

Affiliate Marketing

Do's and Don'ts



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Affiliate marketing is a great way to make money online. If you're just getting started this is a good way to get your "feet wet" in the online business world without having to create your own products or services. If you're an experienced marketer, affiliate marketing can add a nice amount of extra income to your business.

This report will help you get started in affiliate marketing and maximize your sales for super affiliate status.

What is a super affiliate? A super affiliate is an affiliate who takes affiliate marketing seriously and doesn't simply throw up a bunch of banners or ads on their site (these don't really work too well). A super affiliate will take the time to review a product, write a comprehensive product review, and even set up a separate domain to promote a specific product. A super affiliate also knows the importance of building their list so they can further promote products to their customer base.



Now Lets get started....

How does affiliate marketing work:

Simply, you sell other people's products on your websites and blogs. When you see a product you would like to promote, you can sign up for the affiliate program and start promoting that product on your website. As an affiliate, you will receive your own unique ID which will track any sales sent from your site to the affiliate site.

A good affiliate program will also give you information on where and how you can track your sales, where your clicks are coming from and payment information.

You can find affiliate programs through networks like Commission Junction (CJ.com) or Clickbank.com. These networks act like "middle men" and take a certain percentage of every sale sold through them. You will also be paid directly through the network rather than from the vendor.

The plus with these types of programs is that you can choose as many programs as you'd like all in one convenient place and payment is quite easy to track.

The downside is you don't often get the same promotional tools or training that individual affiliate programs will offer you. Many individual affiliate programs (especially those related to information products) will also offer you higher commissions.

Here are a few places where you can find affiliate programs to promote:

www.CJ.com

www.Clickbank.com

www.Shareasale.com

www.Amazon.com

When you first get started in affiliate marketing, it can be a pretty daunting process. It can all look pretty confusing but by following a few simple rules you can get started and learn more as you go along.

You don't have to learn everything at once and a lot of your experience and growth will come through trial and error; having said that, it's best to arm yourself with as much knowledge as you can so that you can get started on the 'right foot.' Here are a few tips to help you get started...

Affiliate Marketing Do's and Don'ts

Do figure out who you are selling to.

Defining a Target Market is a key task in building up an affiliate income. If you don't know who you want to sell to, how will you decide what to promote? And dig deep here. Don't just say 'Men' or 'Parents'. Choose a people group that can be defined in just a few words; Like 'Brand new single moms' or 'Older men with thinning hair.'

Do make a list of what your target market needs.

Sit down with pen and paper or a fresh document on your computer and think like your target market. What do they need right now? What do they consume a lot of? What do they want when they have extra money? You'll probably come up with a pretty good list.

Do choose affiliate programs carefully.

Different merchants offer different commission rates. Scout out the highest commission rate with the best affiliate resources available. Check out the website and make sure that it is easy to navigate and buy from. Check things like Cookie duration to make sure that you have the greatest chance of profiting from your promotions.

Do treat affiliate marketing like a real business.

The more you put into your affiliate marketing the better your chances of gaining super affiliate status. Treat your affiliate marketing like a real business and it will grow and develop over time. Spend time writing reviews, articles and promoting the products you believe in.

Don't plaster your website with affiliate banners.

Introduce your affiliate recommendations in a natural way. A button or banner is great but may not make you too many sales, a product review or a personal recommendation will go further.

Don't over promote products.

It's easy to get overexcited and over do the product offers with your subscribers. Keep some balance and give more than you take. This will keep your list happy and



more willing to consider your offers. Of course, you do need to promote things to your list; after all this is your business, but try to find a balance between free information and product promotions.

Don't give up too soon.

Affiliate marketing is a business that builds up over time. You need to focus on developing your web traffic and email lists while you continue to faithfully offer your market what it wants and needs. As the months go by if you're applying all the correct methods, your income will increase.

Those tips will give you a good starting point. Another very important element of affiliate marketing is your website. A good website can really increase your sales where a poorly designed website can really reduce your income, and we don't mean you have to design a flashy, all singing and dancing website (actually you'll want to avoid that). Instead concentrate on offering quality content and clean design to your visitors. Here are a few tips for designing your website:

Designing a Friendly Website:

One of your first steps to affiliate marketing is to make sure your website is projecting the right message to your visitors. You want to build trust and credibility when a visitor lands on your site, and the way to do this is by designing a website which is easy-to-navigate and pleasing to the eye.

Here are a few tips for designing your website to make sales:

1. Try to use a white background and black font. Excessive use of fonts or colors will give your website an unprofessional look. Keep the design clean and easy to read.

2. Make the navigation friendly. Have a navigation menu with your main categories then underneath each of those categories you can have links to sub categories or articles. Have an updated site map so that visitors can easily find what their looking for and make sure you give them a link back to the home page.

3. Avoid flashing images and flash introductions. These all take away from the purpose of your site and also affect your search engine rankings. Keep it simple and avoid any flashing graphics, music or flash images in your design.

4. Keep offers to a minimum. It's tempting to sign up for a lot of different affiliate programs at once, but this could lead to over promoting of too many different things. If you give your customers too many choices, they many get too confused and not buy anything at all. Depending on the size of your website, keep your promotions to a few quality programs and always weave affiliate links into the content of your site.

5. Warm up your customers. Don't give visitors a sales pitch as soon as they land on your website. Instead pre-sell them by offering information, advice and substance they can actually use, then and only then should you make an offer.



6. Avoid overusing exclamation marks! Or hypey language, this can be a turn off to a lot of people and may look unprofessional and like you're just out to make a sale. Again, think information first.

7. Keep in touch. Don't let visitors just leave your site. Make sure you get their email address so that you have a way to follow-up with them later on. Don't abuse their information and send them product offer after product offer because they may just unsubscribe from your list. Instead, send them useful information and content and then make subtle product recommendations that will help fill their needs.

8. Provide your contact information. People are weary of a lot of websites and want to know you're a real person behind a web page. Clearly list your contact information on your website. Of course, you may not want to give out your home address but a P.O. Box, email address and general information about you and your business helps build trust and credibility.

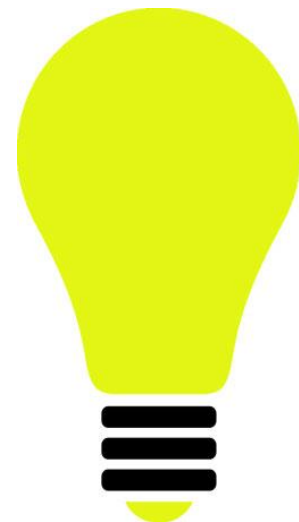
9. Ask for feedback. Place a poll or form on your website where visitors can send you feedback. This is a great way to do market research and learn what your visitors would like to see or how you can improve your website.

Those tips will help you build a visitor-friendly website. And by following these tips you're also increasing your chances of free search engine traffic. Search engines are in the business of providing the best quality search results to their visitors, by doing that in your own website you're pleasing your visitors as well as the search engines. It's a win/win situation for everyone involved.

Now that you have a few of the basics, let's talk about how to maximize your affiliate income.

How to really make affiliate programs work:

1. Make the affiliate programs that you select really relevant to your niche subject to keep the credibility of your site and entice your members into purchasing the products they need. It goes without saying, but if you have a site about babies and parenting babies, it's not a good idea to promote pet related products as these aren't relevant to your target market.
2. Write honest product reviews. Write informative and honest product reviews. This is a great way to give your unbiased opinion on a product and to build trust with your subscribers. And if a product is faulty in some way you can add that as a note, your subscribers will trust you more if they know your recommendations are honest and sincere.
3. Find the correct placement for affiliate links. As mentioned above, affiliate banners and graphics don't usually work as well as providing informative content and weaving affiliate links where appropriate throughout that content. For example, you can write a quality article about helping your baby recover from colic and in that article you can link out to resources which will help the parents remedy this problem.



4. Set up your own domain or blog. You can't do this for every affiliate program, but if you find a product which has really helped you and offers a generous commission, you can set up a blog and speak about your experience using this product. Make regular posts and comments about how the product is helping you and your experiences with it and link to the product throughout your blog. You can also set up your own domain name to promote a product. This looks much more professional than an affiliate link and will be easier to remember too. It's great for using when writing articles and content as well.
5. Try to find affiliate programs that offer 'lifetime cookies' or 'lifetime customers'. This means that when you send a member to the affiliate site your affiliate link is tracked in their system and even if the member doesn't purchase the product right away, you'll still get paid if the person returns and buys from that affiliate program at a later date.
6. Redirect your affiliate links through your own domain. There are many benefits to redirecting your affiliate links. It's easier to track and remember your links when you need them. If a program changes their links it's easy to go back and change your links. You'll also present a more professional image; many affiliate links are long and look like garbly goop; your visitors may be suspicious of these links. Try a Wordpress plugin like Pretty Link.

That's it! It's pretty easy to do and you'll get many benefits from doing this.

In summary, Always remember to provide quality content and information and once you do that you can concentrate on making product recommendations. As your business grows, you'll find other tips and strategies which work best for you and you can start experimenting a little more. By following the tips and advice in this report, you'll be ahead of the game and on your way to becoming a super affiliate. Good luck!