

“The Affiliate Marketing Manuscript”

“A Blueprint For Affiliate Marketing Success For 2008”

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About The Authors:

This book is published by a closely-guarded, private group of UK entrepreneurs and internet marketers who individually and as a group run a range of internet businesses in a variety of industry sectors.

FOREWORD

Opening the Door of Opportunity-Welcome!

Here we are at the beginning of The Affiliate Marketing Manuscript. The principle behind this e-book is to give you the information, tools and resources you must have to be an effective affiliate marketing professional.

All we will be discussing in this e-book is how to make money using the Internet and the affiliate marketing programs that are available to you to accomplish this goal.

From this moment on, prepare yourself by deciding what amount of monthly income is your goal and how much effort you are willing to put toward reaching that goal. This is the most important point: it determines whether you will succeed or not.

The Affiliate Marketing Manuscript is a resource for building your business online by using other people's money, time and effort. It is the definition of passive income – you can make money while you are sleeping and someone else is doing the work that makes it possible.

Affiliate marketing has grown into one of the largest internet sales segment. The power of the Internet has enabled hundreds of companies to increase their sales profit with an extremely low overhead.

Instead of hiring a corporate office sales force, these companies have hundred of electronic sales people (the affiliate marketers website) working for them night and day. The affiliate marketing model is responsible for the tremendous growth of the most profitable Internet retailers.

Because of their use of affiliate marketing to spread the word about their service or product, many of the Internet companies are generating millions of dollars in sales faster than their brick and mortar competitors.

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Even if you have never tried Online Marketing before, by the time you read this book you should have a good idea now of how you can harness the profit potential of affiliate marketing!

WHAT'S IN THIS E-BOOK FOR YOU?

Let's Start With a Change of Perspective

There are three very important points you need to keep in mind as you begin your journey in affiliate marketing:

1. There are thousands of affiliate marketing programs. Start with one or two, and select the programs you will promote carefully. Not every affiliate marketing program is right for every person. Make sure you are clear on the requirements and rewards of each program. A good source of affiliate marketing programs to help you make your selection is the Hydra Network, <http://hydramedia.com>. In this book you will find many other resources as well.
2. The Merchant who sponsors the affiliate marketing program you select actually becomes your client. You must take the time to learn about their products and services in order to focus your efforts and make the kind of money you want to make.
3. You do not have to face this challenge alone. There is an incredible amount of resources available to you in a cooperative environment of affiliate marketing professionals. There are hundreds of discussion boards, newsgroups and forums where the members are all working toward the same goal; making the amount of income they want and need to support their lifestyle. To get an idea of what an affiliate marketing forum is like, take a look at A Best Web, located at <http://www.abestweb.com>.

THE FIRST STEP

Deciding on Your Course of Action

Hopefully by this point, you have considered the decision we asked you to make earlier and Set A Goal for Yourself:

“What amount of monthly income is your goal and how much effort you are willing to exert toward reaching that goal?”

Whether your goal is \$100 a month to \$100,000 a month, one thing both of these goals have in common is that they both take effort. The information contained in this e-book could be the catalyst for either of those figures, **IF** you make a commitment to reaching your goal.

Motivation is the key here; some people need to be between a rock and a hard place before they will take action, others read the writing on the wall and act accordingly, while there are some that take action, just to see what happens.

Take stock of what is motivating you to pursue affiliate marketing as a means to make money online and then use it as your action plan. A plan is useless you put the power behind it to make it meet its goal.

Learning the ropes of affiliate marketing can be an exciting, challenging, frustrating, rewarding and a satisfying experience all at the same time. You can customize your online affiliate marketing experience to be as enjoyable as you want. There are products and services for every type of interest.

IT IS ALL ABOUT YOU

Selecting a Focus for Your Business

Are you fascinated by Internet technology? There are affiliate programs that offer generous commissions for everything that is related to this subject.

What Are You Interested In ?

Choose your area of Interest, and find something that you are Passionate about. There are Online Retailers and other Service companies that are willing to pay you for your valuable expertise and have you represent them. The greatest success comes from representing a product or service that you really care about,

Research The Market

Find a Need and Fill it. Look for a product or service that people really want or need. There are 1,000's of people out there who are looking for a solution to their problem, whatever that might be. Find a way to solve the problem and you can make a fortune.

Give The People What They Want

To be Successful in affiliate marketing you want to represent Products and Services that people really want, and they are actively looking for. Do this and you can't miss!

THE CONCEPT OF AFFILIATE MARKETING

Your Key to Financial Independence

In the foreword, we said that affiliate marketing is a good example of passive income; you are paid for simply selling a product or service for a company using your resources and methods. Using the power of the Internet, affiliate marketing is High Performance commission sales.

Affiliate marketing has come a long way since its inception. You can get a better understanding of how it has evolved and where it is going at the website of Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affiliate_marketing.

What makes affiliate marketing so attractive is that is what is **NOT** required of you. You do not have to worry about product manufacturing or providing customer service, designing marketing material or ship the products for the company.

Your sole responsibility is to promote the product or service of the advertiser and deliver visitors to their website.

You agree to abide by the terms the company has set for their marketing representatives to perform these services and in exchange for these services you will be paid a certain fee for each action they want people to take.

To help you accomplish this goal, and to make sure your account is credited correctly, affiliate marketing program providers provide you with a unique identification code that is embedded in all of the marketing material that they provide you to promote their product or service. Many affiliate marketing programs allow you to select a “username” that becomes the method that identifies your account, for example:

“<http://www.affiliatemarketing.com/your-name.asp>”

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While most affiliate marketing programs use graphic banners or contextual ads embedded with your referral id, there are some companies that provide complete websites to their affiliates. In this case, your referral id becomes the name of the sub-domain of their company site, for example:

“http://www.your-name.affiliatemarketing.com”

“http://www.affiliatemarketing.com/your-name/index.html”

Each graphic image or line of text that is supplied to you to promote the advertisers product or service is embedded with your referral id. When the link is clicked, it transports your visitor to the website of the company you are representing.

WHAT’S IN A CLICK?

The Dynamics of Getting Paid

The click on your referral link is registered on the visitors’ computer in the form of a “cookie”, a small line of code that tells the company to credit your account for this visit. If the “click” is the action that the company is paying you to encourage your visitors to perform – you just made some money! The same holds true for the other actions we described.

A simple idea, that sounds deceptively easy. Putting this idea into motion is where the challenge lies. Consider this question: What makes YOU click a link when you visit a website?

If you have a website that is focused on cars, and you have a referral link that is related to this theme, then there is a good chance that this link maybe of interest to your visitor.

While you do not have to fulfill any orders or answer any customer service questions at the company, in order for you to make money with affiliate marketing, your job of getting visitors to your affiliate program sponsor is just as challenging and providing them with the

information they need to click your referral link is just as important.

THE REWARDS OF AFFILIATE REFERRALS

*** Direct Referrals**

Beside the profit potential of affiliate marketing from your own efforts, you can also earn money from “direct referrals”, when you introduce a new affiliate to the program, they become your direct referral, or sub-affiliate.

Affiliate programs will pay you a commission for every direct referral you make. This is sometimes called a “residual” to distinguish it from the commissions paid in relationship to product or service.

While direct referrals are the most common type of residuals you can earn, you can find some affiliate programs that will pay you a residual on different levels, also called “tiers”.

There are affiliate programs that have an unlimited number of tiers. These are Multi-Level programs. Tiers are just like steps, in a 2 tier program; your referral link is tier one, the visitor who clicks the link they find on your website and becomes an affiliate of the company is your direct referral or sub-affiliate. When they place their referral link on their own website, their referral link becomes tier two. The commission for each sub-affiliate usually is not as generous as for your own direct sales.

In a 3 tier program, the same process is extended; you are paid a commission or residual when your direct referral’s link is clicked on their website and as a result another person becomes an affiliate of the company.

You now in a position to earn commissions three different ways:

1. by referring visitors to the company website that results in a preferred action
2. through a referred visitor who becomes an affiliate of the company

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3. through payment of a certain percentage from the first referral, a smaller percentage from the second referral and on through the number of tiers in the program for each sub-affiliate.

Depending on the number of tiers in an affiliate program, and the promotional efforts of your self and your sub-affiliates, residuals can add between 5-10% to your overall commissions.

You can create your own websites that can systematically generate income for you day or night, even while you sleep.

You can link your web sites to the Online Merchants you represent, and earn commissions from the visitor traffic you “Drive” to them.

*** Freedom to Express Yourself**

Take an interest or hobby and let it produce income for you. Operate your business at the time and place that suits you best. Organize your activities according to the system that works for you. Use your time in the way that satisfies you.

*** Affordable Operating Expenses**

Even the most modest brick and mortar enterprise can cost thousands of dollars to start and operate. Having an e-commerce website on the Internet has reduced these costs, but what you save in money, you can pay in complexity and time.

In contrast, launching an affiliate marketing website can be as easy as choosing a username for your account and having a ready-made site given to you to market the affiliate program product or service.

On the other hand, you also have the freedom to design your own website from yourself, with the assistance of a website creation software package or by enlisting the services of a professional website designer.

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The start up costs for the options mentioned above range from \$50 to \$1,000 or more. It all depends on how many activities you want your visitors to have access to on your site.

*** Peace of Mind**

Is there anything as frustrating as depending on another person to perform a task by a certain time and in a certain manner, only to discover that they did neither?

In today's marketplace, employers are experiencing this type of frustration more frequently. Locating qualified employees has become a multi-million dollar industry; there are employment recruiters and agencies for every profession, and using these services can be quite expensive.

And that is just the beginning of the spending. Once you find a qualified person, you must be able to afford their salary, along with the benefits that they expect. Add to this, the amount of money that you have to spend in order to comply with the laws and regulations that apply to employment issues where you conduct business and the total amount can be staggering.

In the worst case scenario, Heaven help you, if things go very wrong and you can no longer afford to continue to have employees. The realization of the liability associated with being an employer or an employee is one of the strongest motivations behind the decision to manage or operate an affiliate marketing business.

*** Automated Management**

Behind that affiliate marketing referral link is the organization that is producing the product, providing the service and performing all of the related tasks that make it possible for you make money.

You are supplying the company with a very valuable commodity; exposure. The more people that are aware of their product or service, the more possibilities of introducing the benefits of whatever they are selling, presenting an opportunity to purchase it and increase the profits of the company.

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There are thousands of products and service providers that operate affiliate marketing programs, which can range from an individual who will pay a commission on sales of their book to multi-national companies that have hundreds of products to sell.

*** Unlimited Prospects**

Everywhere that the Internet is accessible, a potential customer for the affiliate program that you represent can be found.

The more highly concentrated the number of potential customers is in a certain area, the more opportunities you have to increase your profits. Within this statement lies another key to affiliate marketing success:

You have to know the **BENEFITS** of the product or service that your affiliate program provides, and:

You have to know **WHO** is looking for these benefits

While it might be POSSIBLE to sell a person living in Antarctica ice, is it PROBABLE? You know the answer. You have to know the facts about your market; knowing who they are and where they are, will make your job of promoting a lot easier to manage. This is the rule of thumb to keep in mind when you begin selecting affiliate programs for your business.

DO YOU WANT TO BE IN BUSINESS

Or Do You Want to Play the Lottery?

This is the reality checkpoint. You have as much chance of making \$10,000 the first month your affiliate marketing website is up and running as you do to win the lottery. It's NOT going to happen.

You will see many exaggerated claims of "overnight profits" from some affiliate program providers. But you need to read the fine print, to find out what you can expect. You may find that many of these "business opportunities" involve the payment of a fee in order for you to participate in their program.

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In other words, you have to pay the company a fee to get the opportunity to make a commission.

If the purpose of becoming an affiliate marketer is to get paid for referrals by advertising a company's product or service, why should you have to pay for this?

Yet everyday, many people register and pay money to participate in these programs, and unfortunately, for many of these same people, the dream that they bought never becomes a reality. In truth, affiliate marketing is a lot easier than direct marketing, but it is not a walk through the park either.

It takes a considerable amount of time and effort to put all the pieces in place that are needed to generate a substantial income through affiliate marketing. All of your efforts are focused on one point: getting visitors to your affiliate program providers' website. Once you accomplish this goal, the ball is in their court. You have provided the introduction, now they have to make the presentation that closes the sale.

How Many Affiliate Marketers are Too Many?

The fact that the field of affiliate marketing is competitive should be easy to understand because of the incredible income potential and actual sales revenues that it produces. But the impact of the competition is a lot different because of the size of the population in the territory. The Internet is the medium that millions of people are using to sell their products and buy products from others. There's plenty of room for you to Make Money Online!

Find a Niche

Again, the importance of doing your "homework"; understanding the benefits your program offers and who this will appeal to cannot be overemphasized. In addition to this, you have the opportunity to identify a segment of the market where the product or service you are marketing is completely new. Being first in the marketplace with a new product or service that offers benefits that are highly desired can produce fantastic profits.

Locating this type of affiliate marketing program niche takes research, the more you know about benefits of the product or service you are marketing, the easier it is to identify the most likely prospects for it.

TEN REASONS TO BECOME AN AFFILIATE

The Affiliate Marketing Program Checklist

What makes one affiliate marketing program better than another? Most of the experts in the field say that it is a combination of factors; here are some of the most important aspects to consider before you joint any affiliate program:

1. Minimum 25% Commission

The affiliate program has a great payment structure; meaning a high percentage of the purchase price.

2. Excellent Company Presentation

The website of the affiliate program you join should have a clean, attractive design, easy to navigate with full disclosure of their program details. Remember, you will be sending your prospective affiliates to this site.

3. Accurate Tracking Methods

The affiliate program should provide a comprehensive affiliate statistics page that lists the number of clicks, sales, lead and amount of commissions earned on a monthly basis. The affiliate statistics should be updated automatically and immediately. Who wants to find out today about a sale you made in the previous month?

4. Marketing Tools

Make sure the affiliate program provides a wide variety of text links, banners and graphics to put on your web page. Text links are definitely the best choice.

5. Payment Schedule

The affiliate program should tell you how often you are going to be paid. There are programs that pay monthly, quarterly and by percentage. In addition, there are some programs that have a payout minimum. In most cases, the programs that pay monthly are a better choice. No one enjoys waiting for months to be paid.

6. Affiliate News

Investigate whether or not the affiliate program shares data about how their top affiliates are doing. This can be a great indicator about the popularity of the product or service they are offering. If there are some affiliates are earning over \$5,000 per month, it is a good affiliate program.

7. Affiliate Strategies

Check the affiliate program website for a forum of tutorials, strategies, tips and techniques between the affiliates.

8. Company Updates

Does the affiliate program offer a company newsletter on a regular basis for their affiliates? This is a great way to get extra tips and techniques that are working well.

9. Communication

Find out if they offer email notification when you make a sale or get an affiliate signed up under you (if it is a 2-tier program). It is very motivating to see 'You have a new affiliate' in your inbox.

10. Customer Support

Ensure that your questions will be answered within 48 hours.

SETTING YOUR SIGHTS ON PROFITS

Selecting Your Affiliate Marketing Programs

The key question is: how do you choose a successful affiliate program? We cannot stress the importance of using a trustworthy source for your information enough. There is an abundance of information available on the Internet, but that does not mean that all of what you can find is accurate, reliable or ethical. Choose to follow the wrong advice and you could find yourself in more than hot water-you could face legal action as well.

Here are a few of the most trusted sources of affiliate marketing program information on the Internet with their Alexa.com ranking so you can judge their value for yourself:

One of the most complete resources for affiliate marketing programs is Associateprograms.com: located at <http://www.associateprograms.com/>, this site is considered by many to be a main source for finding successful programs.

Check their Alexa.com rating here:

http://www.alexa.com/data/details/traffic_details?url=www.associateprograms.com%2F.

You can access a search engine optimized affiliate program directory at Top Affiliate.com's website at:

<http://www.top-affiliate.com/>.

Check their Alexa.com rating here:

http://www.alexa.com/data/details/traffic_details?url=www.top-affiliate.com%2F.

Clickbank.com is known primarily for its easy billing and payment methods, they also have an excellent list of affiliate programs that pay high commissions. <http://www.clickbank.com>.

Check their Alexa rating here:

http://www.alexacom.com/data/details/traffic_details?url=www.clickbank.com%2F.

On the website of TamingtheBeast.net, located at <http://www.tamingthebeast.net> is a wealth of business resources that include a wide range of information on affiliate marketing strategies and tutorials, web design and search engine optimization.

Check their Alexa rating here:

http://www.alexacom.com/data/details/traffic_details?url=tamingthebeast.net.

Network Style Affiliate Programs

There are several affiliate program networks on the Internet where you can find a wide range of merchants in different categories. Pay careful attention to the details of each program. Keep in mind that although these programs are all on the same site, they are independently owned and operated.

Commission Junction: <http://www.cj.com>.

Commission Junction is one of the leading affiliate program networks with over 2,000 merchant programs to choose from.

Clixgalore Affiliate Marketing: <http://www.clixgalore.com>.

Clixgalore is a leader in pay for performance affiliate marketing solutions. Drive customers to your site now using your own large affiliate sales team and only pay for performance.

Hydra Network: <http://www.network.hydramedia.com>.

Hydra Network distributes over 1,000 performance-based ad campaigns, with 300 exclusives, generating more than a million new customers per month to advertisers.

NCS Credit Card Affiliate Marketing: <http://www.ncsreporting.com>.

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You can earn commissions by promoting credit cards from some of the largest banks in the United States.

Forex Affiliate Marketing: <http://www.forex-affiliate.com>.

Affiliates in the Forex program earn over \$10,000 per referral. This is one of the Internet's leading affiliate programs.

Performics: Affiliate Marketing: <http://www.performics.com>.

Performics makes online marketing cost-effective, easy and profitable. Affiliate marketing experts who specialize in improving Return On Investment (ROI) and maximizing sales.

DirectTrack Affiliate Marketing: <http://www.directtrack.com>.

DirectTrack is a tracking, reporting, management and ad serving solution to control all of your online marketing efforts.

oneNetwork Affiliate Program: <http://www.digitalriver.com>.

oneNetwork has one of the largest selections of software titles on the Internet where 40,000 affiliates earn up to 75% commissions.

Global Industrial Affiliate Marketing: <http://www.globalindustrial.com>.

Affiliates earn up to 10% commissions with Global Industrial Equipment's e-commerce affiliate program. Global Industrial carries over 30,000 industrial and office products from great manufacturers. This is a solid company that has been in business over 50 years and is a Better Business Bureau member.

GETTING STARTED

Creating Your Visitor Action Plan

In the last section we talked about the concept behind affiliate marketing and how you can make money. There are some affiliate programs that offer only one way to make money, and there are others that give you a combination of ways to earn your commission. In order to accomplish your objective of referring prospects to your advertisers program, choosing an affiliate program that offers you more than one way to earn money is the best choice.

A program that will pay you for a combination of any of these actions:

- the click of your referral link,
- the lead form they complete on their site,
- the trial download of their product or service
- and their purchase of the product or service

are the most popular because they are an affiliate marketing website's gold mine. While they are few and far between, there are some programs that will pay for each of these actions.

If one visitor completes all of these actions, you will be paid 4 times – this is equal to 1 person buying 4 different products from the same store.

It provides you with four different ways to present the benefits of the product or service that waits on the other side of your referral link.

There are a variety of marketing approaches you can use to reach your prospect when you have more than one activity to promote.

The advertiser that has the foresight to offer many different ways to interact with their website visitors and offer the affiliate marketer an incentive for each of them, are represented by some of the best known names on the Internet; Amazon.com, Dell.com, and GoDaddy.com are just a few outstanding examples of lucrative and responsive affiliate programs.

COMMISSION CATEGORIES

Pay Per Sale

The most common form of affiliate marketing incentive is called Pay Per Sale (PPS). When the visitor clicks you link and makes a purchase from the advertisers website, you are paid a percentage of the sale. This form is very popular with the large Internet retailers.

Advantage: You will make the most money from this type of affiliate marketing program on items that are considered “high ticket” items, i.e., sophisticated software like Adobe (Macromedia) Dreamweaver that retails for \$899, a 10% commission of this sale is \$89, a 25% commission of this sale is \$224.75.

You can see how important it is to pay attention to the amount of the percentage. If they are only offering a 2% commission on this same \$899 item you will only earn \$17.98.

Risk: You need to be aware that if the purchase is returned to the company for any reason, you will lose your commission as well.

Pay Per Lead

Information is the oil that makes the Internet run, and this is why the Pay Per Lead (PPL) type affiliate marketing programs is extremely popular. In this type of program, you are paid for every inquiry for information about the advertisers’ product or service that meets a certain criteria, i.e., the visitor is in a particular age group or income bracket.

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Industries that cater to the basic human needs such as financing, housing and health tend to offer the most generous pay per lead programs.

Advantage: Because no purchase is involved, the chances are higher that the visitor will be “converted” from being a website visitor to a prospective customer when they complete the action of entering their contact information on the lead form.

Risk: Commissions are not as generous as pay per sale affiliate programs.

Pay Per Action

In this type of affiliate marketing program, the advertiser pays you when your referred visitor decides to download a trial version of their software or report.

Similar to pay per lead programs, the visitor has not made a purchase; they have simply agreed to take a closer look at what the advertiser has to offer.

As you would imagine, companies that offer electronic goods and services, such as publishers, computer and software companies dominate this particular market. In many cases, campaigns for pay per action are used in combination with pay per sale.

Advantage: The “try-before-you-buy” option encourages visitors to download the product with the understanding that it is for a specific period of time.

Risk: If the performance of the product or service fails to impress the visitor, they will simply cancel the program rather than purchase it.

Pay Per Click

The first and most famous of all affiliate marketing programs is called Pay Per Click.

Thousands of merchants lost money when this affiliate marketing program technology became the target of malicious hackers. The sophisticated software programs that they developed to circumvent the tracking methods caused this form of affiliate marketing to become unpopular.

However, the pay per click model is enjoying a rebound in use. It has been adopted by contextual (“text”) advertising companies, who are using encrypted reporting and tracking features behind this technology to prevent fraud.

Advantage: The easiest affiliate marketing programs to promote, with a growing number of contextual ad providers to choose from.

Risk: Many of these contextual ad providers’ referral links use a large amount of website page space. Commissions can be very small i.e., \$.005 per click or have extremely high payout levels, i.e. commissions only paid after 1,000 clicks.

YOUR AFFILIATE MARKETING BUSINESS

Your Action Plan Checklist

Up to this point of The Affiliate Marketing Manuscript, we have discussed the basic points that you need to know about what affiliate marketing is and how you can profit from it.

Before you move on to the next section, make a note of the following:

- What is your motivation to become an affiliate marketer?
- How much money do you want to make per month?
- How many hours will you work per month?
- What are your THREE main areas of interest?
- Which products or services are related to these interests?
- What is your budget for your affiliate marketing business?
- Which commission plan do you like best?

Why do we make a distinction between your motivation, your interests and the amount of money you want to make? Because, these are the three vital points that can “make or break” your success.

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In whatever your work may be, there is a driving force that gives you the determination to complete the tasks that will bring you the income to support your lifestyle. Describe in words what it is that gives you the drive to work. Keep this and the rest of your action plan in front of you and read it everyday to help you stay focused as you make your way through this process.

We encourage you to be open-minded as you consider your interests. No matter what it is, there are other people in the world with the same interest.

This creates the market for the related services and/or products, which in turn can create an affiliate marketing program.

There are many people who think that simply wanting to make money is motivation enough. It is difficult to devote hours to something that holds no interest for you when you are working on a salary basis. Choosing an affiliate marketing program that is related to your personal interest, gives you the opportunity to get paid while you are learning and sharing what you learn with people who share this interest.

Finally, the budget for your affiliate marketing business will cover the basics of “setting up shop” on the Internet. This includes your domain name, your web hosting package and website design.

In the next section, we will put up the walls to your new business. You will learn how to bring all of the different components together to create an effective affiliate marketing business for yourself online.

Laying the Foundation for Building Success

Now that you have your personal plan of action, let's work on your organizing the key components of the operational base for your affiliate marketing business; your domain name and web hosting for your website.

WWW.YOURNAME.COM

A Domain Name of Your Own

Here is your first statement as an affiliate marketer. Complete this sentence:

“My website address is www. _____ . com”

That has a nice ring to it, doesn't it? Domain name registration is THE business of the Internet.

Domain names exist because of the Internet and now have become as valuable as physical real estate.

Why invest in registering your own domain name when there are many affiliate programs that supply websites to their representatives? There are several reasons why it is more to your advantage to have your own website address:

- Website content management
- Marketing method flexibility
- Administration freedom

Website Content Management

The advantage of using the ready-made or “replicated” affiliate marketing website that is provided by the company that you have agreed to represent is that it is an easy way to do business. All you have to do is advertise your referral link.

The disadvantage of operating your affiliate marketing business in this manner is that you have little or no control over the design and contents of the website. In the early years of affiliate marketing on the Internet, it was easy to have an affiliate marketing website on the search engines index.

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As affiliate marketing programs gained in popularity, search engine companies began to remove these replicated websites, because the content on all of them was exactly the same. Now it is almost impossible to submit a replicated website to a search engine and have it listed.

This fact supports the advantage of having your own domain name. If there are 1,000 affiliates for the Widgets in a Flash company, and they all have websites on the search engines, which site a visitor chooses to learn about what this company can do for them is all a matter of luck.

Choosing your domain name to incorporate a keyword that relates to what you have to offer is extremely important. Your domain name is your primary marketing tool.

Marketing Method Flexibility

Now that search engines have begun to remove replicated websites from their listings, a lot of the related marketing methods are following suit. Affiliate marketing is enough of a challenge, but it is almost impossible to distinguish yourself from other affiliates if you are using exactly the same website design and content.

It is important for you to have targeted traffic to your affiliate marketing website based on your product or service.

To accomplish this, your marketing efforts must be focused only on the people who are most likely to purchase the products.

Having your own domain name and website, allows you more flexibility in how and where you advertise. It gives you the ability to focus on what interests your prospective buyer. A person looking for widgets in Chicago is more likely to first choose to visit a site entitled “Windy City Widgets”, than “Widgets in a Flash”.

Administration Freedom

After your domain name, search engines are your most important marketing tool. With millions of websites on the Internet, this is the first resource that people use to find what they want to learn or purchase.

The fact that you create a website does not automatically mean that thousands of people will come to see what you have to offer, you have to combine the information that search engines use to index sites with the information that is of interest to your target market to create a balance that works in the best interests of your affiliate marketing business.

The way your site is designed can make a huge difference in how quickly the search engine index your site into their directories and what position it holds among the thousands of websites in your category of products and/or services.

In most cases, a replicated website is beyond your administrative reach, you do not have access to change anything about how the website is designed. The advertising sponsor decides whatever title, keywords and description used.

Choosing Your Domain Name

At this point, the advantages of having your own domain name should be very clear. It will allow you to step away from the massive numbers of affiliates who are marketing for your advertising sponsor and focusing buyers' attention on your website by using a keyword in your domain name.

Having in-depth knowledge of the benefits of your affiliate marketing product or service will help you to identify keywords that could be used in the search engines to use in your domain name.

It is a good idea to run a search engine request on each of your keywords individually and as a phrase. The number of times that the keyword is requested shows you its popularity with the general market.

In addition, there are several keyword popularity tools available. The search engine Google operates one of the best you can use. Their “AdWords Keyword Tool” can be found at <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>.

Registering Your Domain Name

With your keyword list you can create several different domain names to check for availability to register.

The simplest way of finding a reputable domain name registrar is to go to the source of registrar accreditation: the ICANN website at <http://www.icann.org>, which has a listing of their membership. I personally use www.namecheap.com to register my domains.

Domain name registrations is one of the most profitable online businesses, the fee you will pay for this service can sometimes be included in a web hosting package as well. If you choose this option, make sure that you fully understand the web hosting features that will be provided will be sufficient to support your affiliate marketing website functions.

Once you have chosen a domain name registrar, you can check the availability of the domain names on your list and do not be surprised if many of your choices are already taken.

As you work through the registration of your domain name, you will begin to get an idea of the competition you are facing in the marketplace at large.

Locating Your Affiliate Marketing Website Online

Registering your affiliate marketing domain name is the first step in having an online business, now you have to find a reliable web hosting service.

Try to resist the temptation of using a free web hosting service. Most of these services require you to have advertising banners on your pages that will only confuse your visitor and may conflict with your marketing strategy.

Web hosting services do not have to be expensive. As we mentioned earlier, there are many domain name registrars that offer service packages on web hosting and some even provide marketing tools like search engine submissions, website design and visitor traffic building software.

Choose your web-hosting provider carefully because your web hosting company is your silent business partner. Your website has to be accessible to Internet users in order for your business to make money. If your web hosting service goes offline, so does your business. Compare the features of the top 20 web hosting service providers in the 2006 Web Host Review available at: <http://www.web-hosting-review.toptenreviews.com>.

I use Hostgator.com for all my websites and highly recommend them – I haven't had any problems or support issues they haven't been able to deal with so far.

Take your website design cue from the audience you want to attract: if the product or service you are promoting is targeted toward musicians, then your website theme should reflect this.

Webmasters World's at <http://www.webmasterworld.com/>

is a discussion group that offers real world experience on all the issues related to website design.

Developing the Picture of Your Business

From your side of the story, having an affiliate marketing business online can be compared to putting together pieces of a puzzle to produce a picture. The “picture” in this case is the image that comes to mind when your domain name information is displayed on a search engine listing.

The easiest way to begin developing this picture is to create a unique website to promote each separate product or service you are marketing. Displaying a large number of unrelated affiliate links all on the same website can detract from your credibility and generally this approach does not encourage visitors to click your affiliate link. If your

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affiliate marketing program is focused on office supplies, your website content should be solely about office supplies.

Designing your website to be “search engine friendly” starts with understanding and applying the criteria that search engines use to create their index. Be careful here, because there is too much information available about this vital subject that is either outdated or can cause you problems.

One of the most trusted sources of working with search engines is Search Engine Watch, located at <http://searchenginewatch.com/>

You have to keep the viewpoint of the potential buyers in mind throughout this process. Remember, there are many other affiliates promoting the same product or service. You must exploit every opportunity to attract to visitors to your affiliate marketing website.

Our example of “Windy City Widgets” can be used in the regional section of the search engines as well as the general index. This term “Windy City” is well known to the people who live in Chicago, and gives you an edge to reach them when they are ready to purchase their widgets.

Knowledge of your domain name is your first marketing contact. On its own, it should be able to motivate a person interested in your product to your website. Visitors to <http://www.saveyourmoney.com>, already have an idea of what the website has to offer.

On the other hand, when someone visits your page from a search engine listing, they will see a brief description of your website content, which is generated by the “meta tags” on your web page.

The three pieces of information that search engines take from the source code of your web page to use in creating your listing on their index are:

- The title of your website
- The keywords
- The description

This information creates an expectation in the visitors' mind that you must meet or else they will leave your site. Internet users are very smart, and a large number of them shop online regularly. But a word of caution here, getting visitors to your site using keywords that are totally unrelated to what you really have to offer on your site is a practice that can get your listing removed and banned from the search engine index.

As you begin building your affiliate marketing business, keeping your domain name as your focal point will prove to be very effective in all of your advertising efforts. The keyword that you use in your domain name should be used throughout your website content, as well as all of your on and offline advertising.

Finding the Balance between Content and Graphics

Building your affiliate marketing business around your domain name is much more effective than using a general approach.

The more specific your focus, the easier it is to get your advertising message to prospective buyers.

Most affiliate marketing programs offer banners or text links embedded with your referral link that you can use on your website. However you should be aware that using these graphics is not always the best idea because they will cause your site to load slowly. Besides this fact, Internet visitors are being faced with advertising graphics at every turn.

What your visitors really want to see what new information you can offer them; what makes your site different from the other websites that they have visited. How well you meet the expectations of your visitors and deliver information that is of interest to them can have an impact on whether your visitor clicks your referral link or not.

The informational content of your website should be compelling articles about the products or services you are offering through your affiliate marketing programs. They should outline the benefits that the visitor will enjoy through its use.

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Using highlighting to draw attention to the special features of your product or service, gives you the opportunity to ask your visitor to take action and make the click on your referral link.

Article headlines can be used to encourage the reader to continue reading, contact you for more information or direct their attention to a specific feature of your affiliate marketing program.

Writing content articles is one of the best ways to target the market you want. There are a number of article submission services that will distribute your articles to other websites to be used as content, giving your site increased exposure on the Internet, which will increase your link popularity and in turn your search engine ranking. By submitting an article to these services weekly, you can rapidly build targeted visitor traffic to your site.

Making the Most of Your Website Visits

At this point, the building your online affiliate marketing business is moving along nicely. You have selected programs, registered your domain name, secured web hosting services and now you are building your website.

Once your affiliate marketing website is launched you will start making money, right?

Right, that CAN be absolutely true. And if that is the result you are looking for, pay attention and study how to put all of these pieces together that are outlined in this e-book.

If you use the resources that are listed here, it will help you to generate an income right from the launch of your affiliate marketing business website.

You can accomplish this if you do some careful planning of the features on your website, make a narrow selection of a customer base, organize your promotions and prepare customer service tools. You can start announcing your affiliate marketing website services and products months before your website goes "live". Building excitement around an upcoming event within your market segment is one way to generate interest in your affiliate product or services.

Exposing your domain name to potential visitors to your website might well be the simplest part of online marketing process. The right mix of informative content and graphic images linked to your referral id code are necessary components of your website. And at this point your visitor makes their first decision about your site: is this what they are looking for?

This is where the first part of “visitor retention” comes into play. You want visitors to explore your site, become interested in the products and services from your affiliate marketing programs.

But your visitor will have to leave your site at some point, and once they leave your site what can you do? Not too much, unless you have given them a way to interact with you.

This is the second part of using visitor retention strategies in your affiliate marketing business. An excellent resource on visitor retention can be found on Revenutions’ website at <http://www.revenution.com/services/visitors.html>

To retain and keep in contact with your visitors once they leave your website, let’s look at two of the most popular methods of interacting with your website visitors.

Giveaways and Subscriptions

With all of the work you have done to get visitors to your affiliate marketing website, the task now shifts to making their visit one they will remember. Your objective is for the visitor to click your referral link, and one way you encourage them to do this is to give them something that they want without obligation. The idea is to extend the reach of your website content and give them a link back to your website.

A giveaway is a single item, for instance, it can be an e-book like the one you are reading, an article, a software program or an incentive like a discount coupon.

A subscription is an item that your visitor will receive at regular intervals; newsletters and ezines are two of the most popular types of subscriptions. Choose what you will giveaway

or write about with your keywords in mind. Remember that whatever you use should be related to your affiliate marketing program website.

Forums

With the “plug and play” software available through most web hosting services and from independent software vendors, you can create your own discussion group or forum for the users of your affiliate marketing product or service.

Internet users are community oriented, giving them a place where they can share and exchange information that is important to them, gives them another incentive to visit your site regularly.

Giveaways, subscriptions and forums all give you the means to interact with your website visitor while they are on your site and after they leave. The best position for these offers or signup boxes is close to the top right or left corners of your web page and designed in a way that they are easily seen.

Make sure that all of your offers are “opt-in” where the visitor gives their consent to you to send email messages to them.

In addition, in accordance with the CAN-SPAM Act, each commercial email must include a means for the subscriber to “opt-out” or cancel their request to receive email.

These three areas of promoting your affiliate marketing program serve as “lead generators” helping you to build a list of the people who are interested in what you have to offer on your affiliate marketing website.

Underlying all of these efforts is the understanding that very few people take action of any kind on their first visit to a website. Be proactive in your approach to your visitors and make it easy for them to return - encourage your visitors to bookmark your site for future visits by incorporating a link at the top of your website to do this.

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When a visitor requests a giveaway or becomes your subscriber, it opens the door for you to communicate new information about your products on regular basis. However, avoid the “hard sell” approach. Remember that most people are interested in improving the quality of their lives, i.e., saving money, having more leisure time or increased income.

Focus your attention on how your product can solve a particular problem that your visitor may have.

Offering a special discount for your subscribers is a wonderful incentive to bring you visitor to your website again and (hopefully) purchase from your website.

Keep the tone of your email conversational, in the same manner you would talk to a friend. In the wording of your e-mail avoid using the word “free” that has become one of the most famous “spam triggers”. To check your email content and make sure it is free of spam triggers visit E-Zine Check at <http://ezinecheck.com/howitworks.html> .

In addition to the value of each of these ideas on their own, linking them to each other may provide you with even better results. For instance, here is an example of how to link your offers together to maximize the number of people on your mailing list:

- A newsletter subscription box on your website homepage
- A newsletter subscription box on each of your website pages
- A link to your giveaway on the subscription opt-in page or confirmation e-mail.
- A text link to your giveaway or subscription signup page at the end of an article on your website

- A hyperlink to your subscription signup page on the thank you page of your giveaway offer
- Your giveaway or subscription in an “exit ad”, a form of pop-up advertising that is activated when your visitor leaves your site.

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If you decide to offer a giveaway and/or subscription to your visitors, you can make this task very easy for yourself if you deliver this content through an automatic mailer or auto responder.

Auto responders make it easy to always stay in touch with your subscribers, because you can schedule your mailing at regular intervals. Many affiliate marketers focus their attention on getting the sale, but it is even more important to contact your customer service after the sale is made.

The beauty of using this system is that each of the components are affiliate marketing programs in their own right. Using these services to promote your affiliate marketing programs can have a double benefit for you. You can find affiliate programs for these services at the following sites:

Subscription Service Affiliate Programs

Constant Contact: <http://www.constantcontact.com>

Auto Responder Affiliate Programs

Get Response: <http://www.getresponse.com>

Email List and Auto Responder Service

Auto-Magic:

<http://www.auto-magic.com>

Whatever you do, make sure that you provide quality content to the visitors who have given you their valuable contact information. You can find hundreds of e-books to giveaway to your visitors at: Free E-books' website at

<http://www.free-e-books.net/marketing.html>.

Remember, your website visitors do not know you; you have to build trust with them. By giving them something valuable you can continue to build their interest in your affiliate marketing program, so that eventually, they will click your referral link and make the sale.

Once you have a few sales on your affiliate marketing account, it can be helpful to request the permission of some of your customers to display a testimonial from them.

A satisfied customers' words underscore the benefits you have been promoting from actual experience of using the product or service.

Testimonials from business customers that include links to their site can improve your affiliate marketing website link popularity as well as boost your credibility by reinforcing the quality of what you are offering.

FINE TUNING YOUR BENEFIT PACKAGE

Speaking to the Heart of Your Market

Once you have the basic content you will use for your affiliate marketing website, you can maximize its impact with the use of "power words".

Power words are also referred to as "triggers" because they can motivate the reader to take action. Using them effectively can help you build customer confidence. Here are ten different benefits people want and the power word that relate to them.

1. **TIME:** The pace of daily life for most people makes time their most valuable commodity. When they come online to shop, they are looking for products and services that will save them time. Power words: FAST, QUICK, i.e., fast delivery, fast ordering or quick results.
2. **SECURITY:** Internet customers want to be sure that they will not be at risk of losing money by accepting your offer. Power words: RISK FREE, MONEY BACK, GUARANTEED, i.e., 90 day money back guarantee, risk free, guaranteed, without obligation.

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3. **EXCLUSIVITY:** When there is only a limited amount of an item, it gives the impression of being more valuable. The more valuable your product or service appears the more people will appreciate what you have to offer. Power words: RARE, LIMITED, SPECIAL, EXCLUSIVE, i.e., exclusively for the first 100 subscribers, special offer, limited edition.
4. **SIMPLICITY:** People appreciate clarity and ease. Show them how your product or service will reduce their stress. Power words: EASY, SIMPLE, CONVENIENT, STRESS FREE, i.e., stress-free ordering, simple instructions, convenient to use, easy payments, etc.
5. **PROOF:** People like to know what other people think about your product or service. Power words: TESTIMONIAL, REVIEW, CRITIQUE, COMPARISON, i.e. buyers' testimonial, consumer review, buyers critique, industry comparison.
6. **SPECIAL OFFERS:** People want to find bargains in the form of rebates, one time sales or percentage offers. Power words: SALE, DISCOUNT, REBATE, ONE-TIME, LIMITED TIME, i.e., one day sale, special discount, instant rebate, one time offer, limited time price.
7. **INCENTIVES:** People love getting gifts before they do business with you. Power words: COMPLIMENTARY, GIVEAWAY, BONUS, GIFT, REWARD, i.e., your complimentary subscription, order bonus, special e-book giveaway, a gift for you.
8. **RECOGNITION:** People want to know that you understand their concerns. Power words: YOU, YOURS, i.e. the benefits you want, the solution to your problem.
9. **STATUS:** People want to know how something will affect their life. Power words: ALERT, IMPORTANT, ATTENTION, i.e., important notice, attention please, special alert.

10. **POPULARITY:** People are always looking for new products or services that will improve their lives. Power words: NEW, FRESH, UPDATED, i.e., brand new, fresh off the press, updated report.

TARGETED NICHE MARKETING

The Point of Access for Affiliates

Throughout The Affiliate Marketing Manuscript you have been encouraged to focus your attention on the keywords that apply to the products or services that you have to offer on your website.

Targeted Niche Marketing is all about finding SPECIFIC solutions to the problems of a SPECIFIC customer base.

When your website is geared to delivering a clear understanding of what benefits your customer is looking to receive from a product or service, then it is easier to connect the dots to the product that provides the solution to the problem they are facing.

As simple as this may sound, there are thousands of online businesses that have yet to grasp the importance of this one principle. No matter how great your product may be, the focus must always be on what the customer wants from that product; how it will enhance their lives and give them what they want.

It is essential for individual affiliates to thoroughly research the concept of targeted niche marketing – where the idea is to be one thing to one group of people instead of the shotgun approach that is responsible for the failure of most affiliate marketers - trying to be “all things to all people.”

Your Niche Market Customer Base

Just as we linked keywords from your domain name, to your search engine information in your website design, to the website content, giveaways and promotions, the same

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approach holds true for identifying your target niche market. It is not enough to simply offer a product that solves a specific problem. In a marketplace as large as the Internet, generalization is the fastest road to oblivion.

Connecting the dots from your product or service to its prospective users is important in order to get their attention, present a solution to their problem and a means to take action. Using the advanced technology that is available to affiliate marketers to find their customer base, there is no reason why you cannot take advantage of these resources for the success of your online business.

The sharper your focus, the easier it is to hit the bulls' eye of the target. Keep in mind that the attention span of Internet shoppers is short and your affiliate marketing competition is growing everyday.

Keys to Unlock Your Customers Wallet

Start your quest for your targeted customers by using demographics, the information about the basic qualities and characteristics of your market, such as age, gender, culture, employment, industry, income level, marital status, and location. For example, does your product cater uniquely to men? Is it more useful to people in a certain profession? What you need to know is; who buys the type of product or service you have to offer?

Affiliate marketers as well as other types businesses shoot themselves in the foot by assuming that what they have to offer will appeal to everyone. Resist the temptation to fall into this pattern of thinking. Even if the product or service you have to offer is used by a diverse market, there are many different factors that you can use to identify who is the perfect customer for you and create your promotional material.

Another valuable tool to use in targeted niche marketing is called psychographics.

There is a tremendous amount of research available on the emotional and behavioral characteristics of your target market that cover everything from the thinking process behind the purchase decision, the rationales that are used to their buying histories of a certain type of product or service.

This data is collected from their areas of interest, the organizations they join, the types of products that they have consumed or the type of services they have used. Even the history of their loyalty to a certain company is tracked, from their initial contact with a company to the end of their relationship.

Where demographics profile those who need a certain product, psychographics define where the product is wanted as well. Starting with the question of who is your perfect customer you can use these tools to fill in the blanks.

Market Research Information in Action

For example, using demographic information, acne medicine manufacturers typically cater to teenagers who are most likely to experience this problem. In other words, teenagers specifically are potential customers because they need clearer skin.

Now let's make the focus sharper using psychographics. In this example, not only do the targeted customers need clearer skin, but they want clearer skin as well.

This is an important fact, for there are some teenagers with acne who may need clearer skin, but it is not important enough to them to really want it - all of this is based around what are the priorities of the person, much like the other choices we make, from the type of work we perform to the style of clothes we wear.

The bottom line for the manufacturers of the acne medicine who wants to target this specific market as accurately as possible to generate higher quality leads, is that they must use the psychographic profile of their potential buyers along with demographic information.

With this information in hand, they can locate the websites that their potential customer visits and present their information about the benefits of using their products. For instance, there are many forums that address the common image problems facing teenagers like Teen Forums located at <http://www.teenageforum.com>.

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The most important rule of thumb in targeted niche marketing for your affiliate business online is that less is more.

If you want to increase your earnings, decrease the customer base you are trying to reach until you have the most likely audience defined and then concentrate your efforts on satisfying these potential customers.

Making the Niche Marketing Connection

The other advantage in taking the targeted niche market approach is that it affords you the opportunity to link to high traffic websites that will generate traffic for your site.

The traffic at these sites will vary, but regardless of the amount of traffic they receive, whether it is 10,000 or 100,000 visitors per year, the important thing to remember is that by linking to you or recommending your products and services you are sharing their website visitor traffic.

This is a powerful strategy and one that takes time to accomplish. The reward of securing a quality link from a high traffic site to your own website is that once in place it will stay in place working around the clock and sending traffic to your website, day after day.

Be aware that there are different types of links along with linking strategies. The two most common links are:

- In-Bound Links – Are where another website points TO your website. This link has been found to be the most important. Read the finding of the study that was conducted by Fortune Interactive at the website of WebProNews located at: <http://www.webpronews.com/topnews/topnews/wpn-60-20060718InboundLinkQualityDeclared1InSEO.html>
- Out-Bound Links – Are where the link points AWAY from your website. This link has an impact on your website ranking as well, but they are not as desirable as inbound links. You can find a comprehensive report on how both inbound and outbound links affect how search engines see your site in a Google Page Rank survey from eFactory's website at <http://pr.efactory.de/>.

Keep Your Linking Strategies Legal

In regards to linking strategies, there are many different theories floating around on the Internet, so you need to be careful. Here are five basic points to remember when you are considering a linking strategy:

- Consider the links you want to make with other websites carefully. Remember it is not the quantity of links located on or pointing to your site that will enhance your Page Rank, but the quality of the link that has the most impact. The links on your site should be considered as part of the resources that you make available to your visitors.
- Find and apply different types of linking strategies that adhere to the guidelines of the major search engines. Be aware of the power that is inherent in NATURAL LINKING to your site and work diligently to increase it.
- Steer clear of programs that promise you hundreds of incoming links overnight. More likely than not, a link scheme will adversely affect your search engine page ranking.
- Be aware that offers to sell you incoming links from sites with high Page Rank is completely against Google Guidelines and can result in the site being banned from being listed in Google for participating in this scheme.
- When creating an outbound link, avoid using automated linking programs. In many cases, this type of software prevents the other site from receiving “credit” for the incoming link. How can you tell if this is true or not? Place your cursor over the link and hold it there. Then take a look at the status bar at the bottom of your monitor screen.

If you see their link showing in the display, your software program is a winner, if a longer URL appears, there is no benefit being received by the site you are linking to.

- Since website links have a direct impact on your valuable search engine listing, the best source of information on how to implement a linking strategy for your website for the best results can be found by going directly to the source. Google offers a wealth of information that will steer you clear of potential problems when it comes to linking to another site. Read the Webmasters Guidelines at:
<http://www.google.com/support/webmasters/bin/answer.py?answer=35769>.

Innovations in Affiliate Marketing Strategies

As an affiliate marketer, you have to constantly be alert to the ever-changing influences that determine where the income opportunities are in the marketplace. Unfortunately, there are many who believe that there is a “secret formula” that will map out a fail-proof road to success, when no such formula exists.

The attitude that will serve your affiliate marketing business the best is to be proactive, constantly study your target audience and keep abreast of the marketing practices that are used by work in harmony with the realities of operating a business online.

While there is no substitute for dedicated hard work that is motivated by a strong commitment to a goal, there are new developments in affiliate marketing techniques that can extend your reach, improve your response rate or make the process of keeping your affiliate marketing business organized easier.

New Age Affiliate Marketing

There are many new affiliate marketers who have decided to approach their business as customers instead of sellers to earn their income. This may not sound revolutionary, but some are surprised that a concept so simple and obvious for earning additional profits is also a risk-free strategy.

To understand “Customer Reciprocation” you need to turn your perspective around about how money is made. The saying; “it takes money to make money” is applied well in this

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technique, where you become the customer of an affiliate by purchasing their product or service and in return, they become a customer of yours.

When affiliates marketers network in this way, everyone wins. There is no pressure to purchase products and services that you do not have a need for; it is a risk-free method of customer acquisition that is gaining strength as an operational method for affiliate marketers.

Operating through a network structure of affiliates, the Customer Acquisition Exchange tracks the affiliates who earn commission from your normal day-to-day online shopping, and then awards your affiliated merchant a customer (you have just earned a commission) in return for every online purchase you make.

In reality, you just earned a commission that you would not otherwise have earned. You can consider this as a rebate on the purchase that you would have made anyway. Customer Acquisition Exchanges help affiliates increase their commissionable sales through customer reciprocation much in the same way as the reputable link exchanges help related websites increase traffic through reciprocal linking.

It makes sense and requires little additional effort. It is simply a change in mindset from being solely an online promoter to also an online buyer. You can use that fact as leverage and have access to take advantage of commissions you would have missed. One of the best exchanges can be found at the site of Spinning Tornado at:

<http://www.spinningtornado.com/content/customer-reciprocation.php>

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Organizing Your Time and Your Priorities

Contrary to what many people who are new to the affiliate marketing business may know, this business existed before the Internet. At that time, the work was tedious; your only tools were your business card, the telephone and the sales letter. In addition, it was a real challenge to get your hands on updated information about the products and services you were promoting.

But the advent of the Internet changed all of that. Now with the help of technology, you can deliver your affiliate marketing message to thousands of people at once.

Now that you have planned and organized the structure of your affiliate marketing business and created your website, your next step is to create a project management outline to handle the day to day task of affiliate marketing:

1. Consider first the personal goals that you were asked to outline in the first section of Affiliate Marketing from A to Z; is this a part-time or full-time commitment?
2. Look at your personal work style; are you an early bird or a night owl?
3. Are there any other time commitments that you need to consider, such as activities with children?

These three pieces of information will give you an overview of how to organize yourself and your affiliate marketing tasks. Here is an example of the daily project management tasks of a dedicated affiliate marketer:

1. Set a start time that you can manage consistently. Begin your day with an update on what has happened since you went offline.

Start with your e-mail, read each one that is newsworthy and follow through with the appropriate action, i.e., reply, file or delete. Resist the temptation of the “I’ll do it later” monster, which only wastes time. Make a practice of completing whatever you start, i.e., if you open the email, be ready to do whatever it takes to take it to the next level.

2. Pay special attention to the e-mails that have questions to answer from your website visitors, they are very important and should be answered within 24 hours of their request. Nothing turns off a customer faster than an unanswered email. You have probably experienced for yourself how annoying it is not to get an answer to a question, so this has to be a priority. It is a good idea to set up an auto responder to notify the customer that their email has been received and their question is in the process of being answered.
3. Next it is time to review your affiliate marketing program information. There may be new developments or products that you need to add to your website or information that you want to pass on to your website visitors online or in an e-mail.
4. Review your affiliate marketing program statistics for clicks, sales, leads and commission payments. If you have advertising campaigns running that generate independent stats, you need to include them for evaluation of effectiveness.
5. On to your website logs. First make sure that all of your pages are responding properly when requested. Investigate any errors that are found. Second check your visitor statistics and compare them with the previous week and month.

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6. If your website design is 1 year old, it is time to start thinking about how to revise it. Remember Internet time is much different than time in the physical world. 1 year for an online business is like 5 years for a brick and mortar business. Giving a well-designed site a fresh look does not have to be a radical change, the point is to keep your visitors interested.
7. Studies on website design show that a well designed site can increase visitor activity on your site, i.e., increased subscriptions, forum registrations or giveaway requests, as well as boost your affiliate conversion rates. Make a list of the areas that most need improvement, i.e., adding a syndicated news feed, as well as what simple change can you make to improve the overall look of the site, i.e., border color
8. You begin the update of your newsletter and content articles for your website, including the latest developments or added benefits to your affiliate marketing product or service.
9. With that section completed, you can focus on showing appreciation to those who have helped you in joint ventures, link exchanges or other promotions and sales efforts. Remember that the Internet is a community; giving credit where credit is due can bring more prospects to your affiliate marketing website.
10. The last section of your newsletter or content article can be devoted to writing recommendations for those who want credible sources for the products being promoted.
Along with some success tips for affiliate marketing newbies. This accomplishes two objectives at the same time; you promote your product and the program.
11. You end your newsletter with a brief description of the topics that will be discussed in the next issue.

12. Now it is time to place your submissions to search engines, article and affiliate program directories to support your marketing efforts. These directories are the means by which you can attract people to joining your affiliate program, spread the word about your site to interested buyers and gain greater exposure for your site in general. You can use these same publications to keep up to date with the newly introduced products.

13. If you have sub affiliates working with you, make contact with them now and review their progress fairly and accurately. This includes phone orders and postal mails that need attention. Discuss their needs for resources; are the ads, banners and articles working for them? Do they need additional information?
Do they have recommendations or suggestions? As you begin to have more direct referrals remember that it is important to stay visible and accessible.

14. The issues that your affiliates discuss with you can be posted for feedback in your affiliate marketing forum. This gives you a chance to get first hand experience and information that you can pass along to your affiliates and use yourself. If your discussion group is interactive, you will be able to share tips and advice in real time, which is an excellent good will builder and may motivate others to join your program.

Does this day sound overwhelming to you? Okay, we admit that it may not be possible to do all of this in one day, but the point was to give you a realistic view of the type of daily tasks that makes affiliate marketing such a challenging and rewarding business.

MAXIMIZING CUSTOMER CONFIDENCE

Communicating Benefits and Solutions

One of the best ways to encourage people to buy a product through your affiliate marketing business is to gain their trust and to establish a high level of credibility.

Once you manage this, the products you support as an affiliate marketer will look more legitimate in your visitors' eyes.

However, before you can use trust and credibility to your advantage, you must develop a basis for it. Ethical business practices, solid quality products or services, informative website content, well-written materials, good marketing, third party testimonials and other strategies are all components that work together to help elevate you to a level of trust.

From the thousands of ways you can increase credibility, do not lose sight of the importance of what to do once you have it. Ideally, a solid reputation will make it easier for visitors to take the time to click on your referral link.

The more positive exposure you gain through your various affiliate marketing activities, the easier it will be to make sales. In depth knowledge of your product or service enables you to make personal recommendations for them.

This point is related to the affiliate marketing program research section of Affiliate Marketing from A to Z. If you take the time to research your affiliate program thoroughly, you can endorse them without fear.

If you take a shy approach to endorsing the products of your affiliate marketing business, you are short-circuiting your income potential as well. Acting in this manner may allow you to earn some money, but unless you are willing to commit and commit fully to your action plan, and make a name for yourself the profits that could be yours will be going to someone else.

So select your affiliate marketing products on these criteria:

1. Would you use this product?
2. Would you recommend this product to a family member?

If the answer is yes, use the product and study it. Once you have first hand experience with the product, your website content and promotional copy about the product will have a more personal touch. There is a big difference between generic sales copy and a personal review.

And what your website visitors want to see is how the product may be useful for them; what type of experience could they expect from this product? Rather than “Over 1,000 people have used our product”, meanwhile your visitor is asking, “Who are they?”

Choosing products that you believe in and use yourself give you the confidence to put your name on the line and personalize your offer. This is one of the fastest ways to boost your customers’ confidence and any promotion you create in this way is sure to have a good response.

People understand that although a marketer has an incentive to endorse a product, but they also know that only a few of them will go the distance be willing to risk their reputation for it.

It is up to you to decide which type of affiliate marketer you are going to be. Do you want to project the image of an insecure, frightened individual without a face and name or is the image of yourself a person who is an informed, credible and respected expert that provides beneficial, firsthand reviews of product use? The first choice dooms you to a substandard existence while the second choice swings open the doors of opportunity.

Maximizing customer confidence starts with you, and as an affiliate marketer you want your visitors to click on your referral link and give you the opportunity to earn a commission. The more receptive you are to your visitors needs for information and solutions to the issues that concern them, the more receptive they will be to your offer.

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As an affiliate marketer, your primary tool is the written word; website content, newsletters, solo ads, sales pages, auto responders, ezines, these are all written materials. Content is important to your visitors and that makes it incredibly important to learn how to use words to your advantage.

Writing content calls for you to play many roles; storyteller, educator, advocate all of these hats you may have to wear at one time or another. The bottom line is that information rules the day if you want to have a successful online affiliate marketing business.

Whether you do it yourself or hire a pro, you will certainly need to keep your eye focused on quality. And with articles the key to whether it will deliver the goods is in the headline.

Pay special attention to the headline for any advertising piece you write, for this is where people make their decision to continue reading or to push that button with the green arrow within seconds of reaching your page. First impressions are always the strongest, so take care in handling this powerful tool and make it give the impression you want to project.

Remember this: What is the first thing your visitors see when they visit your web page? It's the headline-and it has to get their attention and hold their attention for it to work.

And just how do you create a headline that does that? Headlines have to stop the reader in their tracks and make them think. While they are thinking the clock is ticking and with an effective headline you can keep the visitor on your website discovering the answer to the question that started them thinking.

Make your headline strong. Who wants to read a wimpy headline? Make your headline proactive. Words like "if" and "may" are not words for a headline. The headline is the domain of the power word - the kind of word that will sparks interest and drives people to take action.

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The headline has to tell your customers enough to keep them interested. The headline of “Satisfaction Guaranteed”, makes the customers just enough information to motivate them to keep reading to find out what you are talking about.

There is no magic formula for winning headlines. Different situations call for different strategies. The important part is that the headline creates a compulsion to keep on reading.

Your name and your words, these are your two most powerful tools to build customer confidence and your affiliate sales.

Make the most of both of them by using quality content with strong, honest headlines that capture attention and keep your visitors reading until the very last word.

BUILDING TRUST IN YOUR BUSINESS

Using Information as a Sales Tool

Affiliate Marketing A - Z is focused on helping you succeed in affiliate marketing. Whether you are a “newbie” or an experienced affiliate marketer, one factor applies to you both: finding customers will not be easy.

There are many more stories of broken Internet business dreams than ones of success. Many people have cleaned out their bank accounts in pursuit of the “overnight riches” that is highly touted on the radio, television and Internet, only to find that the overnight riches belonged to the one pitching the program.

As a result of these types of experiences, the individuals who have decided to change their method of operation are coming to terms with the fact that their dreams can be realized by using methods that work in concert with factual information, products and services that have market appeal and techniques that address the way people make their purchase decisions.

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If the challenge of finding customers has you wondering what to do, you have done exactly what thousands of others had done: started to search for information. This brings us to the point of this article: how to use information as a marketing sales tool.

Article writing for the Internet is experiencing a huge boost of popularity. Not because articles were not read before, but because for some reason, people lost sight of the primary reason why people use the Internet: to find information.

No matter what product or service you choose for your affiliate marketing business, the fact still remains that you must give people information about it so that they can make a purchase decision. No one is going to buy a product without know how it works, what it will do for them and how much it costs.

And using graphic images and flashy headlines no longer satisfies the savvy Internet shopper. For those individuals who shop online regularly, they have long since come to understand the dynamics of the electronic marketplace.

Promoting a product or service by virtual of a low price alone won't work either, because the marketplace is global and the competition is such that some merchants will sell an item at an incredibly low price because they know they will sell huge quantities of the goods. If you are subscribing to every newsletter, ezine and e-book in sight to find the magic formula to gain customers, you might be in for a disappointment. The truth of the matter is that it takes a combination of factors to find, retain and service customers.

Operating a business online has as many advantages and disadvantages, as a brick and mortar business has to face. The challenge is to understand the differences in the dynamics between these two ways of doing business and apply the correct set of principles to make it work.

For example, in the physical world, a customer enters a store that has an item they are interested in buying. There is a salesperson present to answer their questions and

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demonstrate how the product works. If the person is satisfied, with all that they have heard, seen and experienced to the point where they are ready to purchase the product a sale takes place.

On the other hand, shopping on the Internet is a completely different experience. And this is the first thing that many affiliate marketers lose sight of. Shopping is a social experience. When a person visits your site, they are greeted by text and images instead of a human being. Even if there is a picture of a person on the site, the visitor has no way of knowing if that is really the person who operates the site or a model.

This underscores the greatest challenge that everyone who is working online has to face; how to build trust in the hearts and minds of the people who need our products or services. This is the main reason why many online businesses cannot find the customers that they desire.

Online marketing is a process that cannot be accomplished in one fell swoop. It takes time to establish trust when we are face-to-face, why do we think it will be easier to do this when we are on the Internet?

There are many methods you can use to promote your affiliate marketing business, but none of them will work if they are only used one time. The rate of information exchange on the Internet is as fast as lightning, if you expect someone to remember your banner that flashed at them once last month and come to your website and buy, you are in for a rude awakening.

You can spend hundreds of dollars on banner advertising and still not be any closer to building the interest or the trust necessary to make them click their mouse and visit your website.

The statistics for Internet shopping show that for every two hundred visitors to a site, only 1 will result in a sale. But wait, the statistics gets even better. On the average, there are only 5 sales per thousand visitors.

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Obviously, you cannot rely on banner advertising to bring the customers you need, so what CAN you do to get them to your site? Give them what they want: Information. Not just information about your product or service, or information about you, but gives them the information that they want by researching their interests and addresses their concerns. Give them information on how to use the product or service you have to offer to make their lives better.

Most marketing polls suggest that it will take you seven exposures before you will have earned enough trust to get a sale online or offline. What that means is that your potential customer must see your name and your ads a minimum of seven times before you can expect their interest to peak enough to give you a second look.

People are being bombarded by advertising images and messages all the time. On the radio, the television, and the Internet. This is what makes marketing through information more effective. If you construct your article in the same tone as you would talk to a friend who has come to you for advice about a problem they have, you will begin to gain the trust of whoever reads that article.

There are more than 200 million people online; the chance of the same person seeing the same advertising banner depends completely on the amount of money in your marketing budget. But if a person needs to know the definition of a word, they are more likely to go back to dictionary.com because they know they will find the information they are looking for there.

The same holds true for your affiliate marketing website. If you focus your attention on defining your niche on the Internet, and then work toward becoming the source of information that is relevant to all of the people in that niche, you are now in the position to obtain some bona fide paying customers for your affiliate marketing products and services.

Focusing your attention this way will bring you completely different results than the scatter shot advertising approach. The marketers who throw an ad on the Internet hoping to reach

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as many people as possible and then move on to the next ad or next advertising medium, do not seem to realize the impression that they are making in the minds of those who witness their methods.

It is not possible to build trust with this type of approach, because the chances of the same person seeing their advertising more than one is astronomical and for that same person to see the same ad seven times nearly impossible.

The written word is the best way to implement the “Rule of Seven”. Your affiliate marketing website is your primary vehicle to deliver information to a group of visitors consistently.

Newsletters and ezines delivered by email is the second most popular method of building trust in your affiliate products and services. As a publisher, with just seven newsletters you have delivered your message seven different ways, talked about seven different uses or features of your product.

But the challenge is to first get the subscribers or website visitors and then to deliver informative content that is different every time. Once you begin to build a mailing list of subscribers, it is fairly easy to keep them.

Installing a subscription box on your site is definitely worthwhile. In addition to the subscribers from your site, there are newsletters and ezines you can submit your copy to for publication.

There are other ways to spread the word, Let me suggest a few names to you:

- Wintress Odom
- Sandra Bell
- Marc Erve
- Seamus Penn
- Nicole Allard
- Colin Todhunter

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- Ira Wolfman
- Lionel Hartley

What do these 8 people have in common? They are all published writers on the Internet, specializing in supplying content on everything involving Internet technology. They are all people who publish free-reprint articles to be distributed to publishers the world over. Each of them provides top-notch content that appeal to a much larger audience.

A recent Yahoo has underscored the importance of quality content! The study stated: Content is King! Most site visitors are looking for information of some kind when they go to a site or subscribe to an ezine.

Building trust does indeed take time and these publishers and webmasters understand that the best way to attract and keep visitor traffic is to provide them with what they want. By using free-reprint articles, they are able to provide their readers and their site visitors with the high-quality content subscribers and surfers demand. And in the process you are establishing a familiarity with your product or service and how it can help your visitors to accomplish their goals.

Writing about your product or service does not have to be difficult, as we mentioned before, the best style of writing these types of articles is in a friendly, conversational tone. You are addressing a specific problem, giving a recommendation to the person that you feel confident will provide the solution for them.

There are also hundreds of articles that are available to use as content for your website, newsletter or ezine and if you want to hire someone to write articles for you, there are several agencies that you can contact for this service.

It all adds up the same: it doesn't matter whether you have been operating an online business for 1 month or 10 years, or you are looking to find your first customer or your hundredth customer, you have to give people the information that they need to establish a level of trust in you.

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The choice of methods is up to you; of writing yourself, obtaining free reprint content or hiring a writer for yourself can all provide the same result – quality information about the subject that interests your prospective customer the most.

Operating an affiliate marketing website means that you have to incorporate your information in a format that will help you convert visitors into sales.

You want as many people as possible to click your affiliate links, so the best strategy to accomplish this goal is to make it very easy for them to do that. Using phrases like “have a click here” within your content about your product or service can work wonders.

For the real estate industry it is Location, Location, Location, but for Internet businesses it is Content. Content. Content! The evidence has been reviewed and the verdict is in. Visitors want good quality content and lots of it. So give them what they want. It can be in a variety of forms; articles, tips, newsletter archives and details of each product or service on your site.

And now for a word about images. They are pretty, some of them even dance, but here is a clue; the fewer images on your website the better. Don't worry, your visitors will not miss them, they have seen plenty of graphics on their way to your site.

In addition, too many graphics will make your site load slowly. As an affiliate you want your visitor to click your affiliate link, but if your web site takes forever to load, you may lose that visitor to your competition and they may never return.

Make sure that your website design uses a simple layout with a prominent, easy to find link to each major page on your site. When your visitor comes to your site, show respect for their time; make the experience as enjoyable and uncomplicated as possible.

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If you offer a newsletter, make it very easy for people to sign up by having the subscription details on every page of your site. As you publish your newsletters, offer your visitors a newsletter archives section on your site.

The content on your affiliate marketing website should all be focused on a theme: if you are an affiliate for a beauty company, your website content can be supplied by 10 different writers – as long as the articles are all beauty related. For the articles you write, include your affiliate links at the bottom of each page your articles appear on.

Tell people about yourself through a 'Contact' page. Remember that you have to take every opportunity to build trust with your visitors. Make yourself accessible and they will instantly feel more comfortable and more likely to click your affiliate links!

Stay alert to the Internet technology changes, particularly the search engines and web hosting. Take time and research the different incentive that you can use to persuade your visitors to click your affiliate links.

Review your affiliate marketing website design every six months. Incorporate new design elements on a regular basis, visitors like to see new things, and updating your site regularly will encourage them to come to your site more often.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Staying Ahead of the Competition

Wherever there is opportunity, there will be a demand for supply. Affiliate marketing is generating thousands of dollars of income to individuals who are making this their business and taking that business seriously.

While there is a tremendous demand, for affiliate programs, it is not so easy to decide which one is best for you. Using the tips you have read so far in *Affiliate Marketing from A to Z* gives you a lot of information you can use in making this decision. But the one topic that we are going to focus on in this section should be considered as well: researching your competition.

Most people already have an idea of a product or service they would like to promote and sell when they begin to explore affiliate marketing programs. Generally, in the beginning while you “learn the ropes” of affiliate marketing, it is a good idea to use the KISS rule: “Keep It Simple Sam”.

By far the most popular item on the Internet- free and sold - are information and software products such as utility programs, e-books, e-course, downloadable CD or audio programs.

Their popularity with affiliate marketers is easy to understand; you do not need a lot of money or space for inventory to get started. Consider your interests or expertise and the scope of the product, who would be interested in the subject matter. For informational products it is best to choose a subject that give you room to specialize such as:

- money management
- relationship issues
- business operation
- health and fitness

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These general topics appeal to most people. From this point you can begin to narrow your focus, using the Targeted Niche Marketing techniques. From the point of expertise it is important to keep in mind what you know by now is your motivation. One of the reasons you are reading Affiliate Marketing from A to Z is because you are ready for a change, for a different experience.

Otherwise you would continue what you were doing before. Enthusiasm is contagious, it is easy to talk about the topics that interest or excite your imagination. Here is where you can find the answer to the question of which information products do you want to promote and sell in your affiliate marketing business?

It makes sense to choose something that interests you, because you will be spending many hours learning about how to accomplish the goal of creating the income you desire with this business. Here is your opportunity to break away from the tedious working for a paycheck doing tasks that you do not like.

Once you have made your choice of what you want to learn about and help others learn about, you will be surprised by the liberating feeling you will experience after you make this decision.

And this passion for your work is a vital ingredient that will carry through to your target audience; in your website content and your other promotional material, the life and vitality that you have for your product will be felt. You will be more believable because you are sincere in what you are saying. As time goes by this energy will be instrumental in building trust and sales with your audience.

But now, let's look at the other side of the situation; your competition. Because informational products are easy to promote and sell, you will find that there are many others who share your perspective and in many cases, your passion for their affiliate marketing business. Many of these affiliate marketers have been in the business for years. How can you compete with them?

You do not have to, it is much more to your advantage to study what they are doing, how they do it and then test their methods to see if they will work for you. Keeping the idea of targeted niche marketing in mind, research your competition and the product they are promoting.

Visit their website and study the design, sign up for their newsletter and review their sale material. Check their website stats on Alexa.com, run a search on Google and see where their site ranks. If you take the time to do this type of research on your product, competition and prospective customer base, you will be in a better position to begin earning an income once you website is up and running.

It is also important to keep your finger on the pulse of the events that affect whatever topic of interest you choose to use as the basis of your affiliate marketing business. For example, if you are fascinated by video production, it is a good idea to subscribe to newsfeeds that cover this area to stay current on the new developments, products and services being offered and install them on your website for your visitors.

Understanding that you have competition is one thing. Approaching your customer base with confidence comes from offering them something that the competition is lacking. But be aware, that just like you are watching the competition, they are watching you as well.

In operating your business in an electronic environment, your website, product and services are just as accessible to them for review as theirs is to you. Don't be surprised if you find yourself in the game of "who can do it better". Take the challenge in stride and enjoy the ride!

AFFILIATE PROGRAM RESOURCES

Article Resource Sites

Marketing Seek: <http://www.marketing-seek.com>

Idea Marketers: <http://www.ideamarketers.com>

Ezine Publishing

World Wide Learn: <http://www.worldwidelearn.com/ezine-publishing.htm>

Ezine Directories (Submissions)

Ezine Directory <http://www.ezine-dir.com>

Ezine Search Database <http://www.ezinesearch.com>

New List Newsletter Directory: <http://new-list.com/>

New Jour Electronic Journals and Newsletters <http://gort.ucsd.edu/newjour/submit.html>

New List <http://new-list.com/instructions>

Newsletter Access <http://www.newsletteraccess.com>

Tile Internet Reference <http://www.tile.net>

Marketing Resources

Marketing Tips <http://www.marketingtips.com>

Affiliate Marketing <http://www.affiliatemarketing.co.uk>

Dotfactor.com Internet Marketing Tools <http://www.dotfactor.com>

Agora Business Center: <http://www.agora-business-center.com>

Home Business Mastery <http://www.paulbarrs.com>

Internet Marketing Network <http://www.internet-marketing-network.com>

Profits.cc <http://www.profits.cc>

Selling-It <http://selling-it.com>

Affiliate Directories

Associate Programs <http://www.associateprograms.com>

2 Tier <http://www.2-tier.com>

Affiliate Match <http://www.affiliatemark.com>

Lending Affiliates <http://www.lendingaffiliates.com/links.htm>

Affiliate Seek <http://www.affiliateseek.co.uk>

Other Affiliate Resources

Affiliate Tips <http://www.affiliatetips.com>

ReveNews <http://www.revenews.com>

Webmaster Affiliates <http://www.webmaster-affiliates.net>

VPSource <http://www.vpsource.com>

New Affiliates <http://www.new-affiliates.com>

Web Site Resources

Virtual Promote: <http://www.virtualpromote.com/tools/>

HTML Goodies <http://www.htmlgoodies.com>

Downloads, Software, Freeware

CNET <http://www.download.com>

Tucows Dowloads <http://www.tucows.com>

Intelligent Global Home Business System: <http://www.1intelligent-work-at-home-business.com/>

US Incorporation Services

Active Filings <http://www.activefilings.com>

Traffic Building Systems

Webmaster Resources: http://www.webmasterresources.com/website_traffic_programs/

Search Engines / Directories

Altavista: <http://www.altavista.com>

AOL <http://www.aol.com>

Excite <http://www.excite.com>

Fast <http://www.alltheweb.com>

Google <http://www.google.com>

Hotbot <http://www.hotbot.com>

Lycos <http://www.lycos.com>

Netscape <http://www.netscape.com>

Northern Light <http://www.northernlight.com>

Open Directory <http://www.dmoz.org>

WebCrawler <http://www.webcrawler.com>

Yahoo <http://www.yahoo.com>

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Important Definitions in Affiliate Marketing

Ad Blocking – Method of blocking website advertisements in image formats

AdWords – Google's Pay Per Click (PPC) advertising program.

Affiliate – An individual, web site owner or company that market and promote products or services for a merchant for a commission rate for referring clicks, leads, or sales.

Affiliate Agreement – Terms that governs the relationship between a merchant and an affiliate.

Affiliate Link – Usually a piece of HTML code place on an affiliate website letting the merchant know that an transaction or visitor has been sent to the website

Affiliate Marketing – A revenue sharing arrangement between online merchants and distributors (affiliates) in which the affiliate earns a commission for producing a sale, lead or click for the merchant's site

Affiliate Network – A third party providing services to affiliate merchants and affiliates, including tracking technology, reporting tools, and payment processing.

Affiliate Program – Any arrangement through which a merchant pays a commission to an affiliate for generating clicks, leads, or sales from links located on the affiliate's site. Also know as associate, partner, referral, and revenue sharing programs.

Affiliate Program Directory – Information about a collection of affiliate programs. Directories include information about commission rate, number of affiliates, and commission structure.

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Affiliate Program Manager – The person responsible for administering an affiliate program. Duties should include maintaining regular contact with affiliates, program marketing and responding to queries about the program.

Affiliate Solution Provider – Company that provides the software and services to administer an affiliate program.

Affiliate URL or Link – Special code in a graphic image or text link that identifies a visitor as having arrived from a specific affiliate site.

Animated GIF – Graphic image in GIF98a format with a movement effect applied

Associate – Synonym for ‘affiliate’

Auto – Approve – Term used during the application process where all applicants are automatically approved for an affiliate program

Auto Responder – Software or online application that sends replies automatically, without human intervention. For example, if you had a page of marketing information, you could ask prospects to send email to “info@yourname.com,” the address of your auto responder. The auto responder will automatically email the person your information document. Many auto responders will, at the same time, send an email to you, listing the requester’s address tool for conducting online commerce.

Banner Ad – A graphic image used for advertising in various sizes. One of the most popular forma of website advertisement

Blog – Acronym for ‘web log’, a blog is basically a journal that is available on the web. The act of updating a blog is referred to as ‘blogging’ and those who keep blogs are known as ‘bloggers’.

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Browser – A program that allows you to access and read hypertext documents on the World Wide Web.

CJ – Commission Junction. An Affiliate Network

Click Fraud – Click fraud, also called pay – per – click fraud, is the practice of artificially generating traffic to advertisers' sites either manually or through the use of automated clicking programs (called hitbots). The advertiser pays for this traffic, which has no potential for generating revenue; however, the scammer receives a percentage of the pay – per – click fees paid by the advertiser.

Click Fraud Detection/Monitoring – Service that provides independent monitoring of clicks from your PPC campaigns. If you notice fraudulent activity, Google or Yahoo!/Overture may provide a refund.

Click Through – When a user clicks on a link and arrives at a Web site.

Click Through Rate/Ratio (CTR) – Percentage of visitors who click through to a merchant's Web site. Also used to identify how often a visitor makes a sale or order after clicking through.

Clickbank – Popular online billing and marketing service for the development of affiliate programs, and the largest distributor of digital information products on the Internet. One of the easiest affiliate marketing programs to use.

Cloaking – Hiding of page content or affiliate linking code.

Commission – Also known as a bounty or referral fee, the income an affiliate is paid for generating a sale, lead or click – through to a merchant's web site.

Co – branding – Where affiliates are able include their own logo and/or colors on the merchant's site.

Contextual Link – Placement of affiliate links within related text.

Conversion – When one of your visitors makes a purchase on the merchant's site... i.e. converts from 'visitor' to 'buyer'.

Conversion Rate (CR) – The percentage of visits to your site that convert to a sale. I.e. If 1 person in every hundred visitors to your site makes a purchase; your conversion rate is 1:100 or 1 percent.

Cookie – A cookie is a piece of information sent by a Web Server to a Web Browser that the Browser software is expected to save and to send back to the Server whenever the browser makes additional requests from the Server. You may set your browser to either accept or not accept cookies. Cookies can contain user preferences, login or registration information, and/or "shopping cart" information. When a cookie has been saved to a visitor's computer, the browser sends a request to a Server; the Server uses the information to return customized information. Cookies are stored as text files on the visitor's computer to keep track of information relevant to merchant website.

Cost Per Acquisition/Action (CPA): The amount you pay to acquire a customer.

Cost Per Click (CPC): The amount you pay when a surfer clicks on one of your listings.

Cost Per Lead (CPL) – The amount you pay to acquire a lead

Cost Per Order (CPO) – The amount you pay to process and delivery an order

Cost Per Thousand (CPM): The amount you pay per 1,000 impressions of a banner or button.

Creative – The promotional tools advertisers use to draw in users. Examples are text links, towers, buttons, badges, email copy, pop – ups, etc.

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Cross Linking – Linking a group of domains, usually your own, to each other for the purpose of increasing its popularity with search engines. Excessive cross – linking may lead to your site being penalized by Google or Yahoo!

Contextual Link – Integration of affiliate link within related text. Commonly used in articles and email newsletters

Conversion Rate/Ratio – Percentage of clicks that result in a commissionable sale or lead

Customer Bounty – Commission amount paid to affiliate for every new client or customer that they direct to merchant

Disclaimer – A disclaimer states the terms under which the site or work may be used and gives information relating to what the copyright owner believes to be a breach of his/her/their copyright.

In some cases you may wish to permit certain activities, in others you may wish to withhold all rights, or require the user to apply for a license to carry out certain actions.

Domain Name – The unique name that identifies an Internet site that is linked to a specific IP address. URLs to identify particular Web pages. Every domain name has a suffix that indicates which top-level domain (TLD) it belongs to. There are only a limited number of such domains. For example:

.com – Commercial business

.org – Organizations (nonprofit)

.net – Network organizations

.ca – Canada

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Because the Internet is based on IP addresses, not domain names, every Web server require a Domain Name System (DNS) server to translate domain names into IP addresses.

Doorway Page – Also known as bridge pages, jump page, bridge page, gateway page, entry pages, portals or portal pages, these pages are used to improve search engine placement. A Web page designed specifically for the purpose of gaining high placement in a search engine's rankings. An SEO technique, the doorway is meant to capture the attention of a search engine's spider by containing keywords and phrases that the spider will pick up on. Often the doorway page contains hidden text in order to load the page with occurrences of a specific keyword or phrase. Doorways typically are programmed with a fast meta refresh or a redirect that brings the user to the page that the Web site actually wants the user to visit, or the doorway will have a way for the user to manually click through to the next site. Caution: some search engines will drop a site entirely if the existence of doorway/gateway pages is detected. Read what Google has to say about doorway pages here: <http://www.google.com/webmasters/seo.html> .

E-mail – Electronic mail, a message sent from one e-mail account to another e-mail account through the Internet. An email address has three components: the identifying name of the account, such as "tombrown", the "@" symbol stands for "at" and t

E-mail Link – An affiliate link to a merchant site contained in an email newsletter or signature file.

E-mail Marketing – Promotion of products and service with email

Email Signature – Also called a "signature file", this is a brief message embedded at the end of every email that a person sends.

Endorsement Letter – Also known as a "product review", an endorsement is a promotional statement outlining features and benefits for a particular product or service.

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EPC – Term used by the Commission Junction affiliate network, this is your ‘average earnings per 100 clicks’. This number is calculated by taking commissions earned divided by the total number of clicks times 100.

Exclusivity – A merchant that stipulates ‘exclusivity’ in their affiliate agreement usually prohibits the affiliate from promoting competing products on their site.

Ezine –The short term for an Electronic Magazine, a web site that is modeled after a print magazine. Some ezines are simply electronic versions of existing print magazines, whereas others exist only in their digital format. Most ezines are advertiser – supported but a few charge a subscription.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – Lists common questions and answers about the products and services offered on a website.

FFA – Free for all links, also referred to as “link farms”. A bulletin board style listing of website links organized into categories.

Forum – Online community, where visitors read and post topics on common interests.

File Transfer Protocol (FTP) – A method or protocol for exchanging files over the Internet. FTP works in the same way as HTTP for transferring Web pages from a server to a user’s browser and SMTP for transferring electronic mail across the Internet in that, like these technologies, FTP uses the Internet’s TCP/IP protocols to enable data transfer.

Google Adsense – A Pay Per Click affiliate program that uses contextual and graphic image ads that are linked to targeted page content.

Graphic Interchange Format (GIF) – An image file format, suitable for simple files. A JPEG is the preferred format for storing photographs.

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Hit – A hit is a single request from for a single item on a web server. To load a page with 5 graphics would count as 6 ‘hits’, 1 for the page plus 1 for each of the graphics. Hits therefore are not a very good measurement of traffic to a website.

Home Page – Your primary website page, also called the “index” or “landing” page. This is the first page anyone would see on your web site.

Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) – The most common “language” used to create documents (web pages) to be displayed on the Internet.

Impression – An advertising metric that indicates how many times an advertising link is displayed.

In – house – Term used to describe a Merchant who provides the services required to manage their own affiliate program.

Internet Service Provider (ISP) – The Company that provides the capability for you to connect your computer to the Internet.

IP Address – A unique number consisting of 4 parts separated by dots, e.g. 165.115.245.2. Every machine on the Internet has a unique IP address.

JavaScript – A programming language developed by Sun Microsystems designed for writing programs that can be safely downloaded to your computer through the Internet and immediately run without fear of viruses or other harm to your computer or files. Java requires a browser compatible with Java. Using small Java programs, Web pages can include animations, calculators, and other features.

Joint Venture (JV) – A general partnership typically formed to undertake a particular business transaction or project rather than one intended to continue indefinitely.

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Keyword – The search term that a user may enter at a search engine. For example, someone who wants to find a site that sells printer paper might enter 'printer paper' at a search engine.

Keyword Density – The ratio between the keyword being searched for and the total number of words that appear on your web page. If your keyword only occurs, say, once, in a page that has twenty thousand words, then it has a density of 0.005 percent.

Keyword Selector Tool – Displays how many times a certain keyword was searched for at Overture (Yahoo! Search Marketing) during a given month.

Lifetime Commissions – An affiliate program that pays a commission on EVERY product or service that the customer buys from the merchant, once you've sent the referral, i.e. the customer is yours 'for life'.

Lifetime Value – The total amount of money that a customer could possibly spend with a particular company during his or her lifetime.

Link Popularity – The total number of qualified Web sites linking to your Web site.

LS – LinkShare, An Affiliate Network

Mailing List – A Mailing List is a collection of names and addresses used by an individual or an organization to send material to multiple recipients. The term is often extended to include the people subscribed to such a list, so the group of subscribers is referred to as "the mailing list", or simply "the list".

Manual Approval – Affiliate applicants are manually approved, usually by affiliate manager, for the affiliate program.

Merchant – Also known as an advertiser. The business or online vendor of products or services that offers an affiliate program.

Meta Tags – Information placed in the header of an HTML page, which is not visible to site visitors.

Multilevel Marketing (MLM) – Selling products by using independent distributors and allowing these distributors to build and manage their own sales force by recruiting, motivating, supplying, and training others to sell products. The distributors' compensation includes their own sales and a percentage of the sales of their sales group also called a "down line."

Newsgroup – A newsgroup is a discussion that takes place online, devoted to a particular topic. The discussion takes the form of electronic messages called "postings" that anyone with a newsreader (standard with most browsers) can post or read.

Newbie – A person who is inexperienced in a particular endeavor.

Niche Marketing – Refers to the technique of focusing on a narrowly defined target market segment.

Opt – in – Consent given to receive information by e-mail such as newsletter or ezines.

Opt -out– Withdrawal or cancellation of the consent given to receive information by e-mail.

Paid Inclusion (PI) – Guaranteed listing is a search engine for a fee

Parasite – A system or affiliate that overwrites other affiliate cookies to steal their commissions.

Pay Per Click (PPC) – One of the first affiliate marketing compensation where an affiliate receives a commission for each click (visitor) they refer to a merchant's web site.

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Pay Per Lead (PPL) – An affiliate program in which an affiliate receives a commission for each sales lead that they generate for a merchant web site. Examples include completed surveys, contest or sweepstakes entries, downloaded software demos, or free trials.

Pay Per Sale (PPS) – Programs in which the affiliate receives a commission for each sale of a product or service that they refer to a merchant's web site.

Payment Threshold – Minimum amount of commission earned before payment is made.

Pop Under Ad – Advertisement displayed in a new browser window behind or underneath the current browser window

Pop Up Ad – Advertisement displayed in a new browser window

Portable Document Format (PDF) – A distribution format developed by Adobe Corporation to allow electronic information to be transferred between various types of computers. The software that allows this transfer is called Acrobat.

Profit – The amount of money you earn from your sales. For example, if you sell 10 videos at \$47.00 each, and each costs \$10 to produce and ship, your profit would be \$37.00 per video or \$370.00 total.

Plug -In – A small piece of software that adds features to a larger piece of software.

Portal – A term used to describe a Web site that is intended to be used as a main “point of entry” to the Web. I.e. MSN.com is a portal site.

Privacy Policy – A privacy policy establishes how a company collects and uses information about its customers' accounts and transactions.

Raw Visitor – The term used for every time a page is viewed.

Reciprocal Linking – The process of exchanging links with other websites to increase search engine popularity.

Recurring Commissions – Earn commissions both on the initial sale and subsequent purchases of the same product or service. Examples of affiliate programs that may pay recurring commissions are online dating services and web hosting services.

Referring URL – The website address where the visitor came from to reach your site.

Residual Earnings – Programs that pay affiliates for each sale a shopper from their sites makes at the merchant's site for every purchase made by the customer.

Return on Investment (ROI) – Return on Investment. Percentage of income earned vs. total investment.

Revenue – Total income for your sales. For example, if you sell 50 e – books at \$27.00 each, your revenue would be \$1350.00.

ROAS – Return on Ads Spent. Percentage of income vs. expenses generated by advertising.

SAS – Share-A-Sale, An Affiliate Network

Scumware – Software that contains additional 'features' for the purpose of displaying advertisements. This software will modify web pages from their original content to put ads on the user's computer screen. Examples of scumware propagators included: Gator, Ezula, Surf+ and Imesh.

SEM – Search Engine Marketing.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) – The process of choosing keywords and keyword phrases relevant to your site or page on your site, and placing those keywords within pages so that the site ranks well when those keywords are searched upon.

Search Engine Results Page (SERP) – The position or listing a search engine returns in response to a search query.

Search Term Suggestion Tool – Displays how many times a certain keyword was searched for at Overture during a given month.

SPAM – The term that is used to describe unsolicited commercial e-mail. Also “junk” e-mail to equate it with the paper junk mail that comes through the US Mail. In response to the overwhelming number of complaints about unsolicited e-mail, the CAN-SPAM Act was passed in 2004 which sets specific guidelines for commercial mailers.

For a complete description of the rules, regulations and penalties related to the sending of e-mail for marketing purposes, see the website of the Federal Trade Commission at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/buspubs/canspam.htm> .

Spyware – A program hidden within free downloaded software that transmits user information via the Internet to advertisers, also known as “adware”.

Super Affiliate – Term used to describe an affiliate earning over \$10,000 a month. These are the top 1 or 2% of affiliates that generate approximately 90% of any affiliate programs earnings.

Targeted Marketing – The process of distinguishing the different groups that make up a market, and developing appropriate products and marketing mixes for each target market involved.

T&C – Terms and Conditions.

Text Link – A link not accompanied by a graphical image.

Third Party Tracking Software – Software located on a server other than your own, that tracks and records visits to your Web site.

TOS – Terms of Service or Affiliate Agreement.

Tracking Method – The system an affiliate program uses to track sales, leads or clicks from an embedded referral link. Some programs use cookies for the same purpose.

Tracking URL – A web site URL, <http://www.awebsite.com>, with your special code attached to it, i.e. <http://www.awebsite.com/?myID>. Visitors arriving at the site are tracked back to you through your special code.

Two -tier – A compensation plan structure where affiliates earn commissions on their conversions as well as conversions of webmasters they refer to the program.

Unique Visitor – A term used to describe the process of tracking the amount of [traffic](#) on a web site; it refers to a person who visits a web site more than once within a specified period of time. The software program tracks and counts the visitor traffic to your web site are designed to distinguish between visitors who only visit the site once and unique visitors who return to the site.

Different from a raw visitor or [page views](#) , which are measured by the number of files that are requested from a site, unique visitors are measured according to their unique [IP addresses](#), which are like online fingerprints, and unique visitors are counted only once no matter how many times they visit the site.

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There are some [ISPs](#) that use [Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol](#), such as [AOL](#) and cable modem providers, which use different IPs for every file requested, making one visitor look like many. In this case, a single IP address does not indicate a unique visitor.

Upload – Transferring a file from your computer to another computer.

Uniform Resource Locator (URL) – The address of a site on the World Wide Web.

Here's an example URL: <http://www.byebye925.com/articles/index.html>. The “http” stands for “hypertext transfer protocol”; “://” signals the beginning of the address; “www.byebye925 .com” is the domain name; “/articles” is the directory; and “index.html” is the name of the HTML file.

Viral Marketing – A concept where an advertising message propagates itself through a variety of contacts and emails.

Virus – A computer virus is defined as a set of commands, created intentionally, that will do some level of damage to a computer. A computer virus does not float around in cyberspace, but is always attached to something.

That ‘something’ could be a text file (MSWord document), an email, a photo, a music clip or a video clip. Your computer must receive one of these ‘carriers’ in order to get a computer virus.

Web Host – A business that provide storage, connectivity, and services necessary to serve website pages and files.

Web Site – A specific location (site) on the World Wide Web. Each Web site contains a home or “index” page, which is the first document users see when they enter the site. The site might also contain additional documents and files. Each site is owned and managed by an individual, company or organization.

World Wide Web (WWW or web) – A system of Internet servers that support specially formatted documents. The documents are formatted in a markup language called HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) that supports links to other documents, as well as graphics, audio, and video files.

This means you can jump from one document to another simply by clicking on hot spots. Not all Internet servers are part of the World Wide Web. There are several applications called Web browsers that make it easy to access the World Wide Web; Two of the most popular being Netscape Navigator and Microsoft's Internet Explorer. The World Wide Web is NOT synonymous with the Internet.

Yahoo – Considered by many to be the most comprehensive and popular of all search index databases on the Internet.