



The Quickest Way To Online Profits

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Introduction

The quickest and probably the most simple way for someone new to the Internet to see profits quickly is to sign up for and promote affiliate programs. Most of the people making money with affiliate marketing started at the bottom and worked up through the learning curve. We hope to shorten that learning curve for you. For someone new to the idea of making money on the Internet, there is a lot to be learned and can be overwhelming at first. We will address some of the questions you probably will have concerning affiliate marketing. Let's start at the beginning!

What Is An Affiliate?

An affiliate is a company or an individual that sells other people's products online usually by means of a link to a merchant's site. The affiliate is provided a uniquely coded link by the merchant. When someone uses your unique link to go to the merchant's site and makes a purchase, the merchant is informed that you are responsible for the sale and should be paid for referring the customer.

What Is An Affiliate Program?

A system whereby a merchant will pay a referral fee to an affiliate if the affiliate sends someone to the merchant's site and that someone makes a purchase. The merchant benefited by making a sale that he might not had made if not for the affiliate's efforts, so he is happy to pay the affiliate a percentage of the sale which is called a commission or referral fee.

From the merchant's point of view, affiliate programs are excellent because they generate traffic and hopefully sales with relatively little cost as merchants will only pay if a sale is made.

From the affiliate's point of view, affiliate programs give them an opportunity to make money selling other people's products without the hassles of procuring and delivering the product to the customer.

How Do You Choose An Affiliate Program?

When choosing an affiliate program to join, you must ask yourself certain questions and then find the answers so you can make an informed decision. There is not a formula I can give you that will guarantee your success, but if you diligently get the answers to the following questions, then you can look at the whole picture and make a good choice of which affiliate program to join.

The factors you must consider when evaluating affiliate programs include:

Does the program offer high quality products that will fulfill the needs of my potential customers and also provide excellent customer service?

The most important thing to keep in mind when choosing an affiliate program is the needs of your potential customers. The products that you offer must meet the needs of your customers or they simply will not buy through your links. People look for solutions online and when you show them a logical solution to their problem, they will purchase the product you are recommending. Of course the products must be of high quality and customer service must be excellent. Your credibility is on the line as you are the one referring them to the product.

Is the affiliate program reputable?

Check out the program history and the company history to ensure you are dealing with a reputable company. There should be no fee to join an affiliate program.

Can you make money from the product?

Don't just look for high commission figures or multi-tier payments. Consider how many of an item you might sell as some lower priced items sell more frequently, but at the end of the day, the commission rate must be sufficient to make your efforts worthwhile. Most affiliates will not settle for less than 10% commission.

Does The Affiliate Program Use Tracking Cookies?

Many customers do not buy on their first visit to a merchant's website, so it is important that the merchant uses cookies for their affiliate program. Cookies will ensure you get credit for sales even if the customer does not return directly through your site or returns and buys at a later date. Check out how long the cookies last. An affiliate program should offer a cookie duration of 30 - 90 days.

What types of commissions are offered?

Pay Per Sale (PPS) is the most popular and most used. This type of program will pay a predetermined % commission on the revenue generated by the sale of products or services. A Pay Per Lead (PPL) can be defined as a payment for information. This information can be as simple as the completion of a form or leaving their email address. Pay Per Click (PPC) affiliate programs will pay a small amount for every visitor sent to the target site. Typical payments range from \$0.01 to \$0.25 per click.

How frequently are commissions paid?

Affiliate programs should pay you monthly if the agreed upon payout level is reached. If your payout level is not reached during a particular month then they should roll your earned income into the next month until your payout level is met. Payout levels are the minimum amount that the company will write a check for.

Are statistics provided showing your traffic and sales commissions?

These statistics will help you determine how your marketing efforts are paying off. If a program does not supply traffic and sales commission, then they are probably not real interested in your success. Real time statistics are highly recommended.

Does the program offer marketing support?

Look for programs that give you the tools and support you need to succeed. If they just give you a link and say good luck, you will find it tough to successfully market their products. Banners, promotional text copy, and someone to actually talk to about any problems you may have, should be the minimum marketing support you receive. Ideally there will be an affiliate mailing list so that the merchant can convey useful news.

Does the program have growth potential?

Look for merchants that are dynamic and constantly expanding their product offerings so your customers will keep coming back to see what's new and exciting.

Does the program have a site that can SELL?

You are dependent on the programs site to actually close the sale. Ask yourself if the site does a good job of selling the product to you. Does the site make you want to purchase the product right now? If not, reconsider your affiliate program choice.

You must read the affiliate agreement.

Make sure it is fair to you as an affiliate.

Consider these factors as additional benefits:

Are you rewarded for referring other affiliates?

This type of program is commonly referred to as a two-tier program. If someone follows your link and becomes an affiliate of the program themselves then you will get a referral commission on their sales. While you should not consider this to be an absolute must in your choosing of an affiliate program, it is a nice benefit.

Does the program pay residual commissions?

This is a big plus for you as you will continue to make commissions monthly where as with a single sale you only get the one occurrence of commissions paid to you. While most affiliate programs only pay a one time commission, those with recurring fees like membership sites or hosting sites can be a source of commissions month after month.

Does the program pay lifetime commissions?

Lifetime commissions means you get paid commissions on EVERY purchase a referred customer makes, not just on the first purchase. Most merchants that promise lifetime commissions have excellent tracking for the first visit, but after that they rely on cookies, which are not a reliable way to track in the long term. The merchant offering a system that can handle true lifetime commissions will rely on software that tracks your IP address and your affiliate ID and also by storing your ID in the customer's profile in their database. Do not rely solely on the promise of lifetime cookies alone to get your commissions.

While there are other factors to consider when choosing an affiliate program, following the suggestions above will help you to make a good choice that will lead to your long term success. If a program stacks up favorably against the above factors, then your chance for success is optimal.

How many affiliate programs should you promote?

This is going to depend on how many products it will take to satisfy the needs of your customers. If the products you determine you need are not available from only one program then you will have to join more programs. There are companies which contain many affiliate programs under one umbrella. These companies are called Affiliate Networks.

Affiliate Networks are popular because they consolidate your commissions into one payment, they will have a standardized format for your affiliate links and they do not require individual sign-ups. They are a real convenience for affiliates because they present a wide variety of affiliate programs in one central location and they make it easy to find and join the affiliate programs of many merchants at one time. The information about affiliate marketing and the training you will find within these networks is very good. Some of the most popular are Commission Junction, LinkShare, ClixGalore, ShareASale and Clickbank.

Important Safeguards To Secure Your Commissions

It's a proven fact that many customers will not click on an affiliate URL. Maybe they feel there is less security when buying through an affiliate link or maybe they resent seeing a commission being paid to an affiliate. To safeguard against losing your commissions, you should hide or disguise your link. There are many different types of link hiding pages with different advantages and disadvantages. The most popular are:

1. A PHP Redirect Page uses a PHP script to perform the redirection. While it is the simplest and fastest form of redirect page available, it requires support for PHP on your web site. You can try a PHP redirect page on you site to see if it works. If it does not work, use the refresh meta-tag redirect page instead.
2. A Refresh Meta-Tag Redirect Page uses the refresh meta-tag to perform the redirection. While it is the most commonly used method on the Internet, it's slower than PHP redirect pages and not quite as secure. This type redirect page is the best method if your web host does not support PHP.
3. A Javascript Redirect Page uses Javascript to perform the redirection. It requires the users browser to support Javascript and some people may not have this enabled. Javascript redirect pages do include code to handle cases where the users browser does not support Javascript, but this requires the user to click on a second link. Javascript redirect pages allow you to manually modify them before redirecting.

4. A Link Cloaking Page uses a frameset to hide the affiliate link. Most software tools use this method to protect affiliate commissions. Due to new features added to Internet Explorer it is recommended that you not use this method unless you have a very good reason.

Read [The Problem With Affiliate Links \(PDF\)](#) to get all the details plus free software to build the above referenced pages for your site.

Another proven fact is that your competition will sometimes get your commissions. Let's say a customer has visited several sites that are all promoting the same product as yours. Convince the customer to return to your site and buy from you by promising a special bonus if they purchase from you. Then simply have them send you proof of purchase so they can receive the bonus.

Most people will not purchase on their first visit, so you should offer a free report or free ebook in exchange for their email address. Make sure you follow up with them so they will remember your site over your competitions. Acquiring a visitor's email address is simple to do with a good auto-responder. Any affiliate marketer that is successful will tell you that an auto-responder is an absolute must-have in the affiliate marketing business. Find out more by visiting these reputable auto-responder providers: [AWeber](#), [GetResponse](#)

Growing Your Affiliate Marketing Business

To grow your affiliate marketing business, you will need traffic. To get the traffic, you will need to advertise. Some advertising will require an investment of money on your part, but many can be done for little to no cash outlay.

Some ways of advertising that DO NOT require money.

The most common way is banners and links installed on your site. Links work the best especially when they are incorporated into normal text like reviews or articles. You can put banners on your website, although you should place them carefully as too many on a single web page can be very annoying and very confusing to potential customers.

Make sure that you have submitted your site to all of the major search engines. The search engines can send you a lot of free traffic, but be patient as it may take some time for them to index your site and actually start sending you traffic.

Start your own email list to which you can send offers. Use your auto-responder service to administer your list. They will provide you with subscription forms to put on your web site.

Marketing with articles is one of the easiest ways to build up traffic to your website. Simply write an article that is on the same topic as your website or product and make sure that it contains useful information that people will actually want to read. Upon completion of your article, submit it to article directories making sure that within the resource box you include a link back to your website.

You can also create a free ebook with tips, links to other quality resources and links to your affiliate website. This can be a great resource for potential customers as well as shows customers you are more than willing to help. Make your ebook viral and over time you will see your traffic explode.

A good way to generate traffic with content on your site, without having to buy or write it yourself, is to have a page where your visitors can submit their own articles. This is a great way to keep a steady flow of fresh content being added to your site without a lot of work on your part.

Reciprocal linking is a great way to get traffic and better search engine rankings. This type of linking is where you find another site that has a similar topic as yours and you contact the site owner and ask them if they would like to put a link to your site in exchange for a link to theirs. Just do a search for "link exchange" and you will find several link exchange services and directories that will help you find similar websites that are willing to exchange links with you.

Joining a forum that is on the same topic as your site is a great way to get free traffic. After you have joined you can add your website address to your profile and your signature box. This way every time you post to the forum a link to your website will show.

Free Traffic Exchanges like [TrafficSwarm](#) work very well. A traffic exchange enables members to swap links and visits. In simplest terms, you agree to check out sites belonging to fellow members and in return they send you traffic. The basic services are FREE to members. A new type called [Real Traffic Exchange](#) works like AdSense.

Video sharing is very popular and you can use it to get targeted traffic to your website. Do this by creating a how to video and posting it in a social video sharing site like YouTube and of course provide a few references to your site with your URL. A big benefit of using a video sharing site is that they will provide you with a "Send to Friend" feature for your video. This feature is a link that allows others to share your video with hopefully many of their friends.

Some ways of advertising that DO require money.

These types of advertising will cost you money and tracking your results will be very important. Since you are investing your cash, you want to make sure you are getting a good return.

Pay per click advertising is a good way to drive immediate traffic to your website. Pay per click advertising programs allow you to pay only if someone clicks on your ad. The nice thing about using pay per click advertising is that you can start seeing results almost immediately.

Buying links is a good way to get more traffic and will give your site more credibility with the search engines. It does cost money, but do it right and it can pay off. You will get better results if you purchase links from sites with a higher page rank and traffic volume than your own.

Consider buying advertising space. To do this look for websites on a similar topic as yours. Once you find a good site that is related to but not in competition with yours take a look around their site and see if they sell advertising space.

Buying traffic is another option and it can give your traffic stats a very quick boost. It can also be profitable, but you must be very careful. Thoroughly research any company that you are interested in using. Don't be afraid to ask questions like; Is the traffic targeted or random? Where does the traffic come from? Is it real one time visitors or just computer counted hits?

You can buy an expired domain name that still gets traffic and use it to get more traffic to your website. Make sure that the domain name is receiving traffic that is related to the theme of your website and that the traffic is real visitors and not inflated clicks. Then all you have to do is redirect it to your own website.

Summary

Let's review what we have learned so far. An affiliate is a company or an individual that sells other people's products online through a system called an affiliate program. These affiliate programs administer the tracking of your unique link and when a sale is made by use of your link, they will issue commission payments to you. When choosing an affiliate program to join, you must ask yourself certain questions and then find the answers so you can make an informed decision.

How many programs you will have to join depends on how many products it will take to satisfy the needs of your customers. To grow your affiliate marketing business, you will need traffic. To get the traffic, you will need to advertise. Some advertising will require an investment of money on your part, but many can be done for little to no cash outlay.

By following the suggestions in this report, I am confident you will be prepared to make a good choice on an affiliate program. I highly recommend the following programs. The earning power they afford you, along with their training resources, will help ensure your success.

To Your Success!

Affiliate Networks You Can Join For Free

[Commission Junction](#)

[LinkShare](#)

[clixGalore](#)

[Shareasale](#)

[ClickBank](#)

[Click Exchange](#)

Two-Tier Programs You Can Join For Free

[TheSecondTier](#)

[IMC Affiliate Program](#)

[Implix Affiliate Program](#)

[Generator Software](#)

[myHelpHub Affiliate Network](#)

Residual Programs You Can Join For Free

[GetResponse](#)

[ThirdSphere](#)

[Push Button Publishing](#)

[AWeber](#)

Residual Programs Requiring Membership

[Ultimate Marketing Center](#)

[Software Gold Club](#)

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