

AFFILIATE MARKETING SECRETS



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Chapter 1:

What is Affiliate Marketing and Why You Should Take Notice

Ever seen videos of people claiming they make ‘a million a day posting a few ads’? If so, then you’ve come into contact with affiliate marketing. Sure, affiliate marketing is not particularly likely to make you that much money unless you’re an absolute pro, and as a general rule, it will involve a lot more work than ‘posting a few ads a day’ – particularly to begin with!

But despite all this, there is truth in the claim that you can earn an awful lot of money doing very little with affiliate marketing. In fact, affiliate marketing is really the *only* legitimate tool you have to accomplish this kind of lifestyle. Affiliate marketing is simply the very easiest way to get set up with a money-generating business model that provides *passive* income and that doesn’t see you exchanging time for money.

In other words, whereas working in an office requires you to slave away at a desk in order for you to get paid *by the hour*; affiliate marketing is something that lets you earn cash while you’re asleep. You need to be smart setting it up but once you’ve done that successfully it will be automated; all that’s left for you to do is to handle a little maintenance.

Does this mean you should sign up to one of those ads on Facebook? Heck no! Whenever you see an ad like this, what you’ve always got to question is: what’s in it for them? If they’re offering to help you earn money online so easily, you need to wonder why they need you at all. Most likely, they’re recruiting people like you to act as ‘grunts’ meaning that you’ll promote *their* offers and they’ll ‘share the revenue’ with you. This is obviously not the most efficient way to make money online and you shouldn’t touch it with a barge pole! The other possibility is that they’re going to sell you a very expensive course or make you sign up to some kind of expensive program – either of which will benefit you far less than it will benefit them.

The earliest warning sign with programs like this should always be the lack of information. ‘Make money posting a few ads a day’ is very vague and it’s a rather big promise. There’s no explanation up-front as to how this would work and no mention of the word ‘affiliate marketing’.

In this scenario, those people selling the courses and programs have the advantage of information over you. A much better strategy then is to simply learn the basics of affiliate marketing yourself so that you can create your *own* business model to suit you. All you need to know is what affiliate marketing is, how it works and what the best techniques are for ensuring your success. That’s precisely what you’ll learn in this book.

Throughout the course of this mega-tome, you'll be learning every last thing about how affiliate marketing works fundamentally, the various different techniques used and crucially the various growth hacks and tricks you can use to get ahead of your competition.

Will you be able to make a million dollars a day by posting a few ads? Maybe, maybe not. But what you *will* have is the knowledge to potentially make that possible and certainly to generate a lot of income on an automated basis. You can't say fairer than that!

What is Affiliate Marketing?

So enough beating about the bush! At this point if you're a complete beginner you probably still don't know what affiliate marketing is. As we're not trying to sell you anything, it makes sense to get that bit out of the way first!

(If you aren't a complete beginner and you do know what affiliate marketing is, then you're perfectly okay to skip this section. *But* you will be missing out on some useful information if you do that could help you later.)

Simply put then, affiliate marketing is a type of online marketing where you will be selling a product for commission. This is precisely the same business model as being a door-to-door salesman: you are selling something that someone else made but for a cut of the profit.

There are a few key differences between being an affiliate marketer though and being a door to door salesman – key differences that make what *we* do far more appealing and potentially profitable.

The first and most obvious advantage of being an affiliate marketer is that you'll be selling products online rather than having to do it face to face. This makes the job considerably easier if you're someone who doesn't have the 'gift of the gab' and it also means you'll have considerably lower overheads and considerably less work to do yourself. You can simply sit at home and make a very healthy income by sending a few e-mails and by running a website/social media channel.

What's more, is that you will be able to reach a *huge* number of people compared with a door-to-door salesman because the business is *far* more scalable. The internet makes it possible for us to reach a gigantic number of people at once and potentially to promote a product to thousands of people every day. Considering that a salesman will have a good day if they manage to get around 10 people, you can see right away that this has a far bigger potential for earning.

Quick Lesson: Force Multiplier

In this case, we can consider the internet to be something known in business as a ‘force multiplier’. A force multiplier is any tool or resource that allows you to amplify your output without having to change your input.

The most basic example of this would be a hammer. Hammers allow you to multiply the amount of force that is hitting the nail without you having to *generate* more force yourself. Give a hammer to a painter-decorator or a builder and they can accomplish significantly more in a day than they could before.

Another example of a force multiplier would be a forklift truck. If you have a business moving palettes, then you can provide your staff with a forklift and they’ll be able to move a huge number more than before without putting in any extra work. In fact, they can probably put in *less* work and expend *less* energy and still accomplish more by the end of the day.

In our case, the force multiplier is the internet. This one tool allows you to amplify your marketing message so that it will be heard with hundreds, thousands or even millions of people.

Throughout the course of this book, we might also find more force multipliers and a lot of the key to our success – to increasing revenue without increasing overheads – will be in learning to make better use of our force multipliers.

Automation takes force multiplication one step further and allows you to generate income without *any* input. The most obvious example of this would be something like a digital manufacturing line that could product lots of products on its own. We’ll be looking at how to set up automated processes here too.

Very simply, it’s this simple reliance on force multipliers and automation that didn’t previously exist that makes affiliate marketing possible. Force multipliers and automation normally rely on technology. Eventually enough technology may exist that no one has to trade time for money but for now the only tool advanced enough to make this kind of lifestyle possible is the web. Make use of it!

A Word of Caution: While force multipliers amplify your positive input to help you earn a bigger income, they also amplify mistakes. That means that if you make some kind of error, it will be reproduced to a huge extent and can potentially cause far bigger problems than it could in a manual job. This is why it’s so important to set up your automation and your force multipliers correctly and why observation and maintenance are also crucial.

So the volume is much bigger when you work as an internet marketer versus a face-to-face salesman. This alone means that you could potentially increase your revenue and thereby your profits – but it goes beyond that. Because actually, affiliate marketing gives

you *considerably* more profit per sale and more commission. In fact, a very standard amount for a product creator to share with affiliates is 60%. That means you're actually earning *more* than the person who created the product in the first place! Products can be found for a range of prices too – but if you're selling a digital product such as an eBook then you can expect to make anything from \$30 to \$100 for a sale. Online courses and seminars can go for a lot more – sometimes as much as several thousand dollars. Better yet, if you can sell membership to a gambling site, a trading site or a bingo site, you can actually profit from that member for the *lifetime* of their membership!

All *you* have to do then is to advertise the product online – which often really does just involve posting ads to Facebook or sending e-mails – and you can profit every time someone listens to the ad. And we'll be looking at all sorts of tips to ensure that you're posting in the right places and promoting your products in the right way too.

So you have a bigger profit margin on each sale *and* you're now earning a *lot* more each time someone bites. This is the promise of internet marketing and it's what makes the whole idea so appealing to so many people.

What's in it for Them?

You don't really need to know anything else about affiliate marketing to start learning the ins and outs. All you really need to know is that you're selling products for commission and getting a *very* good profit for each sale.

But that said, it's always good to ensure you fully grasp a concept like this if you want to make the most from it possible.

A question you might have then is: what's in it for them? Why would a product creator be happy to give away more than half of the profits for what they're selling?

The answer to this question is simple: it's all about volume. Let's imagine for a moment that you've created a product like an eBook. This is a digital product meaning there are no manufacturing costs, no delivery costs and no storage costs (which collectively is known as COGS – Cost Of Goods Sold). Each sale of this product is *pure* profit for the creator. They'll then do their best to spread the word and to generate as many sales as they can, but there's only so much they can do as just one person. They might make 100 sales a day but they could *always* still make more by getting marketers to sign up and help them sell.

Imagine how good it would be for them if they had a *legion* of marketers, all promoting and selling their product for them? Imagine the kind of profit they could generate then! Especially if those marketers were full-time marketers who knew all the ins and outs of successful marketing!

So why offer such a high percentage? Simple: they want to attract as many affiliate marketers as possible and to lure them away from promoting *other* products and deals. They might lose 10% per sale by offering 60% instead of 50% but if that means they get one more marketer who sells an additional 300 items a year, then that's still a *much* better scenario overall.

As you can see then, this is one of those rare business models where it *genuinely* offers a win-win situation for the marketers *and* the product creators. You'll now be earning a huge 60% for each sale and they'll be maximizing their income!

Of course it's only going to be *truly* win/win all around if the people buying the products are happy too. So how do you ensure this? Simple: you make certain that whatever you are selling is genuinely high quality and is genuinely something that people want.

Now you're providing value to the end user *and* to the product creator and you're earning a lot of money doing it. This is the ideal scenario for any affiliate marketer.

Should You Become an Affiliate Marketer or Sell Your Own Product?

If you're savvy and you have a keen eye for business, then you're probably wondering whether it's smarter to be selling your own product. After all, we've just seen how they stand to benefit by having legions of marketers selling their products... wouldn't that be a better scenario?

In truth, the answer is 'maybe' and there are certainly advantages to both situations. Let's have a quick look at the key differences and hopefully that will help you to make the best decision.

Advantages of Creating Your Own Product

On the face of it, you might initially think that creating your own product is the best option. After all, this means you'll benefit from 100% profits whenever you make a direct sale and it means that you'll be able to get at *least* 40% and possibly more from a ton of other people all promoting your hard work too.

Additionally, selling a product you created and that you're proud of is also something that brings a lot of satisfaction and gratification. What's more, it lets you easily align all your marketing efforts with the product itself and stay 'on message' all the way through. You can write a website promoting a certain way of life and then sell an eBook as a natural extension of that. This also means people will stay engaged with your brand –

instead of pushing people away from your site to buy something else, you'll be keeping them on your page and the product *itself* will help to increase awareness, authority and trust. In other words, having used your product and hopefully enjoyed it once, they'll be considerably more likely to come back to you to buy again in future.

And finally, when you sell products as the owner rather than as an affiliate, you'll have the full control to change the price, to introduce special offers or even to make changes to the product based on requests. In other words, you'll have far more flexibility which can be a huge advantage as a marketer.

Advantages of Affiliate Marketing

BUT while this might seem like a lot of wins for product owners, it's actually not as clear cut as you think.

For starters, creating a product takes a lot of time, effort, money and skill. You can outsource the process or do it yourself but either way this means a lot of work and time before you even get your first product out there to sell. And this is *especially* true seeing as your product needs to be very good. Selling products that are sub-par will only prevent people from buying from you in future and make you lose a lot of trust and authority. At the same time, people will normally be able to *tell* from the offset that your product is less than great quality meaning fewer sales.

So if you want to start earning money *quickly* then you should become an affiliate marketer. But it goes much further than this...

As a product creator you see, there's no guarantee that your product will sell and there's no verification. So this means essentially that you could spend months or years creating something and pouring a huge amount of hard work into it... only to find that nobody buys it. The result will be low or *no* ROI and a huge disappointment. In fact, this can often be enough to completely destroy your motivation and your enthusiasm and to put an end to your business altogether.

To interject briefly with some personal experience, I actually knew someone this happened to. They had a great idea for a website that would allow researchers to find people to cite in their studies. They were a researcher themselves and they had a good understanding of the industry – they knew this was something people needed and that it was something they would use themselves.

From there, they then went about investing a huge amount of time and money to create the product. They sought legal advice and trademarked the name, they built a website (from scratch – not in WordPress) that was responsive enough to work on every sized display (this was before the days when mobile web browsing was so commonplace) and they hired testers to use the product.

Two years and several loans later they launched the product. Two months after that , they filed for bankruptcy when their hosting charges (which were very large) drastically exceeded their ability to pay off the debt.

There was an awful lot wrong with this business model and the lack of cash flow projections or contingency plans were no small part of that. But what was *really* wrong here was that he never tested that anyone actually wanted the product and he hadn't gone about finding a market first. He *assumed* that people would need his service because he wanted something like it himself. In business though, a 'hunch' just isn't good enough – you need to be certain.

This is the risk that you put yourself in when you create a product of any kind. On the other hand though, when you work as an affiliate marketer, you will actually have the ability to choose products that are *already selling*. That's right: you can pick a product that is a *proven* success. And when you do this, you have no fear that there isn't demand for it. If you fail to sell the number of items you'd hoped, then you know with certainty that the issue is *not* with the product and you just need to sell harder! Why make things more complicated for yourself when you have a proven money maker you can simply start using? It gets better than that too, for as we'll see later on, selling an affiliate product actually means that you can re-use the existing marketing material often. If the seller has found promotional sales copy that *works* then they have no reason *not* to share that with you. You're literally taking an existing business and repeating it – meaning the risk is hugely mitigated.

And if it doesn't work out? Then you haven't lost anything. It takes you about a day to set up a sales funnel and to start trying to earn money *if that*. And it costs nothing – there is absolutely zero upfront investment and you will breakeven as soon as you make your very first sale!

Quick Lesson: Fail Fast and Verification

One approach to selling a product that is popular in business at the moment is something called ‘fail fast’. What this means is that you minimize your potential risk by minimizing the amount of time it takes to fail. Your objective here is to find out *very quickly* whether your business model works or not and then to just get out if the answer is that it doesn’t. This way, you minimize your damage. As a product creator, the best way to do this is often to create an ‘MVP’ to test the market. An MVP is a ‘minimally viable product’ and only if that sells well do you then add to that initial concept by improving the product and building on it. This is one way to mitigate risk and it’s especially possible thanks to the fact that most apps can be updated remotely now.

An even better way to mitigate risk though is to avoid creating the product in the first place until you’re *sure* it will sell. This is called ‘verification’ and an example of how you might do this could be to have a sales page and then only tell the user that the product isn’t ready yet after they’ve clicked ‘buy’. You can then see how many people *would* have bought your product and thus make a decision whether to go ahead based on that. Better yet is to collect pre-orders.

When you’re an affiliate marketer though, all the verification is done for you already. You’re selling a product that is already selling well. Thus you *know* that you’re onto a winner and you absolutely minimize your risk.

Finally, when you sell something as an affiliate, the business model you’ll be using is still highly scalable meaning you can increase your revenue and you can increase your profits.

In fact, it’s an understatement to say your business model is scalable – it’s even better than that. Affiliate marketing is actually *repeatable* and what this means is that the business model can simply be repeated over and over again.

Remember when we said it potentially takes a single day to create a landing page and start selling an affiliate product? That means that there’s *nothing* stopping you from creating 100 landing pages for 100 different products in 100 days. If each one sells only once a day and you make \$30 per sale... well then you’re now making \$3,000 a day. *And* that business will be incredible resilient and therefore stable – because it’s highly unlikely that all the products would stop selling at once.

Affiliate marketing is the perfect business model in many ways then because all you need to do is to take an existing product with an existing promotional campaign and then share it. It’s literally a ‘copy and paste’ business and when you know a few key things it’s practically fool-proof!

Note: If you do decide you’d rather create and sell your own product then don’t worry – a lot of the information in this book will still apply and you simply have to use it to promote your own product instead of someone else’s!

Chapter 2:

The Affiliate Marketing Lifestyle – The Reality Behind the Hype and Is It Right for You?

Hopefully, after reading that lengthy introduction to affiliate marketing, you're now ready and raring to go. We've seen how you'll essentially be taking other people's business models and then just repeating them for your own profit. And we've seen how you can repeat that process over and over again to scale up your income to a huge extent. So it's pretty much a dream job in many ways.

But how likely are you to succeed? What does this job actually entail on a day-to-day basis? How much can you realistically expect to earn and what kind of person makes a good affiliate marketer?

Let's take a look...

Affiliate Marketing – The Reality

We've painted a pretty nice picture of affiliate marketing so far as a job anyone can do and that can generate big income. And it's certainly true – a lot of people making a huge amount of money marketing this way and it's the very best way to make a living if your key goal is fast and straightforward income.

But will you be able to pack in your job tomorrow? Most likely not. Of course there are still challenges when it comes to being an affiliate marketer and there's still a fair amount of work and smarts involved – otherwise *everyone* would be doing it.

As a marketer you really have two options. One is to market through advertising – using Facebook Ads and Google AdWords in order to reach a highly targeted audience. The other is to build your own audience over time who will trust what you have to say.

The latter is the preference because it allows you to build a stable income selling repeatedly to the same group. It also means that you don't have to pay for advertising. But unfortunately, this strategy is also a lot more slow going and it takes a lot of time to build up the kind of trust and authority you need to begin making money. If you choose to go the advertising route though, then you need to invest money into those ad campaigns in order to get money out. In theory, you should always earn money back and get a good ROI for your efforts – you'll be paying a few cents per click so if you are

targeting the right people you should make a few sales before your overheads exceed your profits. But this takes time and effort to get right and that in turn means that you might lose a little money before you hit upon the perfect 'formula' to start generating cash. There's an element of luck here too as you need to happen across the right product and the right advertising campaign to maximize your income.

Most affiliate marketers will use a combination of these strategies – they will advertise while at the same time building a mailing list and running a blog.

For these reasons, you certainly shouldn't hand in your notice tomorrow and it will take time to start seeing BIG income.

How Much Will You Earn?

So how much can you expect to earn precisely and how long will it take? Well, the answer to this ranges hugely depending on your product, the amount of work you put in and your luck.

To be completely honest, it certainly *is* possible to start seeing an income in the first day. If you choose the right product and pay for some ads, you might well generate a couple of sales before long.

But when you start out with your sales page, you can expect it to convert <1% of the time. That means that for every 100 visitors, you'll get less than one sale. With practice it can get higher (10% being a very good target for the advanced marketer).

Likewise CTR (click through rate) on adverts doesn't tend to be particularly high either – maybe about .1-.2%. So now you have a situation where your ad will need to be seen by 1,000-2,000 people for you to get a single sale. Luckily if you're paying for advertising, you will only pay when someone clicks your advert – but that still means you'll need to pay for 100 clicks before you're likely to make a sale. What's more, the more you pay for each click, the more likely it is that your advert will be seen (adverts appear based on 'bids' with the highest paying ad winning the ad slots most regularly). If you pay 30 cents per click (a fairly average amount in order to get your required 10,000 views), then you're going to be paying \$30 to get your one conversion. (All this will be explained in more detail later on, for now just go with it).

If you're getting \$40 for each sale then, you're now spending \$30 for \$10 profit. To earn a reasonable \$200 a day then, you'd have to be spending \$600 on advertising. That's a fairly big investment and especially if you're nervous to begin with.

And if you plan on building your own audience so you don't need to rely on ads, then you're going to need to get your website/ mailing list/ social media account to the point where you're reaching 100,000-200,000 people a day in order to make a real living. This is something that *certainly* won't happen overnight and rather you're looking at a

good few years before you're likely to get to that point. And that will be a few years of posting articles, sharing links, networking and trying to avoid being dissatisfied with your slow start.

Should you give up? Not at all! Everything will be explained in this book and we'll look at some methods you can use to save time and enhance your profits. But just know that you're not going to be rich overnight (despite what those adverts claim). You're going to have to work hard – and work *smart* – in order to reap the benefits later on.

What Are Your Goals?

This then is going to be perhaps your most important lesson in the entire book – and it's something that will help you to practically guarantee success no matter what business model you end up settling on.

The key is to know your goals and to know your timeframe. Unrealistic expectations is the single biggest obstacle for 90% of affiliate marketers and is more often than not what ends up being their undoing.

If you become an affiliate marketer thinking that it's going to make you rich overnight and thinking that it involves nothing but posting occasionally to a blog, then you're going to be very disappointed. Likewise though, if you think you need to quit your day job and take out a loan in order to spend the next two years developing your marketing platform then you're going to be putting your family in financial jeopardy and you're going to be taking an unnecessary risk.

Instead, you need to have realistic goals and a realistic time frame. Using the calculations above, you should be able to come up with a reasonable \$10 a day business model using a landing page and a \$30 ad spend. This is something most of us can afford to risk. Meanwhile, if you can get your website page views up to 200 a day, then you can realistically get \$10 a week within the first couple of months.

As long as you're willing to wait that long and as long as you're willing to invest the necessary (and small amount of) time and money, then this is practically guaranteed and relatively low-risk.

That's not going to change your life of course. BUT what it will do is to allow you to earn \$70 from advertising a week and \$280 a month. Suddenly, things have started looking up. And if you add the \$40 a month from your website, you now have \$320 a month profit in total which comes to \$3,840 a year.

Before you scoff at that, think about how much of a difference just this small amount of money could make to your lifestyle. This is enough to afford a holiday to somewhere rather nice for you and your partner! Or maybe you could put it into savings and earn

\$38,400 over ten years before tax and interest. That's a pretty nice nest egg for a child and a decent deposit on a small house even!

But what's more, is that this 'small' amount of regular income will grow over time. Because after the first couple of weeks you'll have more money in your pot and you can begin to increase your investment in ads regularly. As long as your conversion rates stay consistent, the more money you spend on advertising the more you will be able to scale your income!

And of course your website traffic will grow over time and there's nothing to prevent you from setting up more revenue streams... Suddenly, the amount you're earning will grow and grow.

It will take you a *long* time to become a millionaire then but it's possible to get there – at least partly thanks to the exponential growth that you often see as a marketer (which is to say that you don't gain one new follower a week but more likely several and then several more at a time).

But the point is that it will take no time at all to start seeing an improvement in your lifestyle. Don't aim too big to start with; make this your initial goal and then grow from there. That way you're far less likely to become disappointed and to give up.

How to Quit Your Job and Become an Internet Marketer

What's more, this gives you a much more stable way to become full time as an internet marketer and it means there's no risk and nothing to be afraid of. Want to 'quit the rat race' and stop working eight hours a day in a job you hate? That doesn't have to mean suddenly quitting and storming out and leaving yourself with no steady income!

Instead, all you have to do is to set up a small amount of income through affiliate marketing to make a little bit more cash... and then to grow this income steadily over time to the point where you're making a lot of money. Only once you're earning a very stable income do you then consider quitting your day job and going 'full time' as someone who works online. You could even try earning money fully online on a 'trial basis' to begin with, or you could reduce your work to be part time – or do a job that you enjoy even if it doesn't bring in as much cash. There's zero risk, nothing to be afraid of and everything to potentially gain!

Lifestyle Design and the Digital Nomad

Keeping your ‘ultimate goal’ in mind as an affiliate marketer is also important for other reasons. A lot of people who start working online will do so because they want to change the world and to be a famous entrepreneur. A lot of people start out wanting to be the next Mark Zuckerberg.

But often, those same people would find that achieving that would actually be unfulfilling. If you’re trying to get to a place where you’re doing *less* work, then setting up a huge international business actually isn’t the answer. It’s also clearly not the quickest way to make it happen.

As an affiliate marketer, you will be making money by taking an existing business model and product and selling it to people. You categorically are *not* changing the world and thus you won’t be a famous entrepreneur. You might build some recognition as an influencer in your niche if you build a mailing list, but you certainly are not Mark Zuckerberg – it’s important that you’re okay with that before you go ahead.

Actually though, this is what many of us actually want when we set out to start earning more money. Think about the things that would *actually* make you happy:

- * More time with your family
- * Less financial stress
- * More money to travel and see the world
- * The ability to get up when you want/to lie in bed
- * More time to spend enjoying hobbies/working on your passion projects

Now if you think of these points as being your *actual* goals – suddenly it doesn’t make sense to take on *more* responsibilities as the head of the next start-up. ‘Success’ in the traditional sense is not actually the fastest route to freedom and security. Affiliate marketing on the other hand cuts all the excess that comes from running a business and just gives you the freedom and the income.

This is what’s known as lifestyle design. Lifestyle design was originally popularized by Tim Ferriss in the book *The Four Hour Workweek* and it describes the process of choosing a career and income to suit the kind of lifestyle you want. Instead of fitting your life around the job you do and deciding how much you travel and where to live on that basis, you instead choose your career to support the *lifestyle* you want.

You don’t actually need to be rich to live in a sunny country – you just need to be able to work remotely. And you could probably afford to travel more if you weren’t paying for an expensive commute every day to work! Lifestyle design means prioritizing the things you want out of life and this is made very possible when you work online in *any* capacity.

And the natural extension of lifestyle design? For those who love to travel and see other countries, that would be to become a ‘digital nomad’. A digital nomad is someone who doesn’t have any single address and instead travels the world, working online as they do. If you work online as a digital nomad then you won’t need an office and you’ll be able to work from *anywhere* as long as you have an internet connection. Combine this with the fact that you’ll be earning passive income and there’s nothing to stop you from travelling around the world and working in cafes or on beaches as an affiliate marketer.

Who is Affiliate Marketing For

With all that in mind, affiliate marketing is perfect for anyone who wants to support their current lifestyle with supplementary income and anyone who eventually wants to quit the rat race and start living a far more relaxed and flexible lifestyle. This isn't about creating the next big thing or being a technological marvel – it's about taking the fastest and most efficient route to securing a stable passive income.

It doesn't give you riches overnight and it *does* require work to begin with. But you can start to benefit right away by working for just a few hours in the evenings and after a couple of years you'll be earning big bucks if you do everything right.

And in terms of the actual 'day to day', you'll spend most of your time looking for products, posting and designing adverts, looking at the performance of your campaigns, writing e-mails and posting blog posts. You'll also work on social media a fair amount and may occasionally want to outsource some tasks to designers and writers. This does of course mean spending a fair amount of time in front of the computer and as you won't have a boss, you'll need to be self-motivated and disciplined to make sure you don't spend all that time on YouTube looking at videos of cats.

The skills you'll need for this are relatively few. Having a good understanding for business will help a lot but we'll go over a lot of that as it relates specifically to internet marketing in this book. Likewise, it's very useful to be able to write at least fairly well. You'll be doing most of your marketing *via* the written word, so this is a highly useful skill. As long as you have the basics though, we'll look at how to make your writing more persuasive here.

Finally, you'll benefit from having some basic skills with regards to IT. You don't need to know how to program or to understand complex networks – you just need to have the basic technical knowhow to find your way around web-apps and social media. As long as you're able to use a computer to a basic level, the rest should be fairly self-explanatory.

So if you can tick those boxes and if you know what you want, then you're ready to start earning money as an affiliate marketer.

Chapter 3:

A Quick Set-Up to Start Earning Money RIGHT NOW!

We've talked a lot already and have barely even touched on the tools, steps or processes involved in becoming an affiliate marketer. Perhaps you hoped to have a lot more

technical knowledge by now but all the above is crucial to ensure that you grasp the fundamentals of affiliate marketing and that you go into it with the right mind-set to ensure your eventual success. Often it's knowing how to *approach* affiliate marketing and understanding its nuts and bolts that really makes the difference.

But just in case you're getting a little impatient, we're about to take the complete opposite tact. We're now going to jump in with a highly straightforward and simple business model that you can use to start earning money right away as an affiliate marketer. This chapter will outline a few simple steps you can take to start earning money immediately and that you can execute without any experience or specialist knowledge.

This will serve a few purposes. For starters, it will further help to explain the process by providing a working example. At the same time, it will give the impatient among you the ability to start earning money right now before you've even read any further. Finally, it will give us a decent framework that we can build upon later. With this as your very basic business model, the following chapters will show you how to tweak the various factors or improve the business model, ultimately leading to greater profits, faster growth and more success.

Without further ado then, here is a very basic business model you can use *right now* to start earning cash. Remember: everything we look at here will be built upon further, so don't worry if it seems overly simplistic or if you need more information.

Your First Automated Income

Step 1. Finding Your Product

The first thing you're going to do is to find the product you want to sell. To do this, you need to find an affiliate network. This is where you will find most affiliate products to sell for a decent amount of commission.

For the purposes of this quick example, we're not going to look at all the different networks or at the other options. Instead, we're going to focus on one that offers the best deal in many cases: JVZoo. Compared with other affiliate networks, JVZoo tends to have the fastest set-up and most user-friendly interface. It's also very flexible and makes it super easy for you to grab an affiliate link and to embed it in your website, your emails or anything else.

To get started, head over to <http://www.jvzoo.com/register/909> and click 'Become an Affiliate'. From here, you'll then have to verify your phone number over an automated system and will then have access to start searching through products to sell.

Once you're in, you can set up your payment information etc. and then go to Affiliates > Find Products. You'll be able to see the top products on the first page, alongside with the number of products sold. Right now for instance, 'ProThemes Add On Membership' has sold 58,000+ copies for an average of \$20.22 and with %50 commission. You can even see the number of refunds, in this case 1.96%.

Something you'll notice right away, is that most of the top products are in the 'internet marketing' niche – they're products that people are selling to *other people* trying to make money online! This is one of the most popular niches making it a good niche to choose. The only problem with going the 'make money online' route though, is that it means you'll be competing with a huge amount of other people.

Instead then, to begin with, let's start with something a little more niche. As well as reducing the amount of competition, doing this will also allow you to find your target audience more easily and to identify a 'route to market' (any easy way to access your target demographic).

So for instance, we might choose an eBook on improving your basketball skills. This is an area where there isn't a ton of competition and it lets you target your audience very easily. Alternatively, you might find a book aimed at tree surgeons. Find your product and look for one that's already selling well and that offers a decent amount of commission. Careers is actually a great category to think about.

Another great strategy is to try and solve a very specific problem. A great example of this might be helping people who are getting married, or helping people who are trying to buy a home. Once you click it, you'll then have to click 'Request Affiliate Approval'. In a short time, you should hear back and be given an affiliate link that you can use to start promoting. You'll then get your affiliate link which is all you need to begin making money!

Quick Lesson: Affiliate Links

When you get an affiliate link, this is all you need to start making money. As long as someone clicks on your affiliate link, is taken to the website of the seller and *then* buys a product, you will get paid.

This works using cookies. For those who aren't familiar with the concept, a cookie is a small file that your browser downloads and then stores on your computer. Websites instruct the browser to do this and can then subsequently check for those cookies in order to identify users who have visited the site before and to store information about them. So for instance, when you log into Facebook, this stores a cookie on your computer and that is then what the site uses in order to identify who you are so you don't need to log in next time.

In this case, clicking on that specific link stores a cookie on the computer of the customer and then redirects them to the main checkout page. This in turn means that when they buy the product, the seller is able to identify you as the marketer who referred them. All this is handled automatically by an affiliate network meaning you don't need to worry about it – you just log in and then see easily how many sales you've made.

Step 2. Setting Up Facebook Ads

Next up, you need to set up some Facebook Ads to start sending people to the checkout page via your affiliate link. You can choose to do this either directly, or via a landing page. In this case we're going to keep things nice and simple by sending people *directly* to the checkout where they can buy the product.

Setting up adverts with Facebook is easy enough. Just log into Facebook and then click the arrow on the far right. Here you can then find an option called 'Create Adverts on Facebook'. Once this page loads, you can then create a new campaign and here you'll have a number of different options for the 'objective for your campaign'.

Now choose 'Send People to Your Website' and where it gives you the option to enter a URL, just enter the affiliate link you were given.

From here, you're then given a huge number of options regarding who you want to visit the link. You can choose to narrow the visitors down based on their location, based on their age, based on their behaviors and their interests... You can even target them based on their employers, based on their job title, based on their relationship status...

This process is called 'targeting' and this is how you can then make sure that the only people who see your ads are people who are quite likely to be interested in buying what you have to sell.

This is important because your objective is not to be seen by as many people as possible and it is not to be clicked by as many as people as possible. Every click is costing you money, so what you want to do is to increase the number sales you get while keeping the number clicks to an absolute minimum. You *don't* want anyone to click your ad who isn't at all likely to buy.

So let's say that we were looking at the 'marriage' option and you were hoping to sell an eBook on how to organize a cheap wedding that still impresses guests. Now, all you need to do is to target men or women who are engaged. Now the only people who see the ad, are people who are likely to be currently planning a wedding. You can also target people who are of a certain age to avoid the types of people who maybe are happy to live as engaged for years without any plans to get married.

Further down the page, you get to choose your daily budget. This determines how much you can spend every day before the ads stop showing. If you only have a set budget to spend on advertising, then this is an important figure to set – otherwise you can end up spending hundreds or thousands of dollars!

It might be tempting here to think that you can set your ad spend really low in order to avoid losing too much money. This strategy might work in theory but in practice it means that you won't get any ad clicks. That's because, as mentioned briefly earlier, adverts have to compete for certain ad slots. There are hundreds of people all trying to

show ads to ‘engaged couples’ and so the budget you set will be used to determine how often your ad shows up instead of someone else’s. The higher your budget, the more you’ll pay for each click but the more your ad will be seen. You need to spend a certain amount just to ensure that your ad is actually going to show up at all!

Next we get to add an image, a title and a description. The title should be something eye grabbing and something that makes our product sound desirable. It’s only 40 characters long though, so you need to be smart with your use of words.

The description meanwhile is where we elaborate and this is where we’re going to use a smart technique to improve our ROI further. This is only 20 characters long though. Finally, you reiterate your destination URL. There is a ‘text section’ though as well where you also get to add some information about your site, and you can use a few more characters here.

Finally, you also get to add an image and again our aim here is to grab the eye.

So while the headline and the image will grab the eye and will draw people in, we’re going to use our description to filter people out. How? By adding the price of our product front and center and by being very frank about what it is. So for instance:

Plan The BEST Budget Wedding Ever!

\$50 Wedding Planning Tips eBook!

So the reason this works so well, is that it tells people front and center what the price of the eBook is. They’re not going to click the link thinking they’re getting free tips (unless they don’t read the full thing – which will happen). Most of the time, your visitors will only click the link if they’re *potentially* interested in buying an eBook for \$50. You just got rid of all your time wasters and greatly improved your profit margin as a result!

Going Local

It’s up to you if you want to use this strategy but another option to help increase your ROI further is to filter your audience by local area. For instance, you could say that your eBook is only for people in X location. This will greatly reduce the amount of competition you’re facing and thereby mean that your ad is seen more often even if you set your daily budget to be lower. Check out <http://FacebookSecrets.sec.bz>

Creating a Landing Page

With the above business model, you can start spending some money, you can set your ad to live and you can start earning right away. Then, the more you invest, the more you can increase your revenue and profit.

The amazing thing about choosing a niche like ‘weddings’ is that new people are coming along all the time. This means you’re very unlikely to saturate the market!

But at the moment, you’re rather reliant on other people. You’re paying to send people to the product creator’s website where they can buy the eBook but if they drop the ball and fail to sell the product then you’re going to be wasting money.

This is why it’s very important to look at another key number when you’re choosing your product on JVZoo – that being the ‘conversions’ figure. This number tells you what percentage of referrals are successfully converted into buyers and that makes it very important for you to think about.

But seeing as many of the more niche products on JVZoo only have 50+ sales, you might be wondering if there isn’t more you can do to encourage even more sales. The good news is that there is!

Specifically, what you want to be doing here is to create your own ‘landing page’ or ‘sales page’. This is a page that is entirely built around promoting and selling a product. Instead of linking your Facebook ad to the affiliate product directly then, you instead link it to your landing page where you’ll make the product sound absolutely amazing and really whet the appetite for it. This way, people will be more likely to want the product and to click through from your landing page to make a purchase.

Quick Lesson: Landing Pages

You’ve likely come across landing/sales pages in the past and there will most likely have employed a similar design. Most landing pages are built to have a very long, thin and vertical design. They then consist of a compelling description of the product being sold and will have no external links or navigation.

The whole point of a landing page is to encourage sales of a product and nothing else. This is why you don’t link to your ‘home page’ or your ‘about page’ – anything that could distract from your sales copy or ‘Buy Now’ button is omitted.

The long vertical design meanwhile is employed to encourage readers to scroll down the page. This is done as the simple act of scrolling down a page makes people feel more invested in an idea that’s being sold to them. As you scroll the page, you feel as though you’re going deeper into the site and you’re spending more time and energy on that sales pitch. After you’ve scrolled a certain distance you will feel sufficiently committed to then want to buy something. Or at least that’s the theory...

How do you create a landing page? You'll need to know the basics of setting up a website (see the next chapter) but once you have a hosting account and domain name sorted out, you can skip having to do any actual design yourself by using the excellent 'Optimize Press' to automate most of the process. This is a tool that makes it very simple to create a new landing page and this can be easily integrated with an affiliate link. Now just add the text and images that you think would help to sell the product and you'll see even greater conversions.

This is a very basic business model you can use to start making money through Facebook Ads and JVZoo immediately then. Throw in a landing page and you'll start earning even more.

It really is that easy but in order to start optimizing your profits and scaling the business you'll want to stick around for some of the more advanced affiliate marketing secrets that we have to share...

Chapter 4:

Building Your Empire – Setting Up the Essentials

You've already seen at this point how a landing page can help to support the basic business model we've created. For this you'll need a few additional materials and services that get a little more complicated than simply signing up for Facebook Ads or for JVZoo.

Instead, to create a landing page you're going to need the fundamental components of a website which means you'll want a hosting account and you'll want a domain name. Once you combine these two elements you'll have everything you need to create a website and start filling it with content.

This also allows you to create your own blog and to start doing what's known as 'content marketing'. This is how you'll build a lot of your trust and authority over time and it's a crucial tool in the arsenal of any affiliate marketer.

Quick Lesson: Content Marketing

Almost anything you do to try and promote a website or an online product *other* than using PPC (pay per click advertising) will involve content marketing to some degree. Content marketing essentially means promoting something by creating content – be that video or written content.

Either way, content is highly valuable because it's what most people come onto the web *for*. If you're not on Facebook, you will most likely use the web to search for news, information, how-tos, entertainment or resources. All of these things take the form of content. To find that content meanwhile, you'll likely use Google to search for it – and thus SEO (Search Engine Optimization – which we'll come to later) also relies on content. People share content they like on social media, which is another way we find new websites and generally content is the main way that sites and brands can provide value online and keep people coming back.

Content marketing goes beyond creating more ways for people to find your website though. If you create enough high quality content and post it regularly, then eventually you should be able to get to the point where people learn to trust your brand as an authority resource. Thus, they will seek out your website whenever they have questions regarding a certain subject. What's more, they will be far more likely to trust you when you recommend a product or service.

Setting up a domain name, hosting account and blog are crucial steps for your marketing activities then. And as well as this, you should also look into setting up an autoresponder. This is a service that handles a mailing list, allowing you to invite new subscribers and then to message everyone on that list at once. While you might not necessarily always *need* an autoresponder, they save you a lot of time and work by letting people easily subscribe and unsubscribe, by backing up your list and by generally making it a lot easier to manage. These also let you create simple 'opt-in forms' which are the forms people fill out in order to sign up to your list.

Creating a Website

To begin, let's look at how you go about setting up a website and everything you need in order to manage one.

Domain Name

The first thing you'll need then is your URL. A URL is a domain name that acts as the address for your website. If you hope to use a lot of content marketing and to build up a recognizable brand that you can use to establish yourself as a thought leader, then you will need a domain name that's easily recognizable and that is catchy.

Your domain name should also be something that describes your business well. Most likely you're going to choose a niche that you will operate in predominantly (more on this later) and so you should make sure that your name reflects that. If you're going to be selling fitness products, then try and ensure people know this right away from your business name. Subtly doesn't benefit you much when you have a short amount of time to make an impact.

To acquire a domain name, this is who I recommend: www.NameCheap.com

Hosting

Next you're going to need a hosting account. While your domain name is what will act as the 'address' for your website, the hosting account is going to be what you use to store all your files.

To understand a server, it's helpful to imagine them as essentially being large computers that are constantly connected to the website and that contain websites. When you buy server space, you'll be getting storage space on one of these computers which will likely be holed up in a warehouse somewhere and looked after by a series of technicians to ensure it stays safe and secure against hackers, faults etc.

When someone then types in the domain name you've bought, it then points the browser to that particular space on a server. This then gives it access to the files that make up your website, including the HTML and CSS files that define the layout, design and formatting, as well as all the images and content.

Again, you can get hosting from a number of different sites. Here's what I recommend: www.HostGator.com

Whatever you choose though, you'll need to compare some of the features and different types of hosting.

Types of hosting include:

Shared Hosting: This is the basic type of hosting, which means you get a portion of the space on a specific server. If you imagine a server to be like a computer, it's as though you're getting 20% of the harddrive space to yourself, while other users will get the other parts.

Practically, this doesn't make much difference to you – you'll never see the files of the other user and they'll never see yours. What it does mean though, is that you'll have less available storage space and less 'bandwidth' (bandwidth is how much data can be transferred before the server goes down temporarily or gets very slow – the more people using the same server, the greater the strain will be).

Dedicated Hosting: This way you get your own server that no one else gets to use. That means more space, more bandwidth and more flexibility regarding what you're allowed to install. For instance, if you want to build a web app, you'll need to install a PHP Framework. Some of these, such as Symfony, will only work on dedicated servers.

In some cases, dedicated hosting users will even be permitted to sell storage space to other people as a reseller.

Cloud Hosting: Here you will have multiple copies of your site on different servers (either shared or dedicated) meaning that if one server goes down, the hosting provider can simply redirect traffic to another copy of your website. This means less downtime and of course it also means you get several times the amount of storage and a far less stingy bandwidth limit.

As an affiliate marketer, your hosting requirements will be relatively modest. You won't have too many people visiting your site at once and when they do, they won't be downloading lots of large images. You can certainly start with shared hosting account then to keep your initial investment low and then just build up to the more expensive and comprehensive solutions over time.

Other things to consider are the customer support, the amount of downtime (read reviews) and the additional features. Something very useful to look for is cPanel – which is a selection of tools that will come in very handy for all kinds of webmasters and affiliate marketers in particular.

Setting Up WordPress

Now you have your hosting account and you have your domain name, you can start actually building your first website.

The good news here, is that you won't actually need to have any coding skills or really much by the way of design skills. Instead, we're going to look at how you can build a website with WordPress – and in just a few very quick clicks!

Quick Lesson: What is WordPress?

For those who haven't encountered WordPress before, this is essentially a type of CMS. A CMS is a 'Content Management System', which is basically a platform that you use to organize and manage the content on a website. This means that you can install it on your server and then use it to upload new blog posts or web pages, as well as to edit the ones you already have.

WordPress goes much further than this though and also lets you completely change the design of your website at the touch of a button, or install whole new themes created by the community (some of which will cost you money and others of which are completely free). Better yet, you can also use WordPress to install 'plugins' which are small pieces of code that add interesting and unique features to your website, many of which can help you immensely as an affiliate marketer.

There are many other CMS options out there such as Drupal, but none of them come close to providing the range of features and options available through WordPress. WordPress has by far the most users and which means more plugins and themes and greater support. This has essentially become the 'industry standard' and that also ensures that if something goes wrong with your WordPress site, any web designer or technician you work with should have an understanding of the platform and be able to help.

Of course there are some advantages to building your own website entirely from scratch but if you do this you are creating a lot more work for yourself and drastically increasing the up-front investment, thereby creating greater risk and also reducing your potential profit margin.

Another benefit of WordPress is that it's known to be Google friendly. In other words, using WordPress ensures that SEO will be easier than it otherwise could be and this ensures you'll know it's not the basic code of your website that is causing you problems.

Many massive blogs that are incredibly successful use WordPress. These include the likes of Mashable, Forbes, some of the BBC websites, The Verge, Engadget, Smart Passive Income... the list goes on. As with picking an affiliate product that is already making sales, this is simply the smarter strategy when it comes to creating a website because it means you'll be using a simple method to create a site that you *know* can be highly successful.

This again means that you're taking an almost 'cut and paste' approach to your business and setting yourself up to win. Why overcomplicate matters creating a site that may have technical difficulties and investing a huge amount of time and money, when there is a tool available that can help you quickly create a highly professional looking website in minutes?

OptimizePress which we discussed earlier is *also* a WordPress plugin and you'll find that most autoresponders are highly compatible with WordPress. Again, using these ready-made elements saves you time and effort and ensures a product that has been created to a professional standard. It's just smart business and there's no good reason to take any other approach.

Setting up WordPress is incredibly simple if you have a hosting account with cPanel. In this case, you should be able to find an option when you log in called 'Fantastico'. This essentially installs WordPress on all your behalf, so all you have to do is to select that option and then choose a domain name and a username and password for yourself. If you don't see Fantastico then look around, you might also see similar products there such as SimpleScripts, Softaculous or even just 'WordPress'. Any of these will walk you through the installation and the whole thing takes a matter of seconds.

The other option is to install WordPress manually if you don't have cPanel. To do this, you simply need to visit www.wordpress.com and then download the files in a zip format. Next, unzip the package and upload the entire folder to your server. You can do this using the file manager provided by your hosting provider, or by using FTP (file transfer protocol) software such as FileZilla.

Either way, add the files to the root directory of your server and then open your website in any browser. Then you'll see a page letting you create a configuration file and from there you'll be able to choose your username, password etc. Click 'run the install' and it will complete in a matter of minutes (if that).

If you have any difficulties, it may mean that you needed to create a new MySQL database first. You can do this through cPanel but if you struggle then you can find plenty of instructions online, including on WordPress.com itself to talk you through these more advanced steps.

Now if you navigate to your website again, you'll see a blank website with a generic design and no content yet. Steer to 'www.example.com/wp-admin' and you'll be able to log in to the main control panel.

This is where you'll start creating your website in more detail by adding custom 'themes' (to change the design of the website), by creating a name for your website and by adding your content and pages. Most of this is fairly self-explanatory and intuitive thanks to the user-friendly interface provided by WordPress.

One thing to note when choosing your theme though, is that you may do better to find an alternative theme to the ones provided through WordPress itself. The themes on offer here are going to be fairly uninspired and generic and you may find that you encounter them quite regularly while surfing the web. Instead, buy a custom theme from a website like 'Theme Forest' and you'll be able to find something that's unique and that looks much more professional.

Setting Up an Autoresponder

Now your site is live, you can start adding additional features. For any affiliate marketer, one of the first and most crucially important features is of course the autoresponder – which is what will manage your mailing list.

As mentioned earlier, the job of your autoresponder is to allow people to sign up to your mailing list, to protect you against spam and to let people unsubscribe. This also makes it nice and simple for you to message everyone on your list at once, or to message specific people on your list. You can also see a number of metrics, which shed light on how many people are subscribing at any given time, how many people have unsubscribed, how many people actually open your e-mails... etc.

When it comes to autoresponder there are three big choices. These are MailChimp, Aweber and GetResponse. Any of these will provide effectively the same benefits but none of them are free. Unfortunately, they're also a little complicated in terms of pricing as they all cost different amounts depending on the number of subscribers – making it hard to directly compare the value on offer. The best choice for you then will often depend on how many subscribers you're likely to get as well as your cash flow.

Here's what I use for 10 years now and I have no plans on changing:
<http://idcibc.com/go/?arpreach>

If you don't like what I use, the following graph outlines the costs of each of the main autoresponders depending on the number of subscribers:

MailChimp:

Subscribers	Monthly Fee
500	\$10
1,000	\$15
10,000	\$75
20,000	\$150
30,000	\$215
40,000	\$240
50,000	\$240

AWeber:

Subscription Plan	Fee
Monthly	\$19
Quarterly	\$49
Yearly	\$194

This is then on top of the following monthly fee:

Subscribers	Additional Monthly Fee
< 500	N/A
501-2,500	\$10
2,501-5,000	\$30
5,001-10,000	\$50
10,001-25,000	\$130
25,001+	Not Listed

Get Response:

Subscribers	Monthly Fee
1,000	\$15
2,500	\$25
5,000	\$45
10,000	\$65
25,000	\$145
50,000	\$250
100,000	\$450

Whichever of these you pick, you'll then be able to create an opt-in form, which is the form your visitors will fill in in order to subscribe. You can then insert this into your sidebar, or you can embed it within your individual pages and posts. A popular choice is to place an opt-in form at the bottom of each of your blog posts.

We'll look at how to get the most out of your mailing list in the next chapter. For now though, know that it is absolutely essential to have one of these on your website. This is effectively going to be what you use to bring back visitors who otherwise might only see your website once and leave. This gives you the means to turn that one person who stumbled onto your website by accident into a lead and into a loyal fan.

Here's what I use for 10 years now and I have no plans on changing: www.Aweber.com

Creating a Checkout and Sales Page

Now you have a website and you're collecting e-mails, you're going to want to give people somewhere to actually *buy* your products.

As mentioned previously, one easy way to do this is by setting up a landing page with Optimize Press. This is a tool that makes it very simple to build a website with a sales-page design that will look professional and that will be optimized for selling. If you intend on selling your own digital products rather than working as an affiliate, then Optimize Press can also help you to build a checkout that will handle sales for you.

Using something like Optimize Press is particularly important because it looks professional. When someone is thinking about spending money with you, ensuring that your sales page looks professional is an absolute must – otherwise, people might be put off of buying from you if they think your website is part of a scam or may have some security holes.

Setting up Optimize Press is also very easy thanks to its WordPress integration. In fact, Optimize Press is actually a theme rather than a plug in, so once you install it it will simply transform the look of your site. If you want to have a sales page alongside a website with a blog then, you might want to use two separate WordPress installations in different folders on your server.

Another option is to use Volusion. Volusion is an interesting choice that straddles the line between eCommerce platform and sales page. This means you can use it to sell multiple products of your own, or to sell just one product of your own. Interestingly, it also gives you some integrated tools as an affiliate marketer: for instance, it comes with its own built-in autoresponder and even lets you set-up your *own* affiliate account so that people can sell *your* products.

Of course you can also just create a page on your WordPress site or create a blank page yourself in HTML and use this as your checkout. If you're selling affiliate products then the checkout side of things will likely be handled by the affiliate network, or by the product creator meaning that you can just acquire the customers and refer them without worrying about handling payment.

Another option is to forgo any kind of landing page on your website at all. Instead, you might just embed your affiliate links into the body of your articles and text, you might ad adverts to your site that promote affiliate links, or you might promote the affiliate products through e-mails and social media only. These strategies can work but the best scenario is to use every possible opportunity to promote the products you're selling – so having a landing page is advised.

Setting Up Your Social Media

Finally, you need to make sure that you sign up to every big social media platform available. The saying that you will often hear when it comes to digital marketing and social media is 'be everywhere'. That is to say, that the more different social media sites you're on, the more different 'in-roads' you will create pointing toward your site, your landing page and opt-in form.

At the same time, every time someone sees you on social media, this will be an opportunity to strengthen your brand and to increase brand awareness. Apart from anything else as well, having a consistent brand across a number of different social media sites looks highly professional and suggests that you have a well thought-out and managed business.

The following sites are sites that you should be on at the very least:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- LinkedIn
- Google+

Additionally, you could also set up accounts with:

- Tumblr
- Vine
- YouTube
- SnapChat

You then want to connect all these accounts together and link them with your website. This way, your social media accounts can help to promote your website and your website can help to strengthen your social media accounts.

Look for a theme then that includes social media buttons linking to your accounts on the home page. This way, someone who visits your website can then decide they want to see more of your content and follow you on Facebook or Twitter simply by clicking a button.

You can even get plugins that show your Twitter feed, which is very useful for demonstrating the type of content you provide and for encouraging more follows (as an added bonus, it also keeps your site looking active even if you haven't added a blog post for a while).

Additionally, you should add social sharing buttons to your blog posts and pages so that readers can opt to share your content on *their* social media accounts. One plugin that lets you do this is called 'ShareAholiC'.

Now, when someone visits your website and decides they want to follow your brand, they can add themselves to your Facebook or Twitter accounts. If they read something you've written and like it, they can then share it with their network, which might lead to more people visiting your site and more people following you on social media. As you can see then, this becomes a self-sustaining 'virtuous cycle' that brings in more and more followers and visitors over time.

With all this in place, you have the basic tools you need to start stepping up your affiliate marketing activities. Now it's time to look at some of the different growth hacks and other techniques you can use to accelerate your progress and maximize your profits...

Chapter 4:

Promoting Your Brand and Building Trust – From Content Marketing and SEO to List Building and Social Media

Unless you're made of money, there's only so much you can do with PPC advertising alone. Eventually then, affiliate marketing comes down to being able to promote your website and your brand and to reach a wider audience. This means leveraging the mailing list, blog and social media accounts that you have set up and using them to attract more new visitors and to build trust and authority.

What you need to recognize here is that you are the 'middle man' – and in any business, the 'middle man' is effectively unnecessary. The buyer doesn't really need you and the seller doesn't really need you, so you need to make yourself indispensable to each. In this case, that means helping the product creator to sell a far greater number of products than they otherwise could. And for the buyer, it means providing great quality content and information and helping to find the best deals and products out there.

Every business is ultimately predicated around providing value of one kind of another. *This* is how the internet marketer provides their value. At the same time, it's also how you *succeed* as an internet marketer and how you build momentum and a following.

In this chapter, we will see this link very clearly while looking at the three main types of marketing available to you to promote your brand.

How to Succeed on Social Media

One of your number one tools as an affiliate marketer is social media. This gives you a direct line of communication while at the same time letting you leverage the power of real world social networks.

Compared with e-mail marketing, social media has the drawback of meaning you have to go through a third party – that being Facebook, Twitter or Google. But while this can be a problem, the positive side is that people can share your content with their friends and this gives it the potential to go viral. At the same time, social media is generally more multi media and makes it easier for you to share different types of content.

But unfortunately, 90% of businesses and marketers go about their social media marketing in entirely the wrong way. The problem here is that they will spend their time posting to social media but all they'll post about is how good their business is and it will sound very much like 'corporate speak'.

The kind of content you can often expect to hear then, is just comments like:

"Find out why our EPOS system is the best on the market!"

"Save yourself time and money with a better EPOS system!"

"Looking for an EPOS system? Why not choose the top rated software package in the industry!"

If this is the type of status you are publishing to your Twitter or Facebook account, then unfortunately you are entirely missing the fundamental objective of social media marketing.

This type of content would be fine of course, if you already *had* an audience and your objective was simply to market to them. (Even then though, there's a good chance you'd lose your followers who would quickly unsubscribe...)

What's actually happening here though, is that you're posting content to nobody and you're not giving anyone who might stumble upon it *any* reason that they should consider signing up. The question to *always* ask yourself when creating content for the web is: would *you* follow it? If you saw a social media account like this, then would you subscribe?

If the answer is no, then you really need to reconsider how you might be providing your value.

How to Do Social Media Right

The key is all in the way that you look at your social media and the way you consider it within the broader context of your marketing. Specifically, it's important that you start to think of your social media profiles not only as an opportunity to promote yourself but actually as a product in its own right. What does that mean? It means that the social media accounts should provide value to the point where people *want* to sign up to them and would be disappointed if they were gone.

Of course you need to do this while also remaining on-point with your marketing and that means you need to focus on whatever niche or industry you've chosen. If that's fitness, then it's no good for your Facebook account to be all about business.

But it's *also* no good for your account to be all about how good the product you're selling is. Instead, you should aim to fill it with inspiring images of people working out and getting into great shape, with interesting industry news about *genuinely* fascinating new products and with helpful tips and advice.

If you're selling life insurance, then you may find that it's a little harder to see how you can maintain an interesting and entertaining social media account. In that case though, you simply need to think a little more out of the box. In particular, this could mean that you share pictures of families enjoying life together, or tips for family activities. Maybe you could run a social media account about 'tips for the modern parent', or maybe you could give it a humorous angle 'dispatches from the frontline of parenthood'. Either way, you've now created almost a new brand, a new mission statement and a new form of value for that social media account itself and you've given people good reason to follow you.

This is how you then build your following and you would find that if you consistently put out good quality in this vein, it would eventually give you a huge audience to market to. Notice here that what's really important is the value that you are providing.

More Ways to Provide Value

There are more ways you can provide value too. One is simply to share lots of great content. This means sharing your *own* content (more on that later) but it can also mean sharing lots of content from other blogs in your niche. This latter option essentially

means you're providing a curated content service that will keep your readers up to date with the latest news, products and breakthroughs in your areas.

The great thing about sharing content that you didn't create is that it provides a ton of value while at the same time taking you only seconds. If you browse YouTube and Reddit in the morning, you can simply click 'share' to post to your Facebook page or Twitter feed and thereby provide your audience with great content.

Another bonus of sharing third party content is that you can make sure what you're selling is likely to succeed. This is similar to picking the right affiliate products: there's no chance that the content won't succeed because you can already *see* that it is being read, like and shared.

One of the best ways to do this is through Reddit, as this site has a social structure that lets you see when content has been 'upvoted' (similar to a like). Another option is to use a paid tool like BuzzSumo which shows you how well each blog post is doing on different types of social media and then lets you very easily share to your own blogs and

Focusing on the Lifestyle

Another tip is to try and focus on the lifestyle you're promoting. Once you enter into a niche with a proper brand, you should try and think of yourself as more than just an affiliate marketer trying to sell your product. Instead, think of yourself as a leader in your niche and as someone who is promoting a specific way of life, a specific activity or a specific activity that you really believe in. You're not selling running shoes – you're selling fitness. Try and find the emotional hook that resonates with your customers and you can get them to become loyal fans of your social media.

A good example of this would be to approach Instagram with your emotional hook in mind. To sell those running shoes, you could post images of people in great shape running on the beach against a sunny backdrop, or you could upload images of people lifting heavy weights in the weight room – complete with motivational quotes.

Likewise, if you sell eBooks about earning money online, then you can post pictures of people working on fancy looking computers in coffee shops, sitting in hammocks writing against a sunset, or standing in high rises wearing nice suits. People who are drawn to this way of life will enjoy your content, they will follow you and they will be more moved to buy your products when you mention them.

The Social Factor

What's also key to remember here though, is that social media is... well... *social*. That is to say that people go on social media not only to consume content but also to discuss it and to engage with others. This is a communication tool first and foremost and as such it's important that you consider this aspect when you're trying to promote your brand.

So how do you leverage the communicative aspects of social media in order to increase your following and to get more people to read your content?

There are numerous different strategies you can use. One is simply to engage in more discussions yourself. When you take part in a discussion on Google+, on Facebook or anywhere else using your brand, you will have an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge, your area of expertise and your personality and this can lead to some new follows on those networks.

Additionally, you should invite your followers to connect with you. Ask questions and consult your audience. Write back when someone comments to you. Retweet messages you like from your followers. All of this will help your followers and fans to feel more engaged with your brand and it will increase their likelihood of sharing *your* messages. If you retweet something that someone says in your messages then they'll be far more likely to respond in kind and do the same. Two things are at play here:

- Reciprocity
- Narcissism

Reciprocity because people are highly driven to repay favors afforded them by others (which is why a salesman in Turkey will always offer you a free drink in the hopes you'll be obligated to do them a favor!) and narcissism because we love promoting things that make us look good or that show us in a generally good light.

So if you comment on someone's Tweet, they then get the perk of interacting with your brand which demonstrates their own influence. To prove that they're making waves then, they may be motivated to share one of *your* Tweets or to respond to you and this then means you get seen by their audience. We'll talk more about these kinds of strategies and 'influencer marketing' in a subsequent chapter. Generally though, the more you interact and act as though there's an actual human personality behind your Twitter handle, the more you'll gain exposure and momentum across social media.

SEO Basics

Alongside SEO, the other strategy you can use to promote your website and thus your landing page/store is SEO. SEO of course is Search Engine Optimization and this

essentially means that you design and manage your website and marketing in such a way as to ensure you climb to the top of Google.

This can help to bring in some very targeted traffic to your site. Whereas using Facebook Ads as described earlier allows you to target people who have stated an interest in your niche, industry or product. SEO means you can target people who are actually *actively seeking* the item you're putting out. In that regard, you have the benefit of *timing* as well as targeting.

To put this in perspective, showing an ad for a book on a cheap wedding to a young, engaged woman makes a lot of sense but there's no guarantee that that person will be currently interested in buying anything. They might have already planned their wedding! Or they might just not be in the market to buy anything at that time.

But if you can show an organic search result to someone who is looking for 'tips for a cheap wedding' then you know that in the moment they find your website, they are *currently* looking for those tips.

Seeing as most people turn to Google when looking for any kind of information or product online, this is a fantastic strategy for increasing your revenue and thus your profits.

And the other advantage that SEO grants you? It doesn't cost anything! If you handle the SEO process yourself, then it's completely free. And even if you pay a third party to do it for you, you can save money by only paying for the initial work – not paying for each subsequent click. In theory, a good SEO process can yield results for years to come.

How SEO Works

So how does SEO work?

At a very fundamental level, SEO works via 'robots' and 'spiders'. These are the scripts and programs that Google uses to 'read' the internet. These work individually and thereby allow Google to index the web, adding the URLs of websites and their subjects to a database it can use to bring up relevant results when someone does a search.

When reading the content on a website, Google will comb through it for phrases and terms and these will then be matched with search terms. So if someone searches for 'I need a new hat to go with my blue trousers' and you happen to have that exact phrase on your site (or something similar to it), that page will then be brought up as one of the top results. This is called a 'long tail keyword'; it's a keyword because it's a phrase that someone searched to find your site and it's long tail because it's long-form – the type of keyword that emerges naturally within the content that few people are likely to compete with you on.

The best way to get lots of hits from these kinds of long-tail keywords is simply to write a *lot* of content around your subject. This is why most websites have a blog – the more content you add to a blog the more content there will be for Google to index and the more likely your site will be to come up for various searches.

Regular keywords – the types that you will target specifically – will tend to be much shorter. An example of this would be ‘buy hats online’. This is the sort of thing *lots* of people would search for regularly but which there would also be a lot of competition for.

So the question is: how do you rank for these popular keywords in such a way that you’ll rank *higher* than the competition who are also going for these same terms?

One answer to this is volume and repetition: simply having a *ton* of content will help you to fend off the competition with less, as will repeating your keywords more often. You don’t want to repeat those keywords too much though: doing this looks to Google as though you are trying to manipulate the rankings and artificially elevate your position at the expense of great quality content (content doesn’t tend to read well when it has hundreds of repetitions of the same phrase – this is called ‘keyword stuffing’!). Generally it is recommended that a keyword have around 1-2% keyword ‘density’. This means that you can repeat your keyword once every 100-200 words. However, if you want to ‘play it safe’ to avoid penalization, then you may want to be even more cautious than that.

To repeat the same keywords lots of times without fear of ‘stuffing’, a simple solution is to write *more* content. With 100 articles on your subject, you can use a very low density and still repeat your keywords hundreds of times across your site.

Likewise, keywords can also be used in the HTML of your site and in file names. Use keywords for your image names and for your page names and this reinforces that association with Google. It’s also worth noting that Google sees some content as more crucial to the topic of a website than others dependent on its position. And specifically, this means that content in the opening or closing paragraph of your article will be seen as more influential than content in the main body. Using keywords in your H1 and H2 tags also has a similar effect as these are titles.

Quick Lesson: Content Quality, Algorithms and LSI Keywords

As mentioned earlier, keyword ‘stuffing’ is a very fast way to get your site penalized by Google. There was a time this wasn’t the case though and if you look back at the early days of SEO, then the advice was previously to just repeat the same keyphrases as frequently as you possibly could. This way, you would reinforce the relevance of your keyword in no uncertain terms and you would get to the top of Google for those searches through sheer brute force.

But once webmasters and businesses caught on to this fact, the results were bad for Google and for the web as a whole. This meant that a whole lot of the content you read would now read like the following:

“Looking to **buy hats online**? This is the best place to **buy hats online** and we have a ton of pages where you can **buy hats online**!

We have baseball caps, woolly hats and more to satisfy your **buy hats online** needs!”

As you can see, this content doesn’t really make sense and it’s highly distracting. At the same time, this system meant that the business that got to the top would simply be the one that was able to write the most content and repeat the keyphrase the most often – quality be damned!

So Google needed to evolve and they needed to adapt their algorithm. The new focus for Google after these changes would be to provide the visitor with the content they were looking for and to make sure that the content was helpful, useful and relevant – after all, that’s Google’s USP!

Thus we entered into an age where every few months, Google would update their algorithm and give it a name like ‘Panda’, ‘Penguin’ or ‘Pigeon’ and thereby mix up the search rankings. Today, keyword stuffing will get your content penalized which is why you should never go over 2% density. Likewise, you need to be varied with anchor text when linking *to* your site and you need to show Google other indicators that you are delivering quality content through your site. These indicators include things like content length (Google now likes ‘in-depth’ articles which are around 1,800 words long) and links out to other useful resources. What’s more, your content should also be completely unique and original and should involve lots of related terms and synonyms *around* your keyword.

This latter point is what is known as ‘LSI keywords’. LSI stands for ‘Latent Semantic Indexing’ and the idea is that Google now looks for words that relate to your search terms. This doesn’t only suggest that you are genuinely writing in-depth on the subject you claim to be discussing, it also shows that you have a good vocabulary, writing style and knowledge *and* it helps Google to better recognize what type of content you’re delivering.

For instance, if you use the word ‘fork’ then you might be talking about cutlery or a fork in the road. Google will thus look for relevant expressions relating to either one of those

subjects and use this in order to know *which* of those topics your website is about. It's crucial then as a webmaster that you also take the time to use lots of variations on your primary keywords in order to do all of this. It also gives you a way to increase your keyword density without stuffing and without it seeming unnatural.

Finally, Google looks at how long people are spending on your page and how many people are leaving before they've been there long enough to read anything (your 'bounce rate').

Google is improving its algorithm all the time and this means they will increasingly get better and better at filtering out people who are trying to 'game' the system. The point is that they want you to stop focusing on how their algorithm works and instead to focus on delivering high quality content in large quantities to your users. If you can do that, then your goals will be aligned with Google's and as a result you'll be more likely to succeed.

Focus on your users and as with every other aspect of your marketing, make sure you are delivering great *quality* as well as quantity.

Link Building

The spiders and robots find content by finding links on other sites. If there are no links pointing at your site from page that Google has already indexed, then it will have no way of knowing your content is there and you might not come up in searches at all as a result.

At the same time though, these links (called 'inbound links') also serve another role; they act as testimonials or referrals. The assumption is that if a website is linking to your website, then that website must think your content is useful or interesting. If lots of high profile websites are linking to your site, then that probably means they're *right*.

This is the general concept but as with keyword density, it's crucial that you don't try to manipulate this approach. Sites that build a huge number of low quality links will be penalized for instance, as will sites that attempt to buy links, sites that only ever swap links and 'blog networks' that link to each other in a large chain.

Optimization

Finally, a good SEO strategy should also include some optimization for the website itself. This means that the site should load quickly, should be responsive so that it looks good on any type of display (including mobile) and should be intuitive to navigate and not drowning in adverts.

All this is important because Google wants to ensure that the sites it sends visitors to will provide an all-round good experience no matter what type of device they're on. What's more, when a website is designed in a specific way, this can help make it easier

for Google’s spiders to navigate. Having a ‘site map’ for instance can be a big help because it ensures Google doesn’t miss any content on your wider site.

The Process

With all that in mind then, the general process for SEO involves adding lots of high quality blog content to your site on a regular basis including keywords and trying to get as many links as you can on external websites that are relevant to yours.

As an affiliate marketer, it’s not a good idea to spend *too* much time doing this – as there are faster ways to get more direct traffic. However, you can get a lot of ROI by simply adding the content (which has other uses as we’ll see) and aiming to get links on a few of the larger blogs in your niche. You can achieve the latter by using ‘guest posts’. Here, you provide a blog in your niche with free content under the proviso that they provide a link back to your website in return. This way, they get free content and you get free links. Start with blogs that are at a similar level to yours and as you build up, you can target the bigger and bigger sites. One link on the right site can potentially completely change your fortunes, so don’t underestimate the value of this strategy.

At the same time, building a site effectively with WordPress will ensure that you have good optimization, rapid load times and a responsive design.

More PPC

Google AdWords

We’ve already discussed how to use Facebook Ads for PPC but this is only one type of PPC. Another network that provides a similar service is the highly popular ‘Google AdWords’. AdWords is like a mix between Facebook Ads and SEO, essentially letting you pay ‘per click’ for ads that appear on specific SERPs (Search Engine Results Pages). You choose the keywords that you intend to target, pay for an ad and then have your results show just above the organic results as a ‘sponsored result’.

Quick Lesson: AdWords as a Research Tool

Interestingly, you can also use AdWords as a research tool before you do your SEO. Bearing in mind that it can take a long time to succeed at SEO and to get to the top of the organic search results, it's a good idea to make sure that your search terms are *worth* ranking for before you put in all that time and effort or before you pay someone a lot of money to do it for you.

As such, you should consider using AdWords as a result tool by testing the search terms that you're interested in ranking for as AdWords keywords. If those ads bring in lots of money, then you know it's worth finding the organic results. If they don't? Then you should try different keywords and see if they do better. Once you find a term that is profitable, *then* you know it's worth putting in the time.

Using AdWords instead of Facebook Ads provides unique benefits. For instance, it means that you'll be able to target your visitors when they're actively looking for the kinds of content you provide. At the same time, you'll also have some specific tools that you can use to enhance your campaign. For instance, Google 'Remarketing' targets people who have already been to your website and visited a specific page. An example of how this can be used is to retarget people who spent time looking at your eBook with ads for that same eBook. This is an incredibly high ROI way to advertise because the person already knows what you're advertising and thus aren't likely to click on your ad unless they're interested in buying the product.

Another unique feature of AdWords is that it lets you include something called 'negative keywords'. These are keywords that you want to filter out so that your ads *won't* show. An example of this might be to filter out the word 'free' – this way you won't waste time advertising to someone who has expressly stated they're not looking to spend money.

AdWords also integrates with Google Analytics which provides you with a ton of data and metrics that you don't get from Facebook. For instance, what you can do with an Analytics account and an AdWords account is to set up goals – such as someone buying your book. You can then look at your control panel to see which ads are resulting in the most actual conversions – rather than just the most clicks. This kind of insight lets you hone your advertising campaign far more precisely and greatly increase their effectiveness over time.

CPA

That said though, Facebook does have a feature that is somewhat comparable to goals and in fact this can be considered even more powerful.

Specifically, Facebook gives you some basic CPA functionality. CPA stands for ‘Cost Per Action’ and what this means is that you’re no longer paying per click, but are instead paying per *action*. An action can be anything from someone buying a product (or in Facebook’s case, redeeming a special offer) or subscribing to a mailing list. In essence, this makes Facebook somewhat similar to an affiliate!

Unfortunately, it’s not easy to set up affiliate sales *as* your action. This means you can’t guarantee ROI by having a situation where you only get charged when someone buys your affiliate product.

That said, this is a very useful tool for building up your mainlining list and effectively means you’re paying X amount per targeted subscriber. Likewise, you can use this as a strategy to increase your Facebook page likes. Either of these can then subsequently be translated into conversions at least theoretically.

There are also a number of CPA sites networks that specialize in this kind of service and are much more flexible as a result. These sites include MaxBounty, Ascend Media, AdWorkMedia and more. While this is a great platform in theory though, the industry isn’t quite as developed as PPC overall, so there’s no one platform that has yet risen to prominence. Most CPA networks are a little tricky to get into to start with and some of them have been associated with dodgy practices.

Still, for the advanced marketer, this is certainly an area to keep an eye on!

Creating a Brand

If you’re only using e-mail marketing (which we’ll get to later) and/or PPC, then you don’t necessarily need to create a big brand.

However, if you’re going to be using the various different methods we’ve discussed here such as SEO and social media marketing, then it can pay to build yourself a brand.

A brand means a logo but it also means a mission statement – or a commitment to the value you’re going to provide. When a brand is handled well, it provides a calling card and a demonstration of intent. This way, any customers who buy from you and have a good experience will be able to identify more of your work and they will thus be more inclined to buy from you again in future.

Brands then are *very* useful when you plan on selling more than one affiliate product in the same niche. At the same time, if you have any long-term plans to create your own products, then this can also be a good strategy.

Finally, brands inspire trust and they help you to look more professional. Most of the big companies that we’re used to buying from have strong branding and thus we have come to associated brands with quality. If you have a great looking logo that’s present on your

website and across all your social media, then this consistent attention to your presentation will help you to build more trust and to generate more sales as a result.

So how do you create your brand?

Creating Your Logo

The first thing to do is to create your logo and to have a business name. Your name will likely come from your niche/industry and will probably be the same as your URL. At the same time, it should be something that makes it clear what you are selling and that is catchy and easy to remember.

From here, you can start creating a logo which will likely include your business name in some capacity. Some other criteria for a good logo include the following:

- Versatile – Your logo should look good on any website, any product or any colored background
- Simplicity – The simpler your logo, the better
- Originality – Avoid anything that is overly derivative or cliché. No lightbulbs and no globes!
- Attractiveness – It needs to look good!

To come up with a logo that will tick all these boxes, it helps to start with a research stage. Here, you should look up logos from different companies in your niche and you should look up different websites you like and images that relate to your company. Put these images together in a ‘mood board’ or collage (you can even use Pinterest) and then spitball by trying to combine the images and ideas in unique ways. Don’t leave anything out, draw as many logos as you can using the inspiration you’ve accumulated and you should find it leads to a few that are acceptable.

Then, once you have a few designs you find acceptable, take those and survey members of your audience to see which works best. This last stage is very important because your logo design isn’t *for* you but rather for your visitors.

Once you’ve settled on your logo, you can then go about creating it. You can either do this yourself or outsource it but either way it is critical that you use professional tools – and specifically this means vector software like Adobe Illustrator.

Vector software is software that lets you create ‘vector files’. These are image files that are distinct and unique from BMPs or PNGs (which we call ‘raster files’) because they can be scaled to any size without losing definition. They can also be edited very easily without having to ‘rub anything out’. The reason for this, is that they work differently from raster files. Whereas raster files are essentially pixel maps which tell the computer where to draw each dot to make up the bigger picture, vector files are a series of instructions that tell the computer where to draw each line or curve and what

angle/thickness it should be. This means you can zoom in because the rendering software simply knows to follow those same instructions but to draw longer lines. Likewise, this means you can alter the angle of a line, or delete a specific element in the background or foreground.

Should You Create a Personal Brand?

If you read the above instructions and thought it didn't sound very much like the affiliate marketing you're familiar with, then that is probably because most affiliate marketers use a personal brand. That is to say that they promote products under their *own* name rather than a company name. Note that this doesn't mean you *don't* need a logo, but it does become a little less important. Your name in a stylized font or perhaps with a cartoonified image of yourself will likely suffice.

Going this has a number of advantages for an affiliate marketer however. Your audience will likely know that the product you're selling is not your own and as such there is no need for you to pretend to be a big conglomerate with tons of resources. What you *can* be as an affiliate with your name as the brand though, is someone your audience feel that they know and that they can trust. This then helps them to be more likely to take your recommendations when you suggest products and services. This allows you to speak in the first person and that in turn can be much more persuasive when you're trying to sell 'this exciting new product'. You can use your first hand experiences, testimonials and more and you can build a sense of recognition and familiarity.

Having a personal brand is also very useful for social media and it creates some new opportunities and options. For instance, you can fill your social media with much more personal content – comments about your day for instance or your opinion on things that are in the news. Either of these strategies will fill your social media with more interesting posts that people feel they can engage with and respond to and it's also a lot more fun because you can be 'yourself'.

Some people will also get a bit of a kick out of essentially becoming a very minor internet celebrity. You can become quite well known among your fans to the point where people start recognizing you from your social media or writing you grateful fan mail.

So why *wouldn't* you create a personal brand? One reason might be that you don't *like* the idea of people knowing who you are. You can always use a pseudonym in this case but unless you're willing to appear in pictures it might just be easier to go with a brand you're more detached from.

Likewise, a personal brand makes it much harder for you to branch out into multiple niches. You can have multiple companies all selling different items to different people but if you're the same person claiming to be an expert on health *and* claiming to be an expert on SEO then it can raise eyebrows and damage your reputation. Then again, you

may opt to have a personal brand *and* a company name – either in separate areas or focusing on a single subject. Tim Ferriss can be seen as an example of the latter. Tim Ferriss is an author and blogger who created ‘The Four Hour Workweek’. ‘The Four Hour Workweek’ and ‘Four Hour Blog’ have thus become brands but so is Tim in his own right. The same can be said for Pat Flynn and his blog ‘Smart Passive Income’.

Ultimately then, this comes down to the specific strategy that you’re intending to follow and as well as your own personal preference.

Staying On Message

Either way though, once you have a brand, it’s important to stay on message and to maintain the same mission statement and quality throughout. If you have a fitness brand, then you want people to feel secure in the knowledge that they can return to your site or social media channels whenever they want to enjoy fitness related content that focusses on getting results in the most efficient manner/whatever it is that you chose to make your mission statement.

Chapter 5:

How to Create Stunning Content That Gets Shares, Likes and Conversions

Writing great content for your blog is crucial to help promote your website and blog and thereby to create more opportunities to market your affiliate product.

If you were paying close attention to the earlier section on SEO, then you will hopefully have noticed that content really lies at the heart of this process. Adding more content to a blog gives Google more to index and this in turn translates as higher rankings for more search terms. Without written content, there is nothing for Google to index and no way for it to know what the topic of your site is.

At the same time, the more content you add to your blog, the more you will have to share on social media. Sharing your own content on social media is another *very* effective way to get more people to visit your site and to get more likes and follows; *and* it ensures that your existing followers are getting value from following you.

But it goes beyond this and that’s where the whole concept of ‘content marketing’ really comes in. Content marketing means that you use content not only to create more

inroads for your site and to help people find you but also to build the trust and authority that you need to establish yourself as a thought leader in your niche. You can access tons of [free content here](#).

Quick Lesson: Content Marketing

Essentially, the idea behind content marketing is simply to show your readers that you are capable of delivering high quality information, advice and entertainment so that they return to your site and sign up.

Let's say someone discovers one of your blog posts when they're looking for specific information on Google. They read your site, they notice your branding and they enjoy what they see. This won't be enough on its own to ensure they ever come back though.

But if they then see your content appear on social media because a friend shared it, they may be more inclined to click on it now. Likewise, if they see your site come up in the SERPs for another search in future, they might then be more likely to select your content over someone else's.

Either way, they now return to your site a few times and are impressed each time with the quality of what you have to offer. So now, when they have a specific question in mind and they need an answer from someone they can trust – they might *actively* look for you.

At the same time, they may find they enjoy your content so much that they actually sign up to your mailing list so that they can find it again in future. Perhaps they add you on social media.

Whatever happens, they now consider you a trusted resource on the subject matter and as such they will turn to you for advice and they will seek out your opinion. And when you recommend a product because it's 'the best you've ever seen'. *This* is the true power of content marketing and how it goes far beyond simply getting onto the SERPs.

And it goes further than this too. If you write your content *really* well then you might find that *other* people share it to their own social media without additional incentive. This type of content is called 'link bait' – content so interesting and good that it is practically begging to be shared.

Selling Directly From Content

You can even turn a great article into a direct way to generate sales for affiliate products *without* having to link out to a landing page: simply by embedding affiliate links into your content.

So let's say you write an article on 'how to make your first Android game'. Now of course this type of content would appeal to coders, developers, gamers and people with plans to become any of those things. As such, it would likely get shared rapidly throughout those groups and generate lots of inbound links. If in the body of the text you were to recommend a specific eBook or a program – even as an offhand remark – then people might click the link. Get enough visitors and this can result in a lot of big earnings.

And if you do this for *every* article and blog post on your site, then you are creating *huge* opportunities to make more sales each time a visitor comes to your blog.

Often, the number one form of monetization for bloggers is to place PPC advertising on their site. These pay per click ads pay them every time someone clicks on them (just like the PPC you might use on Facebook or AdWords) but they only get paid a few cents for each click and they lose the visitor whenever an ad gets clicked on. Remove these and add an affiliate link instead though and you can generate a *lot* more money from the same number of visitors: because you'll be earning \$30 or more for every time they click.

How to Create Great, Clickable Titles

As you can see then, the ability to create very high quality content within your niche is an absolutely fundamental skill for any affiliate marketer. How do you go about doing it?

The first clue is to look at what's currently working on social media. One type of content that is doing incredibly well on Facebook at the moment is content known as 'clickbait'. You've undoubtedly come across this type of content yourself and you've probably found it highly annoying.

Clickbait is content that uses a title that tries to tempt people into clicking on it even if they might not be interested in what it actually has to say. It achieves this by using titles that pique the curiosity of the reader, or that make wild claims or controversial statements.

An example of such a title is:

“This Woman Wouldn’t Let Her Friend Sit Down on the Bus – When You Find Out Why, It Will Blow Your Mind!”

Or

“This One Weird Trick Is Helping Men Of All Ages Build Muscle – But Should It Be Banned?”

The first article pulls you in through curiosity alone. As a reader, you rack your brain trying to work out why a woman wouldn’t let her friend sit down and how it could possibly blow your mind and the only recourse is to click the link to find out.

The latter title makes a huge claim while also remaining very mysterious. The ‘weird’ trick makes us want to find out more, while the idea that a muscle building strategy should maybe be banned is also outlandish enough to encourage clicks. It also sounds controversial and this means that even if you suspect it’s nonsense, you might click it just to leave a comment.

You see these titles *all* the time on Facebook and other social media and this alone should be enough to tell you that the strategy categorically *works* – otherwise people wouldn’t be spending their money on that type of content and they wouldn’t keep writing it.

But it only works in the short term. When you click on any of these titles, you will almost certainly be disappointed by what you find. Sometimes the links are so ad heavy that you don’t even get an actual article and the question is never answered at all. In other cases, the article will simply not really offer any value or interest. The muscle building trick is almost certainly going to be a landing page for some kind of scam product, while the former will probably be a weird video. Either way, you leave frustrated and this means you’re less likely to read anything from that brand again.

The Alternative Approach

So that’s one approach to writing article titles that isn’t right for you as an affiliate marketer but keep it in mind because we’ll be coming back to it.

Another approach that *doesn’t* work is what a lot of other websites do: which is to post dull, derivative and dry content on a regular basis.

You know the kind: these are articles on the ‘10 Best Pec Exercises’ or ‘Top SEO Tips’. These are articles that have been written a *million* different times by a *million* different writers and that most of us have read several iterations of. It just doesn’t sound interesting or different because there’s so much content out there just like it.

The question you should *always* be asking when posting any kind of content is: would *you* read it? If the answer is no, then chances are that your audience wouldn’t read it either – so forget it!

The Answer!

So what's the answer?

Simple: you use titles that are somewhat similar to clickbait but you then *deliver* on your promise with actually high quality information.

So instead of saying you have one weird muscle building trick, instead you do your research and you find some cutting edge studies on new muscle building supplements or techniques. 'Cardio Acceleration' is one fat burning technique that involves doing brief stints of cardio in between your lifts in the gym. In studies, this type of training has been shown to burn several hundred times more fat than other types of training – but it's not without its caveats.

When you use the term 'Cardio Acceleration' in your title though, you will still incur the curiosity of your audience because they likely won't have heard the expression before. At the same time though, you're not being strangely vague about it so they'll know that you're not just another scam artist. What's more, it sounds really *cool* and interesting.

So now your title is 'Cardio Acceleration – A New, Highly Efficient Fat Burning Technique That's Only for the Hardcore!'.

This title is every *bit* as clickable as the others except you actually have something interesting and useful to write on the subject.

Alternatively, you could create something else new and challenging. Instead of more SEO tips, how about: 'The Psychological Impact of Working as a Digital Marketer'. Instead of another article on the health benefits of cinnamon, how about listing some supplements for martial artists?

There are many more examples of this type of content you can create though it does involve a little more work. You just need to be unique and interesting and to do your research. Create titles that are exciting, cutting edge, different from anything else and that *you* would want to read.

How to Get Shares for Your Content

Getting your articles read is one thing and if you have an affiliate link embedded in there somewhere, then each new reader might translate to a new sale and more profits. But if you can get your articles to get *shared* then the returns will be cumulative and exponential. Aim to get your content to spread across the internet and to get promoted by your readers and you can drastically increase your results.

So how do you do that? The key is to understand the psychology behind sharing and the motivation that people have for doing it.

And understanding this goes back to looking at the fundamental role of social media: social media is a communication tool first and foremost and thus your aim should be to facilitate communication *via* your content.

So what is someone really trying to *say* when they share content?

Often, it comes down to a form of self-expression wherein the user is trying to demonstrate that they agree with what you're saying or that it resonates with them. Someone might share content about working from home because *they* work from home. They might share an article about nostalgic technology if there is something that brings back a memory for them. This is a little like putting posters up on your wall about your favorite band.

Another reason we share is because we think that other people will enjoy the content. We might share content with our entire network if we think it has general appeal but more often we will share an article with a specific individual we think will appreciate it. Know someone who absolutely loves Bruce Lee and won't stop talking about them? Then that article on 'Why Bruce Lee is STILL the Greatest Martial Artist' is for them. Know someone who has a bad habit of eating out of date food? Then you might share with them an article on 'Just Because You Can't See It, Mold Can Still be Harmful'.

Controversial articles also do well for similar reasons as they allow a discussion, as do articles that can act as resources or guides. 'A Complete Guide to Every Bodyweight Exercise EVER' will get lots of shares if it is sufficiently long and well-researched because people can link to it whenever they're talking about bodyweight exercises or when someone says something like 'there aren't many ways to train your shoulders with bodyweight' on Reddit.

So how do you hit gold with these sorts of articles that people will share every time?

The secret is to have a target in mind *as you write them*. Think of your articles like products and research your markets before you make them. Don't just write a generic article and then hope that someone will read it and share it: write articles knowing precisely the kind of person who will like it (your persona) and the type of use it might have.

This also gives you a route to market for your articles – it gives you a specific place you can post links where you know people will appreciate it. Every time you write your article, imagine you are speaking to a specific type of person as you make your points, or imagine that you are arguing your case in a forum discussion. This way, other people will use your articles to talk to those same people and to argue those same cases.

Quick Lesson: Personas and Target Demographics

The best way to make sure your content is aimed at a specific type of person is to have in mind a 'persona'. Your persona is a fictional character who is the perfect target for your blog post or article, or who is the perfect market for your product.

You should treat your personas as you would treat fictional characters in a film. That means thinking about who they are and actually considering everything you can about them. Where do they work? What other things do they enjoy? Where do they spend their time?

You might think this sounds like excessive research for a single article but it can shed light on some new and exciting marketing and promotional opportunities. For instance, you might notice an overlap between the persona you're selling your affiliate product to and the persona you're currently writing articles for. If you have a fitness website, then martial artists will likely be interested in some of your content and some of your products. If you are in the dating niche, then an article on clothing might have some relevance.

This then means you can cross over your niches and find new places to recruit customers, fans, subscribers and followers. In turn, that means you don't have to compete with everyone else in your niche. Posting your article on running shoes and how they can be useful for martial artists in a running forum means you may get some buyers but you won't be fighting every other running shoe manufacturer and affiliate.

Something to keep in mind as well when creating your content with the hopes of it getting shared, is that a lot of people will share and like posts *before* they have actually read them! Many of us never get round to reading the things we see posted on Facebook but we will click 'Like' as a knee-jerk reaction when we see that the content is about something we like or when we think that it expresses something that has been on our minds.

This then should tell you just how important it is to get the image that will show along it right, as well as the title. *These* are the only things that many people will go on when they choose to promote your content for you.

If you don't have the means to create great quality images yourself, then it's very much worth finding some good stock images you can use and including those instead. Note that pictures of people actually compel us to look on a very fundamental level.

Chapter 6:

How to Write Sales Copy That Really Works

You've seen how to create content that will get read and you've seen how to write content that will get *shared*.

Now it's time to look at what *really* matters in terms of writing for an affiliate marketer: and that's creating content that will get your sales. Sales copy is going to be your number one tool as a marketer when it comes to making you lots of sales and this is what will largely make your landing pages so effective above and beyond what you would be able to do with an eCommerce store.

So how do you convince to buy something they'd never heard of before?

Introducing AIDA

The first thing to start with is your structure. Here there are plenty of options open to you but one of the most popular is known as 'AIDA'. This stands for 'Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action'. The general point is that when someone first lands on your sales page, they probably have never heard of whatever it is you're selling and have no interest in staying there. You have to work from this assumption and hit hard and fast to ensure they stay on the page and they're interested in what you're selling.

Subtly doesn't work. You don't have time to reel someone in with an elaborate yarn and so what's important is that you hit them hard and fast with a bold opening statement or a question and then *immediately* tell them what it is you're selling. From there, you then have to make them actually want what you're selling and then you have to clinch the deal by getting them to take action.

So how do you effectively do all those things? To start with, getting attention will often mean using a rhetorical question which will force your readers to engage with what you're writing. When you say 'have you ever...?', this forces the reader to think back in order to answer the question. At that point, they're then engaging with your content.

Another tip is to use a narrative structure. This is another way to keep people reading in a world when we're constantly in a rush and constantly being bombarded with information. We have been telling and listening to stories since time immemorial, so if

you give your sales pitch some kind of story, people will want to know how it ends and they'll feel compelled to keep scrolling and keep reading.

How does this work? One common example is to talk about how you were in their position once but that all changed:

“Think you can't make money working from home? I used to think the same thing.

And in fact, I had tried pretty much every money making method out there. So I *knew* it wasn't possible.

Or I *thought* I knew. You see, that was before I stumbled onto something quite amazing...”

Notice how this kind of content makes you want to keep reading? We want to know what happens *next*. Each line is a cliff hanger, and as such we want to keep going and keep reading.

Another thing you might notice in this example is that the lines are very spaced out and very short. If you cast your mind back to our description of a landing page, you might remember that it was a narrow and vertical design that had lots of paragraphs. Remember: the more people scroll down, the ‘deeper’ they feel they have gone into your content and the more invested they become in what you have to say.

This is also great for preventing people from leaving your site as soon as you get there. The danger here is that people will see a massive block of text and then want to leave the site rather than sift through it all and strain their eyes. By using lots of short, well-spaced paragraphs, you can keep your readers scrolling through your content and give them the option to skip ahead and skim. It makes the writing that much more compelling – and using a big font works too.

From here, you then need to early on describe exactly what it is that the product you're selling does and why people should want it. Telling them how it can help in no uncertain terms will prevent them from leaving out of frustration (if you've ever been to a website where it's unclear what's being sold then you'll know how irritating it is!) and you'll then be in a good position to really get them to want your item.

As we'll see, the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ of your product are very intimately linked...

Working the Emotions: Value Propositions and More

The key thing to keep in mind when trying to sell *anything* is your value proposition.

In fact, let's take a step back. Understand that people don't buy products based on logic. We don't buy things because we need them and we've considered the pros and cons.

In fact, we're often most reluctant to buy the things we need. How badly do you need a new toothbrush right now??

Instead, we tend to buy things because we want them. Most of our purchases are emotional and impulsive and based on a knee-jerk reaction to the things we want. This is why you need to press emotional buttons to get someone to buy.

And you do that by focusing on the *value proposition*.

What is value proposition? Simple: it's the way in which your product promises to make life better for the people who buy it.

Another way to look at this is by referencing an old saying: you don't sell hats, you sell warm heads. In other words, don't focus on what your product does but *why* people want it to do that.

So if you're selling an eBook on how to get great abs, what's the value proposition? It's not great abs. It's that 'feeling of confidence you get from having a sexy body', or an improved love life, or better athletic performance.

You don't sell a car, you sell freedom and you sell exhilaration. You sell *status*. This is similar to what we discussed when we talked about promoting a lifestyle rather than a product through social media. People want something that will inspire them and they want something exciting – so don't just talk in terms of technicalities.

As well as talking about the exciting life that people could have if they bought your product though, you should also focus on what they can get away from and the drawbacks of their *current* situation.

So in other words, you don't just tell people about how they will love having amazing abs, you express your understanding about how much it sucks to have a flabby stomach.

This is the equivalent of your 'pain point'. And if you have a more straightforward product that solves a specific problem in a specific industry, then this is where you can focus on that.

Pain points are spending too long washing up, being tired every morning, having to wait for the computer to boot up... your product needs to promise a better future and it needs to fix a pain point. The more simple and straightforward you can make this, the easier it will be to market and to sell.

Finally, the other way you need to work the emotions is by applying a little pressure. You want your customer to desire the product you're describing and at the same time, you want them to feel anxious that if they don't act fast – it may be gone.

If you have some flexibility in controlling the price point of your affiliate product, then one way you can do this is by introducing a special offer or discount. Otherwise you can just point out that stocks are limited and that if they don't click buy *right now*, they may well lose out!

Quick Lesson: Mitigating Risk

When someone is considering acting on your advice and buying the product though, there will be a number of things holding them back and preventing them from taking action.

One of these things is the potential risk: people don't want to buy something for \$35 or more that might not do exactly what it claims to. They have no guarantee that you're not just a scam artist and unlike being in a store, they have no way of looking over your product before they buy.

What's more, people are *naturally* risk averse. That is to say, that if there's a 50% chance of winning a thousand pounds and a 50% chance of losing three hundred pounds, a lot of people *wouldn't take the chance*. Even though they stand to earn more than they stand to lose, people are more driven to hold onto what they already have than to chase after what they don't *yet* have.

So your job as an affiliate marketer is to put their mind at ease and to take away their concerns while removing risk.

One way to do this is to address their concerns head on. Here, you're simply going to second guess what they might be thinking and then prevent them from worrying in the same sentence.

So when you are selling an eBook, you say things like:

"I know what you're thinking and no – this isn't just another scam!"

Or how about:

"I was reluctant too – I never thought I had what it took to follow a training program and I had been burned before."

This way, you can preempt concerns and remove them from the table.

Another strategy though is simply to offer some kind of guarantee. JVZoo and most other affiliate networks facilitate a very simple and straightforward return policy which means that anyone who buys a product you recommend can easily get their money back – and this is something you should promote front and center!

"NO RISK! FULL MONEY BACK GUARANTEE IF YOU'RE NOT 100% HAPPY!"

What you'll find is that this makes a *lot* of people interested in buying your product who otherwise wouldn't be but very few people will actually act on the returns policy.

Another option is to offer a free sample or a free trial. You can do this for instance by giving away the first chapter of the eBook, or by offering a free trial of a service that requires the buyer to cancel a direct debit to get out of (this is called inertia selling – a lot of people won't be bothered to cancel the transaction even if they lose interest in the product!).

The best example of offering a free trial? Pet shops that let potential buyers take dogs home for a week before making a decision. It works every time!

Facts, Figures and Social Proof

Finally, you can further reinforce what you're saying with liberal doses of facts, statistics and figures. People know that your objective is to sell to them and so anything you say they will likely question and assess. However, when you quote statistics or research, this sounds official enough that a lot of people will accept it blindly.

“70% of people saw incredible results from this product!”

“People are now earning an average of \$23,890 a month using strategies similar to this one”

“The sharks-with-lasers-on-their-heads industry has seen year-on-year growth of 700%”

It is immoral to make up facts and figures but that doesn't mean you can't be a little selective about which ones you use. Likewise, you can conduct your own surveys and research to try and back up your key points.

A more fundamental approach is just to build on facts in order to reach your conclusions so that your readers can see a real logical progression.

“Increasing testosterone leads to more muscle mass, confidence and drive (study) → Other studies show that tribulis terrestris, tongcat ali and l-carnitine can all increase testosterone by at least 5% → So when combined synergistically into a single product, they can promise results of up to 15% → This product can lead to a 15% increase in your confidence and muscle mass!”

A similar strategy is to appeal to authority figures. Psychologist Milgram famously showed that people would do almost anything they were told if the person giving instructions was wearing a lab coat. Tell people that scientists, experts or doctors agree with your hypothesis and you'll find that they're far more likely to get on board.

If you can't *get* a testimonial from an expert then there are other more subtle ways that brands achieve a similar effect. How about having a picture of a man in a lab coat on your landing page? Or how about giving your brand an official sounding title: like the UK supplement company 'Dr. Organic'?

Finally, try to use social influence to further encourage sales. Humans are social animals and if we think something is popular or that other people are using something, then this tends to make us want it too. You can take advantage of this by saying your new product is 'hot' or a 'top seller' or you can just use a lot of testimonials.

Don't have any testimonials? Just ask a few of your former customers if it's okay to get a testimonial from them – to save time you can pre-write the message and then just ask them to sign off on it.

Combine all these different strategies into a single highly convincing sales pitch and use the tried-and-tested sales page layout and you can find it results in a huge number of sales.

Chapter 7:

An Introduction to the Most Popular Affiliate Networks And Other Options

We've already discussed one of the biggest affiliate networks JVZoo (<http://www.jvzoo.com/register/909>) and how to get set up with them. This is the number one affiliate market that we recommend, as it has the easiest set up, the most intuitive interface and the most flexible system.

At the same time though, there are some other big affiliate networks out there that you can choose from and if you familiarize yourself with a few of them, then you'll be able to spread your assets, as well as choosing from a larger variety of different products that people can buy from you.

ClickBank, CJ and More

ClickBank is one of the biggest and oldest affiliate markets out there. It pretty much popularized the idea of affiliate marketing and as a result it has had plenty of time to grow and to acquire a huge number of products. You can sign up here: www.ClickBank.com

How about the others?

Another popular one is Commission Junction (www.cj.com). This is similar to ClickBank in that it is a very large affiliate network with a large number of different products on offer. Commission Junction has slightly fewer products than Clickbank, slightly worse analytics and slightly worse support (it has seen several rebrandings). Stick with JVZoo and Clickbank then and consider CJ your 'third choice'.

If you're looking for something a bit different though, then a good choice for you might be Warrior Special Offers or WSO. Full disclosure: this site is *only* for products in the 'make money online niche' but you'll find that this accounts for a lot of digital products no matter what network you choose.

Warrior Forum is a forum aimed at digital marketers of all kinds as well as webmasters. The idea is that people meet here in order to discuss marketing opportunities and strategies, to review products and techniques and generally to discuss war stories.

However, the forum has grown to become rather large and this has resulted in the creation of ‘Warrior Special Offers’, a section specifically for people who want to buy and sell products and services (the idea being that you provide some kind of ‘special offer’ for warriors, but this is easy enough to ignore).

This part of the forum has also grown and now has its own affiliate program, meaning that you can sell products that other warriors are selling. The handy thing about choosing WSO is that it has the forum attached which presents some more unique opportunities. Specifically, it means you can spend time interacting in the forum, getting to know people and developing a reputation as someone who can be trusted in the forum *before* you go on to start selling products. It also means you can easily communicate directly with the sellers and you can get to know them before you start promoting their products. On the downside, the landing pages that WSO uses are essentially just *forum posts*.

WSO also charges lower fees than the other affiliate networks. It’s certainly worth considering if it aligns with your business strategy, though its lack of versatility means that a lot of people won’t be able to rely on this as their primary affiliate network.

Another lesser known affiliate network is BlueSnap, which was formerly known as Plimus. The *only* reason this is being included in the book is to demonstrate just how important it is to do your research before you start using an affiliate network. BlueSnap changed its name to avoid very bad press and has done nothing to shape up its practices since then. The company is known for taking huge fees from their sellers and product creators alike and this goes as far as charging a \$10 maintenance fee *every month*. If you don’t sell anything one month, you can actually end up in minus figures! Steer clear of this company at all costs.

Google once had their own affiliate network called ‘Google Affiliate Network’ (imaginative) though it closed down a few years ago.

Amazon Associates

When you think ‘affiliate network’, it’s services like CJ, JVZoo and Clickbank that often spring to mind. However, these represent just one kind of affiliate network and there are others that can provide a variety of other benefits.

For instance, there is Amazon. Amazon has its own affiliate network called ‘Amazon Associates’ which effectively allows you to sell anything you can find on Amazon. While Clickbank has a wide range of products including dancing classes and skin care programs, Amazon sells pretty much every kind of product you can think of including a huge selection of physical products (and of course eBooks through the Kindle Store).

Quick Lesson: Physical Products or Digital Products?

When deciding whether something like Amazon is right for you, looking at whether you'd rather sell digital products or physical products is often a very good place to start.

So what's the difference?

Oh, only *everything*.

Selling digital products is very popular among product creators because it completely removes the overheads. Digital products have no 'COGs' (Cost Of Goods Sold) because it costs nothing to product them, nothing to store them and nothing to ship them. This means that once you've developed the product, you can sell it in vast quantities.

What that means for you as an affiliate meanwhile, is that you can sell the products and get a much bigger share of the profit. Remember, somewhere like JVZoo or Clickbank can net you as much as 60% or even 75% of the cost price in some cases. This is because there is just one seller and they are getting nearly 100% profit for each sale – they can offer you as much as they like and they don't stand to lose much.

But when you sell a physical product, things are quite different. In this case, the physical product will have specific costs associated with it and the profit is likely to be much smaller for the product creator. Creating physical products requires materials and manufacturing and as such, it will normally be outsourced. What's more, the product creator will rarely sell their product or be directly involved with their own marketing. In the case of Amazon for instance, Amazon is a reseller and needs to get a cut of the profit too. Most commonly, resellers will get a 100% profit on everything they buy. This is called 'keystoning', where a reseller sells a product for twice the cost they bought it.

Then there is shipping and delivery to consider, packaging and more.

All this means that with something like Amazon Associates, you actually will only get around 4-8% commission on the cost price as opposed to 60-75%. That's of course *much* less and that means you have to sell an awful lot more in order to make even close to the same amount of money.

So on the face of it, you might jump to the conclusion that physical products are vastly inferior to digital products when it comes to trying to sell. But that would be a little hasty...

In many ways you see, physical products actually have the edge.

For starters, there's the simple fact that a lot of people just don't *buy* digital products. Think about the people you know in your own life – would all of them buy digital products? The older generation don't tend to buy things that they can't physically hold and perhaps wouldn't even know what to do with an eBook. Likewise, most of us have technophobe friends who wouldn't want to buy a product online that they'd never get to see.

And there's only so much value that an eBook can offer. A lot of people don't read *books* at all and most of those people who do would still rather have a physical book they can hold (and check before they buy). What's more, eBooks require you to read them on a device like a tablet or a Kindle – devices that not everyone has and that can strain the eyes when reading outdoors or in other situations.

There's just not that much else you can do with a digital product. Sure, there are eCourses but these only appeal to people who are looking to learn something very specific and have a lot of time on their hands. Then there are things like software but that's somewhat limiting in terms of scope too.

On the other hand, a physical product can be *anything*. Through Amazon Associates you can sell shoes, you can sell books, you can sell computers, you can sell clothing... the list goes on and on. This means it's much easier to find a product that specifically relates to your chosen niche or a specific article and then to sell that through Amazon.

When you think of what you consider to be a 'real business', you'll no doubt think of companies that sell *real* physical products. That's because these still provide the most tangible value and benefit to the end user and because they have the widest selection.

When you sell physical products, you of course open up the potential audience to a massive degree and can now sell to an entirely different kind of person. If you're *just* selling digital products, then you might be leaving a lot of money on the table.

So what's the best answer? Most likely it's to sell both. Possibly not to begin with but once you're comfortable as an affiliate marketer, it's very much worth considering branching out into this area.

Amazon Associates has a ton of other benefits and features too that make it a great choice for affiliates.

For one, Amazon is a very trusted and well-known shopping platform. When you're trying to sell anything it's important to recognize and then overcome any 'barriers to sale' – things that might put off your potential customers from buying from you. One of the very *biggest* barriers to sale for an affiliate marketer in particular is a lack of trust: people worry that their card details won't be secure, or that they'll buy the product and they'll never hear from you again or see the product that they paid for. When they buy through Amazon though, they know this isn't going to happen because they'll likely have used the company many times before. It also means that they can buy the product with a single click instead of having to sign up for a new account and get out their credit card. Remember what we said about people buying impulsively and based on emotion? If they have to work to complete the transaction, then you can lose that moment and lose the sale. When you choose Amazon Associates, you get to benefit from their 'buy with one click' button, which helps *them* to sell thousands more products than they otherwise would.

Amazon Associates is also somewhat generous in terms of what it counts as a referral. If someone clicks on your affiliate link and visits Amazon, you get paid your commission no matter *what* they buy. So if you recommend a new type of protein shake and they go to the site and buy gloves, you still make the commission. Of course there are some very high ticket items on here too: if someone buys a computer or a television then 8% might suddenly be quite a decent amount of money.

Another benefit of this platform is that it provides a lot of tools. You can create your links simply by copying and pasting a URL for instance, which lets you embed products directly into your articles – but you can also go further and use images or even sliders that scroll through *multiple* products. This lets you create a quite effective online store almost right on the same page as your article.

Quick Lesson: Amazon Associates vs AdSense and How to Sell Amazon Products Effectively

AdSense is the ad network from Google that you would post on your site if you were trying to make money as a publisher. These are the same as Google AdWords, except they appear embedded on publishers' sites instead of appearing on searches.

If you opt for an image and affiliate link for selling your item, then you can treat this just like PPC. In other words, you can place the ads on your page and wait for people to click them and potentially buy a product. You don't have to do any promotion and the image will work for itself. You can even set it up to work like an ad and to take advantage of Amazon's own remarketing – meaning you don't have to pick and choose the products yourself.

But if you do this, then you'll find that your Amazon ads are no more effective than Google ads – which is to say they won't earn you all that much cash. Unfortunately, if you simply leave an ad on your page and wait for clicks, then only a few of your visitors will click those ads and even fewer will buy anything. If you have a thousand visitors to your page a day, then you can expect to make about a dollar from Amazon Associates ads a week. Not great!

But you can do better than that by treating your Associates account less like display ads and more like an affiliate account. In other words, it's time to *make like an affiliate marketer*. Don't just take your adverts and leave them there: promote them!

This is the excellent difference between Amazon Associates and Google AdSense. With AdSense, you *aren't allowed* to promote the ads as a publisher and have to act as though they aren't there. With Amazon Associates though, you can select the product, you can explain why it's great and you can then tell your visitors that they'll be supporting your site if they buy through the link. As you can imagine, this has the potential to make a huge difference to your sales. Even better, you can combine techniques – having some Amazon Ads around the page while promoting specific links within the body of your articles.

The best approach here is to find a product that you genuinely think is *really* good. Then promote it in a way that's honest and open within the body of a well-structured and unique article. This can be highly effective and lead to a *lot* of sales.

ShareASale

Another interesting option for your affiliate products is ShareASale. ShareASale is site that is dedicated to affiliate marketing (unlike Amazon) but which allows you to sell physical products (unlike JVZoo). What ShareASale also has going for it is that it offers a bigger range of items and often with more commission. Some products provide as much as 20% commission or more and you can choose from a range of exciting brands, selling clothing, furniture and a range of other things. You can even sell experience days, holidays and more.

There isn't the selection of products available here that there is on Amazon (of course) and it's a little more fiddly to get started. The website also isn't quite as intuitive or feature-rich as the Amazon Associates site. However, if you want to sell a physical product and don't like the low commissions on Amazon, it's at least *checking* here just to see if there is something that will work well with your business model and niche.

More Options and Strategies

So we've seen a ton of different affiliate networks now, which have included the likes of JVZoo, ClickBank, Commission Junction, WSO, Amazon Associates, BlueSnap and ShareASale. But what if you've looked at *all* of these and you still feel that there's nothing out there that's quite perfect for you to sell?

Well, this is where you need to start doing your own work. You see there is actually no limit to what you can sell and there's always something out there even if you haven't found it yet – you just need to take initiative sometimes and go out there to locate it.

One example of how you can do this is simply to browse the web for affiliate programs. Sometimes you'll find that manufacturers and service providers have affiliate programs that they only promote directly through their website. Find a company that makes supplements, clothes or equipment, or look for one that offers a service and then look to the bottom of the page. You *may* just find that they have an affiliate scheme or an invitation to work together. And because these companies don't go through an affiliate network, you'll often find you can actually earn more this way.

If you think that sounds like a lot of work then you can save time by simply searching in Google for affiliate programs. Just use a string like 'affiliate program' or 'affiliate marketers wanted' and that will often bring up a number of companies that are directly working with affiliates. This way you can expect to make more money and have a better selection of physical *and* digital products.

And last but not least you can make your *own* opportunities. If you find a company that sells a product you love but they don't already offer an affiliate program, then just suggest that maybe they should. Pick up the phone or write an e-mail and say that you love what they do and that you'd like to help them promote their products. This can often be more successful than you'd think – especially if you help them to set up and thus save them the work.

Another option is to find someone who creates products and to agree to set out with this business model in mind to begin with. If you're someone who is good at marketing things but you don't know how to create your own products, then just find a friend or business partner to work with and offer to help them sell if they create something. The great thing about this strategy is that this way you also get some say in what it is you want to make. This in turn means you can choose to make something that you know you'll be able to sell and perhaps that caters to the market you've already formed.

In either case, you'll also find that you're more likely to get a positive response if you can demonstrate that you already have a following and if you can show that you'll be able to sell to them.

Chapter 8:

How to Choose Products That Will Bring You Massive Commissions

In the last chapter we covered some of the more popular and well-known affiliate networks and also looked at a couple of lesser known options. But knowing where to find affiliate products to sell is really only part of the story. Just as important is to know what kind of thing you're going to sell once you get there.

Take a look around JVZoo and *certainly* Amazon and you'll quickly find there are almost a limitless selection of different things to sell. How do you make the choice of what you want to promote?

There are countless different factors to take into account here but it's important that you spend some time thinking it through. Ultimately, your decision here is going to be one of the biggest factors in determining your success.

Your Profits

What's most important of all when choosing your affiliate product is to choose something that is likely to sell well. If you have a product that earns you several hundred dollars for every sale but no one buys it, then this is going to earn you zero still.

But while that's true, it certainly is also worth considering just how much you're going to earn per sale as well. This way, you can then calculate how many items you'll need to shift in order to make a decent profit from your affiliate activities.

Likewise, you also need to look at *how* you are making money from each sale. More specifically, it's key to note whether you're making money because the product is priced high or because you're making a lot of commission on each sale. If you had to choose either or here, then of course it's far preferable to be in the latter scenario. This way, the item will be priced lower but you'll still be able to make a better living from fewer sales.

Another thing to think about in regards to the price is the income of your target demographic. Who are the people reading your website or following you on social media? Do they have a disposable income to spend on the kinds of products that you're now offering?

In other words, it doesn't necessarily make sense to go for the highest paying item possible and to assume that this is going to earn you the most money. For instance, you might have a high ticket item like an online seminar that you can sell for \$1,500 and make \$500 from each sale. But how many people are likely to sign up to these kinds of courses? Do you know enough about the subject to be truly convincing? Do you have precisely the right audience? In all likelihood, you'll see very few sales of something like this.

Likewise, with a very cheap item, you need to ask how that is going to reflect on the value of the product. People like to feel like they're getting the very best and like they're buying something premium. If this eBook is only going to cost them \$5, they might wonder why every *other* eBook costs \$30.

If you're selling multiple products, then you even need to think about how one is going to compete with the other. Might sales of *one* affiliate product cannibalize sales of another? For instance, is it really a good idea to sell a product for \$10 and a very similar one for \$2?

Quick Lesson: Contrast

When it comes to pricing, affiliate marketers have a lot less control and flexibility when compared to product creators. In other words, you can't just make the decision to sell your items for less or to introduce some kind of special offer: you need to run this past the creators first and you might not get given the go ahead.

What you can do though, is to think about how different items on your site/in your e-mails are priced and how these prices will interact with and affect one another.

And this means that you can take advantage of strategies such as 'contrast'. Essentially, contrast means that you are purposefully creating a stark contrast between two price points with two products. So you might have an eBook that you sell for \$30 and another that you sell for \$10 on the same subject.

Now, there is the risk here that sales of one will cannibalize sales of the other, as we discussed a moment ago; this *may* not be a good move for you. But then again, there's also a possibility that shaving these two differently priced items will *encourage* sales.

For instance, if someone is considering buying your \$30 eBook but they think it's too expensive and they can't justify spending that much money, then they can buy the \$10 item as a compromise. This makes the \$10 item *feel* cheaper and at the same time it helps the buyer to convince themselves that they're making a good decision and a savvy one. If someone wants to buy something, then giving them a way to talk themselves into it like this is often a good strategy.

Conversely though, you can also use your \$10 offer in order to attract attention and draw the potential buyer in. They see that you're selling an item for \$10 and they click your ad to go to your site. They're now probably going to buy *something*. But if when they get there, they see that you're *also* selling something additional for \$30, they might then decide that actually they would rather have this other, more premium product and thereby know that they're going to get the best. If they're spending money anyway, why settle for less?

This is an example of how an affiliate marketer can 'play items' off of one another and it's something to consider when choosing the types of things you'd like to start selling.

Recurring Commission

And actually, selling a high ticket item just once may not even be the most profitable option for you. If you sell an item for a lot of money you still only earn from that customer *once*.

So what will *really* bring in the most profit is any kind of recurring commission. Some services incur recurring monthly fees for their users, while others cost money every time

a user logs in to use it. Some of these options can then provide you with commission every time the company makes money from someone you referred.

So if you refer someone to a gambling site and they use that site every single day, you can stand to earn every single time they put money in! The same might be true for bingo, or for some kind of web app that requires a paid membership. This way, you can get a much more stable income because you'll be able to work out how much you're likely to earn each month. Moreover, you can carry on earning money *long* after you've stopped being an affiliate and potentially even be set up for life!

Popularity

Of course what's also very important to look at when selling your item is the popularity. When you go onto JVZoo or Clickbank, you can see all kinds of metrics about the items and this includes the number of sales.

Remember what we said earlier: there's no point in overcomplicating a business model and if you can find something that is already selling really well, this will help you to minimize the risk. You now know that if your product isn't selling, it's *not* the fault of the item and this then reduces the number of different factors to consider. This way, you can focus on other things like finding the right audience or writing a better sales pitch on your landing page.

Looking at the number of sales is only one aspect though. At the same time, you should also look at the number of returns and the number of sellers. Looking at the number of refunds gives you a good idea of the quality of the item. Not only will this help you to avoid having to give refunds that will cost you money, but it also means the item is probably something that you can get behind and sell without wondering whether it's actually any good. And remember: you're trying to build long term trust with your customers so that you can potentially sell to them again in future – so you don't want to convince them to buy things that are low quality!

In terms of the number of sellers this is also important because it tells you how much money each affiliate is making from each product. To put it another way, if you have 1,000 people trying to sell a product then you'd expect it to have at *least* 1,000 sales. That means each person managed to sell it once... so in other words it doesn't mean the product is popular with buyers necessarily. All this *does* tell you is that the product is popular with affiliates; affiliates *think* it should be popular and thus lots are trying to sell it.

Another thing to keep in mind is that you're going to be competing with these other affiliates at least to some degree. If there are 1,000 people all trying to sell the same product then who is to say that they're the customers will buy it from you and not from them.

The best products then are the ones that have very few people selling them but are nevertheless making *lots* of sales. Look for new products that appear to be ‘breakout products’ and that not every other affiliate has cottoned on to yet.

You can also do your research to look into the way that other sellers are promoting these items. If you find a product is doing well because an affiliate has spent thousands of dollars on advertising, then it may be difficult for you to stand out and be noticed.

Originality and Market Research

Keep in mind as well that you’re not just competing with the other sellers of the precise product you’re looking at – but also anyone with a similar product.

We discussed briefly at the start of this eBook that you may already have seen adverts on Facebook for the ‘make money online’ lifestyle. Likewise, you’ll have noticed that sites like JVZoo and WSO sell *mostly* products aimed at making money online. In other words, this is a somewhat saturated market and you’re going to need to work really hard if you hope to stand out and be noticed by your audience. The danger here is that you promote your ‘make money online program’ and people who land on it just roll their eyes knowing that they’ve seen countless things exactly like this before in the past.

And likewise, you can also look at similar products in the market to see whether something has a chance of selling. If the item you’re looking at isn’t already selling by the bucket load but similar products that offer less *are* then you might safely assume that this item has the *potential* to sell as long as it has the right marketing push.

If you want to get really advanced then you can set out to do some market research. As with any new product, the ideal scenario is that you’re creating a product that has a clear need and demand but where there isn’t any direct competition. If you can find a niche and an item that is similar to other successful products while offering something different, or while costing less than what’s already on the market, then you have a good chance of being successful.

Does it Work for You?

What’s more important than asking ‘can it sell’ though, is to ask ‘can *you* sell it?’.

In other words, you need to look at whether the product you’re considering works within the context of your niche and your current market. You probably already have a number of social media followers and you likely have a mailing list that you’ve built up. These are your ‘routes to market’ – your direct access to your audience that you can use in order to start marketing your items.

So what you really need to think about, is whether or not the item is something you can easily sell.

For instance, if you have built a list of hobbyist writers, then you should look for a product that tells writers how to earn money or that suggests how they can get published. It doesn't matter if there's an SEO or fitness book that offers a lot more profit per sale – your audience is *much* more likely to buy a writing product and so that is the kind of product that you should focus on.

Likewise, you should also be thinking about your areas of interest and your areas of expertise. We've already discussed how much content you'll need to be producing as an affiliate marketer and that a lot of your success will come from writing articles and blog posts, from entering into discussions on social media and from writing e-mails. These all need to be within the specific niche or industry that you're selling in and that your products are in.

If you pick a product that you know nothing about then, you're going to have to spend an awful lot of time writing about something that you have no interest in and no understanding of. This will come across in your text and make people far less likely to trust you as a brand and far less likely to want to subscribe to your mailing list. Likewise, it means you're much more likely to get bored with what you're doing and give up.

One of the wonderful things about affiliate marketing is that in theory, you can make a living from just writing about topics that you love and really enjoy thinking about. But to do this, you need to choose the right subject and the right products.

Remember earlier when we discussed the kinds of articles that some sites shared that were just generic and derivative? Those articles like 'How to Get Abs' or '10 SEO Tips' that everyone has heard a thousand times before? People are tired of that kind of content and they want something more unique, more cutting edge and more exciting. The only way that you're going to be able to provide that for people is if you are clued in on the topic you're writing about and marketing. If you really know and understand what it is that you're discussing then you'll be able to make *amazing* content because you'll know what kind of things people want to read.

The Value Proposition and USP

We talked already about how to write a great landing page and get people to buy things. And when we did, we discussed the importance of emphasizing the value proposition and the USP. *How* does your product make lives better? What single problem does it elegantly solve?

When you choose your product then, you need to be able to see that value proposition or that problem that it solves right from the offset. You need to be able to look at whatever it is you're thinking of selling and to see immediately where the value lies. This is something that the creator should have considered when they built it – and if they did it will make your job a thousand times easier.

But at the same time, this should also be a value proposition or USP that you can understand and empathize with. You need to be able to put yourself in the shoes of the buyer and to think how someone would be able to sell this product to you. Ideally, you need to really *want* the product yourself. This way, you don't have to lie about what it is that makes it so good – you can simply share your very genuine enthusiasm.

The Bottom Line

The real bottom line is that when you're choosing your product, you need to already know how you're going to sell it. Don't pick a product that's doing well and then come up with a plan. Instead, take the products that offer good potential and then select one based on what appeals to your experience and your gut instinct. And before you do any work or put in any effort make sure that you have *already* come up with a strategy and a plan. You should already have a monologue forming your head as you look at the items explaining why they're so good and how they're going to change your life. You should already be thinking of the kinds of articles you can write around this subject. You should already know which social media networks you're going to post to and whether or not your mailing list is the right mailing list. Once you have begun your marketing process, the product itself should simply be the last piece of a perfectly constructed puzzle!

Other Considerations

Extra Incentives and Indicators

If you are torn between a few different products that all show a good likelihood of making a lot of money, then you might have a hard time picking between them. One good strategy then is to look at whether there are any differentiating factors that can help to seal the deal.

One of the single most important differentiating factors is whether or not you can get a free sample (or in the case of Amazon, whether or not you already own the item). Being able to actually test the product for yourself and to see whether it is good and specifically *what's* good about it will make a massive difference to your ability to sell it. It will make a huge difference right away to your belief in the product and if you're like most people then you should feel much more comfortable selling something that you have already tried yourself and found that you enjoyed. People will often feel a little awkward selling something they haven't seen and try as you might, that can tend to come across in your sales pitch.

The other reason to sample the product is that this then gives you the opportunity to find out *what* makes it so good and to go into detail on those factors. Why is it different from the competition? How did it specifically help you? Can you feel the difference in quality? Did the creator throw in some extras that really impressed you? Was the customer service good? All this will make your pitch far more convincing and encourage

the buyers to think that you actually know what you're talking about and have their best interests at heart.

And as one more added bonus of sampling your item – if you have a product then you can take photos of it and create videos of it which can also be useful for selling. Affiliate sales through YouTube are highly underrated!

Of course it's also just nice to get free stuff to try out!

So that's one type of additional incentive that a product manufacturer can offer to affiliates and it's common to find this through JVZoo and the like. Another common type of additional material is the sales material. Many manufacturers actually supply the very landing page, e-mail sequence and sales funnel that they use in order to sell their product and that has proven successful for them. While this might come as a surprising, remember that they have nothing to lose here. The more products you sell, the more extra income they're going to make and it will have no negative impact on the amount they're earning on their own. From their perspective there's no reason *not* to share the materials they've used and to thereby help guarantee your success.

And if they've been shifting lots of units using a specific set of materials then there's no reason you can't do exactly the same thing. This really is a 'cut and paste' business and that's very appealing, especially to someone new.

Are there downsides to using ready-made materials? Of course. One of these downsides for instance is the simple fact that you won't be promoting in your own voice if you use these. This can be quite jarring if you've built a relationship with your audience via e-mail and social media and off-putting as a result. At the same time, it removes some of the skill and fun from the job and there's always the possibility you could have done better.

So you shouldn't rely on ready-made marketing materials for your affiliate marketing activities. *But* if you are looking for a very quick and easy 'cut and paste' business you can set up in no time at all, then this is a good way to achieve that.

The final extra incentive? Some kind of bonus or special offer. This way, you can offer your customers a discount that they won't get anywhere else. That provides them with additional value by being your subscriber (thereby increasing their brand loyalty and encouraging them to buy more of your future products/open more of your future emails) while at the same time encouraging them to buy quickly and through your link. Usually this is accomplished in the form of a 'promo code'.

Promo codes have another advantage too in that they make your business appear more professional. The assumption is that you have somehow gained access to a special deal through your connections with the product manufacturer and that makes you look good. Everyone wins!

Ethics and Barriers

Affiliate marketing can bring up a surprising number of ethical issues. If you're selling a product you don't believe in then of course this is an ethical consideration you're going to have to deal with – and most people will be much happier seeking out something that they *do* think is a good product.

But beyond that, there are ethical considerations around certain products too and you need to think about these before you jump in and start selling. For example: does the product pose any potential health risk? Does it go against beliefs you might have?

If the product contains health advice, then is this something you should be selling? Likewise, is there any way that the product could harm your potential audience? This is something that puts many people off of gambling affiliate programs. You stand to earn an *awful* lot of money promoting gambling sites but in doing so, you could potentially be responsible for someone losing all of their life savings or even developing a bad habit that becomes highly destructive. Gambling in itself isn't wrong though and it's not illegal – it's just something you will have to consider and that means looking at your own views before you go ahead.

Likewise, you should also think about the way that these issues can create further problems. Some products for instance might create a backlash from your audience. If you've built up the trust of your followers and then you e-mail them with a promotion for a gambling site, then this could understandably lead to displeasure from those same people. Likewise, it's also useful to keep in mind that gambling promotions aren't permitted on Facebook Ads. And if you are selling a gambling product and you have Google AdSense on your site, you might be banned from the AdSense program. Suffice to say then, that if you intend on using either of these platforms, you should steer clear of gambling as a niche.

Chapter 9: Building and Using a Mailing List to Promote Affiliate Offers

We've looked at all kinds of different techniques you can use to promote your website, your landing page and your affiliate offers. We've seen how you can send people directly to your landing page via Facebook Ads or Google AdWords and we've seen how you can use SEO and social media to generally promote a brand.

But now it's time to look at the single biggest tool that many affiliate marketers use in order to promote their products and their offers: e-mail marketing.

Earlier we discussed how to choose an autoresponder and set up your opt-in form. Now it's time to learn how to encourage people to sign up and how to get them to actually listen to what you have to say.

Why Internet Marketing is Ideal for Affiliates

Many affiliate marketers and even *other* types of marketers will say that their mailing list is their single most important asset for reaching a wide audience and making sales. So what is it that makes mailing lists so valuable in general and for affiliates specifically?

The first big advantage of an e-mail list is that it's *highly* targeted and arguably moreso than any other type of list. This is because the people on your mailing list have actually given you *permission* to contact them. Rather than simply 'liking' your page, they have actually willingly giving you a means to get in touch, thereby establishing that they are interested in your brand and the kinds of things you sell.

This small matter of permission also impacts the way that people feel psychologically when they get your messages. Specifically, this means that when you message someone, they won't feel as though it's an inconvenience or a nuisance – instead it's something they gave you permission to do and thus they'll be fine with it happening (at least theoretically).

Another big advantage of e-mail marketing is that it gives you a very direct way in which to reach your audience. This makes it different than social media marketing because you're not going *through* another platform. That is to say that Facebook isn't managing your relationship.

A good example of why this matters can be seen when we look at how Facebook has recently changed its policy regarding page likes. When Facebook first introduced the idea of Facebook pages for brands, it was possible to build a following and then to communicate with 100% of that following by sending a message. This number shrunk and now posting to your Facebook page will only reach 10% of your audience or less. That means that if you have 1,000 people following you, you can only reach 100 people. It's also not completely unheard of for Facebook to simply get rid of a Facebook page or group without any explanation or consultation given.

So you could spend days, months and years building your page only to wake up one morning and find it's gone. This might sound like hyperbole and paranoia but it actually happened to me with a page that had several hundred thousand likes. It was a painful experience and it really hammered home just how important it is to have your own direct way of accessing an audience if you're going to invest that much time, money and effort into building it.

E-mail marketing gives you complete control and it lets you communicate with someone right in their inbox. This means you can message them wherever they are and they will see the message *when* you send it. It feels much more personal and potentially you can have a much more emotional impact as a result of this.

One often quoted ‘rule’ of digital marketing, is that it takes five ‘touches’ in order to sell something. What this means, is that it’s very rare for you to make a sale simply by sending a single e-mail, or from someone landing on your page and reading your article. Instead, you need to build that trust, you need to explain why your product is so good and you need to warm the buyer up to being interested in it.

E-mail marketing is perfect for this because it lets you use those five touches in a sequence and know that each of your messages is going to be seen by the people you’re trying to reach. This lets you manage your relationship and execute a plan and that results in many more sales.

How to Build Your Mailing List

We’ve already covered the biggest and most important way to build a mailing list and that is simply to create lots of great content and to keep updating it consistently. If your website informs someone with useful and entertaining information and if you demonstrate that on your site you tackle a host of fascinating subjects in a unique way – if you provide lots of value – then people will sign up to your mailing list because they’ll want more.

But this is a somewhat passive way to build your list and if you want to speed the process up there are some additional strategies you can use.

Go to <http://ListBuildingSecrets.sec.bz>

Incentives

One of the biggest ways to get people to sign up to a mailing list is to incentivize that action. In other words, give people a good reason to sign up to your mailing list by offering something in exchange.

One of the most popular incentives of all here and the most obvious is a free eBook. If you offer an eBook, then you are providing free value in exchange for e-mails but at the same time, you won’t be costing yourself anything – so this isn’t a ‘loss leader’. eBooks as we have already discussed are great because there is no cost of manufacturing, storing or anything else. This means that you can give away as many as you want and it won’t cost you anything.

Likewise, you can also give away free ‘reports’ (which amount to very short eBooks), free online courses and more.

Quick Lesson: How to Make eBooks to Give Away and Monetize Them!

If you decided you wanted to become an affiliate marketer in order to avoid having to create products, then the idea of creating an eBook to incentivize your mailing list may not be terribly appealing. In fact, it might somewhat defeat the whole point as far as you’re concerned!

Luckily though, there are ways you can acquire your eBooks without having to create anything yourself. Of course you can outsource the process by using a site such as UpWork or Elance. Here, you’ll be able to find freelancers who are willing to write eBooks, design covers and more and who will work for a good wage in most cases. Another option is to buy an eBook with ‘PLR’. That stands for Private Label Rights and what it basically means is that you can resell it and also edit and change it however you see fit.

But if you want to forego spending more money then another option is to take content from your website. That’s right: if you already have been writing blog posts and articles then you probably have tons of unique content on your site. It’s unlikely any of your visitors will have read your entire site and Google really won’t care whether your eBook is unique or not – you don’t need it to get indexed.

So simply grab your existing writing and turn it into an eBook and you have a great free product to give away as an incentive!

If you *do* make your eBook this way, or if you’re happy to go about actually writing something, then you can make it more worth your while too by monetizing it. Simply throw in some additional affiliate links and that way people might buy something based on the eBook they’re reading. This is a great strategy if the eBook is good and it means that even if the subscribers only wanted the eBook and they never read your e-mails, you might *still* be able to profit from them.

As an added bonus, people who share your book and copy it will actually be helping you. If all goes well and the book proliferates around the net – containing your affiliate links – then you can earn a lot of money without even needing to promote it yourself.

And because your eBook is *free* and people are getting tons of value from it, you’ll have their captive attention and can really push the merits of the products you’re trying to promote!

The key thing to keep in mind when providing these kinds of freebies though is that firstly: they must be relevant to the products you’re selling and they must be in your

niche. Secondly: you also need to ensure that you aren't going to convince people to sign up to your mailing list who have no real interest in whatever it is you're going to be writing about.

The point here is that people *love* freebies. If you give away something for free on your website, then there's a good chance that they'll sign up to the mailing list just to get that free thing and then ignore all of your subsequent messages. This is not what you want and it's a complete waste of time for everyone involved.

Instead then, make sure that your product attracts not only people who are interested in your subject but also who are willing to spend money and who are likely to open your future messages.

This is easier said than done but if you get it right and your mailing list is highly targeted it will be much more effective as a result. It's better to have one good lead than a thousand dud ones!

So how do you make sure people aren't just signing up for a freebie? One option is to make your incentive a discount or special offer instead. So say "sign up to this mailing list to get discounts on tons of great products!". This way, you are giving people an incentive to sign up and you're offering something in exchange for their personal details. At the same time though, by signing up they will be demonstrating an interest in spending money. They're not just looking to get something free, they actually want to buy something but want to save money doing so.

What's even better, is that the value you'll now be providing will be coming from the e-mails themselves. In other words, in order to get those discounts that they have shown they want, they will need to actually open the e-mails you're sending. This is very different from a situation where they've got what they want and now just want to be left alone!

You can also mimic this second strategy by making your e-mails themselves the thing that people want. A simple way to do this is by making your mailing list a 'newsletter' an 'email course' or even an 'ezine'. These things all sound much more appealing and if you include some interesting content in each of your messages that's on topic, then people will have a good reason to actually *look forward* to opening your e-mails each time they land in their inboxes. You should treat each e-mail like a blog post and give it the same care and attention.

Pop-Overs and Mentions

There are other more straightforward things you can do to promote your mailing lists too. One is to add a pop-over, which is a pop-up that appears within the browser window over the top of what you're reading. You're no doubt highly familiar with these

because they appear simply *everywhere*. No matter what kind of websites you're visiting, almost all of them will now have some kind of pop-over that appears after a few minutes and invites you to sign up to the mailing list.

Now, you might have found these very irritating and perhaps this was enough reason for you to *not* want to use them. However, you should also ask yourself *why* so many bloggers and webmasters all use this technique. The obvious answer? Because it really works! And in fact, research suggests that you can increase your sign-ups by several hundred percent by including an opt-in form in a pop-over. Quite simply, this forces the visitor to engage with your offer and it makes sure that they don't miss the option to sign up. If you offer something free as well then people will very likely just enter their e-mail and move on.

But you also do want to avoid annoying anyone too much, which is why it's a good idea to do everything you can to make this minimally interruptive and frustrating. One thing that you shouldn't do to this end, is to use the manipulative technique of making the 'no' button sound off-putting. Many of these mailing lists will say things like:

"Do you want to sign up for our mailing list and learn how to get amazing abs?"

With the options being:

"Yes"

Or

"No, I'm happy to carry on looking flabby"

While it's clear to see what the bloggers are going for here, it's also a very quick way to alienate and annoy your visitors – so you're better off avoiding this strategy altogether!

Another thing to do is to ensure that the mailing lists aren't popping up repeatedly or right away. If someone has landed on your site for the very first time then it's *highly* unlikely they'll want to sign up to your mailing list before they've even read any of your content. We've already discussed how it takes time to build recognition and trust!

So if your mailing list pops up the minute a new visitor arrives on your page, this will just cause aggravation and not likely get many leads. Instead, use smarter pop-over technology that will show only once the visitor has been on your page a certain amount of time, or only once they have scrolled down a certain distance. Either of these strategies can prevent frustration and it means that only the people who *engage* with your content will see your message.

Finally and most importantly of all – make sure your popover is mobile friendly. A lot of these plugins and tools won't appear properly on mobile devices and end up covering the entire screen and making it impossible for visitors to click the cross or the 'no' button. This then renders the entire website completely unusable and as you might imagine that is *not* good for your brand. A good tool to use that is generally mobile

friendly is SumoMe, though you can find plenty more similar plugins through WordPress.

Another strategy for increasing your sign-ups that doesn't involve shoving your opt-in force literally in people's faces, is to simply mention it and *ask* them to sign up. This might sound rather simplistic but it works surprisingly well!

The mistake a lot of people make is to keep their mailing list in the corner of their site and to hope people just discover it and sign up. If instead you tell people it's there in your content and explain *why* it's worth signing up to, then you'll give people much more incentive and you'll know that they'll *at least* be aware that it's an option for them to sign up! Tell people that they can get more exclusive and exciting content by joining and this will give them a good incentive as long as what you're writing is great quality (telling people they're getting something exclusive or calling them VIPs are two great ways to get people excited to be a part of something).

Squeeze Pages

If you really want to focus on building your mailing list as the first step in your affiliate marketing strategy, then you may want to start by creating a squeeze page. A squeeze page is very similar to a landing page/sales page and utilizes the same narrow design and the same persuasive writing techniques. The key difference here though, is that you're not going to promote a product at the end but instead promote your mailing list. So the entire site is designed around the singular goal of getting people to subscribe to your mailing list and you can then just direct visitors to that page in order to grow your list.

This means you can use PPC or CPA (remember you can pay 'per subscriber' using Facebook Ads) and simply link to your squeeze page. These strategies require a little bit of upfront investment but ultimately it should pay off a lot if you can get all your members to convert at some point in the future!

Writing Your E-Mails

So now you're growing your mailing list and people are signing up left, right and center. The next question to ask yourself how you're going to take advantage of that list and turn those leads into prospects and buyers.

What you *don't* want to do is to launch straight in with your sales pitch. As with your other forms of content marketing (which is essentially what this is), you need to instead slowly build trust and authority and then from there to increase excitement and anticipation for your product.

Step one then is to make sure that your e-mails get opened and that people look forward to your content. Hopefully, they will open your very first message because they expect it to be good quality – they liked your content and they’ve been promised more of the same so they have no reason *not* to at least look at what you send them.

From here then, you should actually ensure to wow them with great content that really supplements what’s on your website. Think about the formatting and the value and make sure that they take something useful away from your message.

Keep doing this and you will gradually get to the point where people will look forward to your mails the same way they might look forward to getting their favorite magazine subscription through the door. At the same time, there’s nothing wrong with sending your readers to your website in order to get the full scoop. Give them the first part of your story in the e-mail and then send them to your site – this may even lead to a conversion!

Note: When you are creating your e-mail content, you typically want it to be much shorter than your website content. Whereas 1,800 words is the magic number for a blog post, most people don’t want to read that much through Gmail. Keep it short and sweet but deliver real value as well as some inspiration. Go here: <http://EzineWholesaler.com>

Quick Lesson: How to Write Great Subject Lines

If you are comparing your emails to articles or blog posts, then it follows that you should compare your subject line to an article heading. This provides all the same jobs, telling people what your content is about and why they should open it. At the same time, it needs to grab attention and really leap out.

But there are some differences here too. The first difference is that the typical email client will only display 50 characters or fewer for the subject heading. If your subject line is really waffling then, people won’t know what it’s about and won’t open it.

Another difference is that often an e-mail subject will sound as though you’re talking *to* someone. This isn’t quite a title but rather a message and as such you want it to be a little person. Some people will go as far with this as to put Re: in the heading or to pretend they know the person who signed up. This *can* be a useful strategy though it often comes across as manipulative and may irritate some people so tread carefully with it. Another option available to you is to use your recipient’s name “Jeff! Why not check out our new deals?”, which is possible through some autoresponder software.

Your main objectives then are to quickly grab attention and then convey the value that is inside the e-mail. Use the same rules as for your article title by making it sound interesting, valuable and unique to the other content they’ve read.

And most important of all? Tone down the promotional speak. People are absolutely sick of spam in their inboxes and in all likelihood, this is probably something that you

can sympathize with. Don't be just another marketer trying to get their attention – be a content provider or an entertainer and built their trust.

Split Testing

Note that you can also split test by using the data available through your autoresponder. Many autoresponders let you see how many of your e-mails were opened and this then means you can see which headings were the most successful. Create two different versions of your headings and compare which one works best – then you know to write more like that in future!

Once you've got this flow going and people trust you, you can then start to warm them up to the idea of your product. This is where it comes in really handy to be using e-mail marketing – you have the time and the luxury to warm them up to your product and to get them interested in it. You can build hype and even ask for feedback and ideas. If you ask *what kind of product* people want, then you can literally choose an affiliate product to match the one that your audience have expressed a need for.

Over time you can make this product more and more prominent and build up to a launch date when it will be going live. Give your mailing list advance access and a discount and after you've built that trust and established the desire, they will then hopefully be inclined to click through and convert.

Remember, it takes about five touches to generate a conversion. So to break down your mailing list messages into five parts, that could look like this:

- A welcome and hello to your audience, offering useful advice and value
- A message providing great useful tips plus mention of something 'exciting on the way'
- Message with exciting tips and inspiring stories and a bit more information about what you'll be selling
- Exciting tips + a description of your amazing product and what it will do
- A link to where the product can be bought along with a straight up sales pitch

What is an Autoresponder Sequence?

But wait, there's a problem! What if someone signs up just as you're about to launch and the *first* e-mail they see is that promotion? You can get around this by mentioning your new subscribers at some point in every message and by having a 'welcome message' delivered every time someone new signs up.

Alternatively though, you can also automate the entire process and to do this you just need what is known as an 'autoresponder sequence'. This is basically a series of e-mails that will get sent out to any new subscriber and that will contain your five touches and conversion e-mail.

Building a Sales Funnel

Another very useful tool that you can combine with your mailing list is a sales funnel. This is another way to get your ‘five touches’ and it basically gets your visitors to commit more and more to your brand and to engage more and more with what you have to say.

A good funnel should again have about five steps and these should be based on incremental increases in commitment.

So the first ‘step’ in your funnel is getting someone to sign up to your mailing list and you might do this via your website or via a squeeze page. The second step will be getting them to read your emails and to enjoy your content. The third step might be getting them to visit a free online seminar or discussion. Fourth might be getting them to pay for a small product and fifth might be getting them to buy your big ticket item.

As your visitors go through each of these steps they become just a little more committed to your brand each time and eventually they’ll then feel as though it’s only a small matter to take the last step and end up spending a lot of money on a big product.

This works much better than going in cold and immediately requesting they buy your \$1,000 course and it’s a great way to build brand loyalty. Your mailing list is the number one way for you to achieve that!

Chapter 10:

Advanced Techniques – Flyers, AdSwaps, Influencer Marketing and More

We’ve looked at an awful lot of different ways to market your product which included everything from creating PPC ads and landing pages, to setting up complex sales funnels.

But really great marketing isn’t just about using a few automated systems to generate more sales. Great marketing is about using your ingenuity and inventiveness in order to find new ways to connect with a bigger audience. Affiliate marketing is just like any other form of marketing and there are *limitless* options for how you want to go about it.

To demonstrate that, here are some lesser known methods and some more advanced methods. Hopefully these will also help you to see some more exciting opportunities and to come up with your *own* ideas.

Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is often described as a ‘growth hack’ which means it’s a strategy that marketers and businesses alike can use in order to reach a much larger audience, much more quickly.

Normally, building an audience takes a huge amount of time. Even with an amazing blog and a great squeeze page and autoresponder sequence, it will likely take you years to build up a gigantic audience. You can use PPC to skip this stage and go straight to the selling but if you don’t have money to invest then this might not be an option that’s available to you.

So what if you don’t have the luxury of time and you want to get to the big leagues right away? Good news: you can!

With influencer marketing, what you’re effectively doing is finding someone who is *already* at the top of their game and then using their exposure in order to make it big. It’s like having an affiliate to promote *your* affiliate product!

So how does this work? Simple: you find someone who is massive and land a blog post on their blog, including a link to your landing page. *Or* you ask someone who is already massive to post your link to *their* Twitter, meaning you reach a million different people overnight with no need to grow your own audience. This way you can make thousands of dollars or *more* overnight – it’s an incredibly effective method!

Of course it’s not quite so simple as that. The problem with influencer marketing is that these influencers have to actually *want* to work with you and that means you have to offer them something in return.

One way to do this is to just pay them. You can simply find an influencer on Twitter or YouTube and then sponsor them to send out a message to their followers. This means you need to invest money though and they’ll probably want to say that the message is sponsored which makes it a little less effective.

One common way to buy an influencer’s ‘audience’ for a message is through a solo ad. A solo ad means an ad that goes out to a list that someone else has built. Of course you do your research to ensure that the list you’re going out to is targeted to the right audience but in theory this means you get the benefits of having your own gigantic list but without actually having to build one!

Another option is to trade something with the influencer. An example of this is the guest post model. Likewise, you can do something similar by promoting *their* message to your list in exchange for them doing the same. When you do this via e-mails this is what’s known as an ‘adswap’.

When trying to exchange lists and audiences though, make sure that you don’t target influencers who are *too* big. If you go straight for the biggest names on the web, then

they likely won't stand to gain as much from the deal as you which means they're quite likely to just ignore your message. To ensure this doesn't happen, you need to go after smaller fish – ideally people who are at a similar level to you or maybe just a little bit higher. Each time you do this, you can potentially add a big percentage onto your audience and that means you can go after someone slightly bigger *next time* and eventually target the really big players. This way you can slowly climb the ladder.

Of course if you're really good, you can get an influencer to share your link for free. You can do this simply by creating such great content that they want to share it and then bringing it to their attention. *Or* you can do it by finding influencers who have a huge audience but who are oblivious to just how influential they are. These are people too and occasionally they share stuff!

One strategy people often use when trying to get guest posts is to post regularly in the comments sections on the blogs they're trying to target. This way, they hope to get known by the blogger, so that when they eventually get in touch their e-mail will stand out and won't just get deleted.

Another strategy you can use is to do business with the blogger. If they offer any kind of service or product and you pay for that, then they will be obliged to contact you during which time you can form something of a relationship. From there, if you then go on to ask for a guest post or for a retweet, you may find they're much more receptive because they already *know* you.

Quick Lesson: Tools for Influencer Marketing

There are lots of tools you can use in order to find influencers to work with. One of the best is Twitter Analytics. If you sign in here, you'll be able to see some interesting metrics about your account, including which of your tweets performs best, when people are most engaged and also who your 'most valuable' followers are.

A valuable follower is anyone who regularly engages with your content and anyone who has a big audience of their own. If you can find someone who ticks both these boxes, then they provide you with the perfect opportunity to reach a big audience right away. Just retweet what they say, or comment on one of their tweets and they will be likely to share it, thus giving you more exposure!

Another great tool to use is LinkedIn. This is where LinkedIn really comes into its own in fact as it lets you see how you're connected to some of the biggest names on the web. If you have a mutual friend or you know a friend of one of their friends, you can contact anyone on the network using the 'InMail' system. LinkedIn even shows you which people are the biggest influencers when you're looking at their profile pages!

Want to grow your LinkedIn network more quickly? An awesome strategy is to use the excellent 'Rapportive'. This tool allows you to see the LinkedIn account of anyone who contacts you through Gmail, thereby letting you add them instantly!

Real World Marketing

Don't assume that all affiliate marketing is internet marketing. You can actually sell online products in person and as long as you're using your affiliate link, you'll still get the profits!

An example of this is to use flyers. If you're promoting bingo accounts for instance, then you can print off flyers and hand them out in your local area. If those flyers include your affiliate link, then that can lead immediately to a lot of recurring income!

Likewise, you can also use direct TV ads, radio ads and more to send people to a landing page. One particularly good 'route to market' is to aim for small niche magazines. If you can get them to write a story about you, then this won't cost you anything! Alternatively, if you pay for an ad, it will likely be very cheap.

The real world is also useful for a lot of other things. In particular, it's *excellent* for networking. Go to networking events and this is an excellent way to meet influencers who you can work with later – and it's much easier to make a lasting impression in person – just make sure it's a positive one!

Video Marketing

YouTube is another great place to sell your affiliate products. If you create a vlog then you can build trust and subscribers and use this just the same way as a blog. What's even better about a video though is that it's more engaging and you can make it much more persuasive. If you're selling a physical product, then you'll even have the benefit of being able to *show* the product in use on the screen. This makes a massive difference and gives people the ability to imagine holding it themselves. YouTube is a search engine and works similarly to Google, so create videos people are looking for and fill them with persuasive content to make sales.

Videos are also a great way to enhance the effectiveness of a landing page. To help grab attention even more than you already were, have a video auto play when someone lands on the page and then start reading out your sales pitch.

Note: You don't need to be Steven Spielberg to make persuasive marketing videos – you can simply save a slideshow created in PowerPoint as an MPG and then record yourself narrating it!

Press Releases

Another mini strategy you can use is to create press releases. These are short ‘news pieces’ designed to be read by journalists and turned into stories. You can send them directly to big blogs, websites and magazines and include a link to your landing page where they’ll be able to buy the product via you. Likewise, you can also upload these to a site like PR.Com where many writers go to get new stories.

The key to success with a press release is to make sure that your story is *news worthy* and that you provide all the information that a blogger needs to turn it into an interesting piece for their audience. A special discount isn’t something people generally consider newsworthy – however big rebranding, perhaps a launch event or something to that effect can be.

Advanced Affiliate Business Models

If you want to get clever about it, there are actually all kinds of advanced versions of affiliate marketing and ways you can ‘work the system’.

One of the best examples of this is the ‘cash back website’. A cash back site is essentially a site that sells affiliate products and shares the revenue with the buyers. So if you make 60% from each sale, you could offer to give buyer 30% back. This gives them a very strong incentive to buy from you, while at the same time giving you profit.

Another option is to sell affiliate products and to get marketers to help you do so, thereby splitting the revenue with them instead. This is called a revenue share model but in order for it to be worth their while, you need to offer them something they wouldn’t have otherwise – perhaps access to products that don’t have affiliate schemes normally, or maybe access to a big audience.

Get inventive and you’ll find there are loads of different ways you can take the basic affiliate model and then scale it up to epic proportions! This is the perfect example of how you can use inventiveness to make a lot more money as a marketer!

Chapter 11:

Safeguarding Your Affiliate Links Using Cloakers and Redirects

At this point in the book, we've now covered everything that could be considered basic – though we've gone into *far* more detail than most other books on the subject. You now know the basic business model that underlies affiliate marketing and you know every step you need to take to start getting lots of sales for products that pay out lots of commission. What's more, you have tons of strategies and hacks you can use to make more money and to tailor your business model to suit your own skills and interests.

But now we're going to get a little technical and discuss a precaution that you need to take during all this. We already explained how affiliate marketing works on a technical level - by using your specific link to store cookies on the visitors' computers – and you might have noticed that this system is incredibly simple. In fact, you might even have thought it was *worrying* simple and somewhat easy to crack.

By understanding the weaknesses of this system you can not only make sure to protect your income from things going wrong but you can also help to increase your sales and your profits. This is something that many affiliate marketers skip and it can have dire consequences. Download and install this software: <http://idcibc.com/go/?linktracker>

What is Link Cloaking and Why You Should Do It?

When you hover your mouse over any link, you should notice that it comes up with a URL in the bottom of your browser. Normally, this link might be something like 'www.example.com'. If however the link is an affiliate link, it will usually be obvious because it will have lots of additional information tacked onto the end of it. Often this takes the form of a lengthy URL with numbers question marks and equals signs. So maybe 'www.example.com/buy/marketID=99123129?referrer=89'.

Not only does this not look particularly catchy or inviting but it also communicates to your audience that it's an affiliate link. Anyone with any familiarity with affiliate links will thus know that you're trying to make money from them and this can then undermine what you're promoting. Is that *really* the best piece of software you ever used, or are you just interested in selling something and lying through your teeth?

People are *less inclined* to click affiliate links and this can therefore cause issues. Another problem is that people can now visit the site while skipping your affiliate ID. If

they see that the link is to 'www.example.com' then they may just type that route domain into their browser and entirely skip your referral and your affiliate link. They might do this to prevent you earning money from their purchase, or they may do it completely innocently just trying to save time. Either way, you can lose money. This is known as 'affiliate bypassing'.

Another threat is something called 'affiliate hijacking'. This means that *another* affiliate might steal your commissions and get the product for a discount price. For instance, if you're selling a product someone wants, they might see that you're an affiliate and then set up their own affiliate account so that they can buy the product and get a 'discount' in the form of commission. This cheats you *and* the merchant out of sales.

Lastly, you might even find yourself at the mercy of a malicious attack. If an affiliate's behavior is flagged as suspicious, this can sometimes get their account suspended. That means that a competitor could click on your link lots of times or encourage lots of sales through your link on the same IP and result in you getting banned. This is highly unlikely seeing as it would take a lot of work for very little gain but it is possible and it's another important reason to protect yourself.

How to Use Cloakers and Redirects

As you've possibly guessed by now, cloakers work by simply disguising the full URL that people are clicking, while redirects send people to another link first.

A link cloaker is a special script or simple page that redirects a simple URL or that uses a 'frame' showing multiple pages in the same browser window.

There are a number of different ways to use cloakers or redirects and the best option for you will depend on how much security you want and how advanced you are. Here are some of the options you have available to you:

Third Party Solutions

A number of third party solutions exist to help you keep your links shorter and more memorable and these can double up as link cloakers. One well known one is 'bit.ly' while another is 'TinyUrl'. Both of these were originally intended to be used with Twitter in order to make URLs shorter and thus more suitable for being used in very brief Tweets.

These are incredibly simple to use: all you need to do is paste your link into a box and then you'll be given a new URL you can use in the body of your text. The only problem with these though is that they mean going through a third party and thereby relinquishing some of your control. Some people are unhappy with this and so they don't use that solution.

Using a Plugin

There are a plethora of different plugins you can use to keep your links protected and some of these provide advanced features. Specific link protecting plugins also offer additional benefits such as HTML Unicode encrypting or opening in an iFrame. There are plenty of options, so just take a look through your WP-Admin panel.

Creating a Redirect Page

Another option is to make your own redirect page. This is a page of code that simply includes the following line:

```
<meta http-equiv="refresh" content="0; url=http://www.example.com/affiliatelink">
```

The only problem with this is that it's very easy for people to work out where the link is really pointing just by doing a simple 'view source'.

Editing HTAccess

Finally, you can edit your htaccess file. Just open it up and add the line:

```
"Redirect product/ http://www.example.com/affiliatelink"
```

Here, 'product' is a directory on your server. So just log in and use the FTP client to create a new folder on your webhost with that name and then whenever you send someone there, they'll instead go to the affiliate link.

There are a variety of other strategies available and if you're very paranoid then you can add some more advanced code to use encryption and iFrames. For most people though, these few tools will be enough protection and you can even combine them to create a lengthy bread trail to your affiliate page.

This software makes everything easy: <http://idcibc.com/go/?linktracker>

Chapter 12:

Alternatives to Affiliate Marketing

Now you know everything you could possibly need to know to be a highly successful affiliate marketer, you should have a very good idea of what it entails and whether or not it's for you.

But what if, after all that, you don't think you *do* like the sounds of affiliate marketing? What if it all seems a bit complicated? Or a bit slow? Or what if you'd like to make your own product that you can take real pride in?

No problem! The good news is that the skills you've learned as an affiliate marketer are *highly* transferable and can be used in a range of different business models you can use to earn money online. If you've been paying attention all this time, then you will *also* have the skills to handle a number of these business models and likewise there's nothing to stop you combining multiple businesses like these to form a range of different income streams. For example...

Creating a Digital Product

If you want your *own* product then you can make one relatively simply. Most people have the ability to write an eBook and the old saying goes that 'everyone has a book in them'. All you need to do is create a Word Document and save it as a PDF and if you want, you can even do this by using content you've already created for your blog or website.

But if you're not confident in your skills as a writer, or perhaps if you want to create something else like an app or another piece of software, then you can do this relatively simply too by outsourcing the process via UpWork, Elance or Fiverr. You can also find people happy to work for money on Digital Point Forum or Warrior Forum (Digital Point is a competitor to Warrior Forum).

Getting someone to write you an ebook will normally set you back \$2-\$4 per 100 words but note that you do get what you pay for. If you spend a little more, the book will be much better quality. As a rule, a book you're going to sell should be at least 10,000 words long which means you're looking at spending somewhere in the ball park of around \$200 or \$400. This isn't bad considering you should be able to make the money back after 10 or more sales!

If you're really adventurous, you could even find affiliates for your *own* products!

PLR Products

As mentioned earlier, an alternative approach here is to buy a product with PLR – Private Label Rights. This way, you buy the book and the right to edit and sell it. Often these come with all the marketing materials included but you get more flexibility in the way you want to edit your business model.

If you're looking for a good site to download PLR products, there's really only one that I recommend. It's the RRW site run by Mark Austin. Mark is an honest marketer who is continually adding great products for his members to download. You can join RRW for free here: [www. Resell-Rights-Weekly.com](http://www.Resell-Rights-Weekly.com)

Crafts

Of course your products don't have to be digital products and if you can make something physical then that might be even better – especially as this time you'll be getting 100% commission instead of the paltry 4% offered by Amazon!

Most people don't have the means to create a product that they mass produce but if you have some kind of skill or craft then that's something you can easily market. Why not sell hand-made jewelry, clothes, paintings or something else you make? That way you can turn a hobby into a business!

Marketing

Another option is to use your marketing skills as a service. Now you know how to make a splash on the web, build an audience and gain a following, this is something you can sell to other people!

Internet marketing is something that every business needs and it's increasingly well known. Once you've seen how much money it can make for you, why not outsource it to others? You can find work very quickly advertising somewhere like Warrior Forum and you'll find that there's a big demand for it.

That said, this is also a somewhat saturated market. To stand out, you need to find the right audience and make your service sound different from all the others – all things you should know how to do by now!

A free tip though: try going into high street stores that don't have websites (or that have poor performing websites) in your area and offering them your SEO, social media and PPC skills to get them to the top of Google. As with influencer marketing, it's much easier to make an impression and make your case in person!

Chapter 13: Your Complete Plan for Affiliate Marketing Domination

Wow, you made it! Congratulations! At this moment in time you probably feel as though your head weighs an extra 10 kilograms as a result of all the new knowledge packed in there. Feels as though you could lose it all if you shook your head, doesn't it?

To prevent that happening then, let's take a moment to recap on everything we've learned and to structure the process you need to use into a nice outline.

This is your complete plan for affiliate marketing domination and the steps you need to take to absolute victory!

Step 1: The Planning

We've seen just how important it is to pick the right niche, seeing as this will ultimately impact everything else from the look of your website, to the products you're selling to the kind of audience who will be buying them.

Look at what you know, what you enjoy writing and reading about and what will be easy to sell. Think about subjects that provide you with a great value proposition and a great USP and where you have a clear route to an untapped market.

Now create your logo and brand and decide if you want a personal brand or something a bit more corporate.

Step 2: Set Up

Now you need to set up a landing page at the very least, social media and probably a blog to go along with it.

The social media channels you need to be on should *at least* be:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- LinkedIn

To create a website, you'll need a hosting account and a URL. Create your site using WordPress to save yourself a lot of time and stress.

Step 3: Finding Your Product and Starting Selling

You can sell all manner of products from physical products and services to eBooks. A good place to start though is with a simple and high paying eBook that you can find on JVZoo. Pick something that is already successful and that you would want yourself and make sure it caters to the audience you're building.

Once you have your affiliate link, you can now create a landing page which you can do easily with the Optimize Press plugin for WordPress. Don't forget to cloak your URL for protection.

Write your landing page and use a narrative structure, lots of facts and authority and a strong emotional appeal to maximize your conversions.

Want to start making money? If you have some cash to invest then you can start earning immediately by setting up some Facebook Ads. All you need to do is to ensure that the Facebook Ads are highly targeted to your audience and that you are up-front about what you're selling in the heading. This way, you shouldn't get too many 'wasted' clicks. If your landing page is good, this should immediately yield decent ROI.

Step 4: Building Trust and Authority

Now the next step is to start getting more people to your site organically (unpaid) through SEO, social media and content marketing.

The number one way to do this is to keep creating high quality content and to make sure it delivers real value that's different from anything else out there. Your social media pages meanwhile should also be offering lots of value within your niche and you should view them as products in their own right. Put some work into influencer marketing, taking time to build your way up to the top bloggers, share your highly targeted content in forums and online communities and engage in discussion. Encourage people to sign up to your mailing list too with a pop-over and maybe a free eBook.

All this will help you to build more trust and authority over time and to gain more momentum to help you sell your product even more.

Step 5: Replicate and Scale

The awesome thing about affiliate marketing is that there's nothing to stop you simply repeating the same business model over and over. You can now start looking for more products to sell to your audience – maybe branching out into an Amazon Associates account – or you can start looking for new markets and simply sell a different product there.

Conclusion

Using these simple steps and then scaling over time, you can grow your business to insane heights while maintain a relatively passive income that doesn't involve too much work on your part.

Or why not grow and evolve your business into something else? With your revenue stream, you can now look into doing other things you want to do and maybe that might mean creating your own product, selling arts and crafts or setting up your own marketing agency!

The key thing is to keep your eye on the big picture and to remember what you want to achieve from all this. If you got into affiliate marketing because you wanted to enjoy passive income, financial freedom and more relaxed lifestyle then there's no *need* to grow or to have crazy ambition.

And likewise, you shouldn't put too much pressure on yourself to start making a million in your first year. Every bit of cash you make as an affiliate should be seen as a win and every win will make your life that bit easier.

Write about something you enjoy, build an audience that respects you and feel life getting easier as you start to accumulate more and more additional income.

Who knows, maybe you *will* be the next billionaire to retire to a sunny island. Either way though, you now have an incredible skill you can use to passively generate income quickly and easily. That's an incredible skill to have!