute that you can sit at home doing absolutely nothing, or only working five minutes a day, and earn \$1000 a week. That does not happen, unless you have a trust fund – or unless you have built a nice sized list in a small niche and built a solid relationship with that list. When you get to that point, and you've made a name for yourself, you may be able to cut back on work – a little – but if you get too lax, you can bet that you won't have your affiliate marketing profits for long!



Doug's Reviews

Reviewing and Revealing Online Opportunities