

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO

AFFILIATE MARKETING



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Are you looking for a side hustle or maybe a way to replace your income for more freedom?

Maybe you've heard about affiliate marketing and are thinking about giving it a try. Affiliate marketing is basically earning a commission on products you promote on your blog, website, YouTube channel, etc.

Although affiliate marketing is a relatively simple concept, it's not necessarily an easy or quick method of earning income. And, there are right ways to do it that will make everything easier.

This guide will give you some helpful insights into how to get started affiliate marketing, the importance of building an audience vs increasing your traffic, and helpful tips and tricks that will help you be more successful along the way.



WHAT IS AFFILIATE MARKETING?

Basically, you promote products on your website, YouTube channel, or social media profile and if one of your followers clicks the link and makes a purchase, you make a commission.

Commissions can range from 5% to 50% depending on the site and the product. Some companies will offer a flat rate.

As with any business, affiliate marketing requires hard work and dedication. The more work you put in, the more you're likely to get in terms of profits. Your dedication will determine your income level.



IS AFFILIATE MARKETING WORTH IT?

So many people make the decision to try affiliate marketing only to never quite reach the level of income they'd hoped for. This is mainly because they don't take the time to fully understand how it works and the level of commitment it takes to be successful.

The truth is that affiliate marketing is worth it but you have to be willing to invest in educating yourself.

Why is it worth it? Here are a few reasons:

- You don't have to create a product
- You don't have to pay any fees
- You don't have to deal with customers
- It's fast
- It's profitable
- Work when you want



HOW TO GET STARTED WITH AFFILIATE MARKETING

If you choose to start affiliate marketing, the best approach you can take is to treat it like a business right from the beginning. Learn as much as you can and do the research. Successful affiliate marketers don't take shortcuts or skip steps.

Manage your expectations. Affiliate marketing is a simple concept but it does require that you spend some time learning exactly how it works and what you need to do to be successful.

Take a look at some of the important topics you'll need to consider before starting your affiliate marketing business.

– PICK A NICHE –

Choosing a niche is a crucial first step in starting your affiliate marketing business. If you try to sell to everyone, you'll end up selling to no one. Finding the right niche for you makes it so much easier to sell, create relevant content, and connect with your audience.

Pick what interests *you*. **The best way for you to engage readers and be successful with an affiliate marketing strategy is for you to be passionate about your topic.** Quality content leads to higher search engine rankings, more traffic, engaged visitors, and more affiliate sales.

– CHOOSE A PLATFORM –

Theoretically, affiliate marketing works on pretty much any platform. However, it's much easier to build an audience and increase sales with blogs and YouTube.

Whichever platform you choose, it's important that your site or videos be professional and visually pleasing. If your site seems chaotic, busy, hard to read, or otherwise hard to follow, you could have a hard time keeping visitors there long enough to find your affiliate links.

Keep in mind that the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) requires that you disclose to your visitors that you're promoting affiliate links.

– FIND AFFILIATE PROGRAMS –

There are essentially three types of affiliate programs.

- **High Commission, Low Volume Affiliates** - These affiliate programs offer a higher payout for commissions but they tend to not move as many of their products because they are at a higher price point.

- **Low Commission, High Volume Affiliates** - These programs don't offer a huge commission but you may get more clicks and sales. They tend to have a broader market appeal.
- **High Commission, High Volume Affiliates** - These programs appeal to a large number of consumers and they pay high commission rates. The downside to this type of affiliate is the competition.

The affiliate program you choose depends largely on your niche and level of expertise. If the primary visitors to your site/channel are consumers, you'll probably have the most success with a program that offers lower commission but higher volume.

However, if your target audience is more likely to be businesses, you may have more luck with a high commission, low volume program.

– CREATE AWESOME CONTENT –

The real way to the customer's heart is by providing *value*.

In the content world, providing value simply means giving prospects what they need or want for free, with no tricks and no hidden agendas.

By providing good content, you do two things:

- You keep the reader on your page long enough to find your affiliate links.
- You create trust that the product you're promoting is good and worth purchasing.

What types of content will best reach your audience and create value for them? There are several that are usually top performers for affiliate marketing.

- Product Reviews
- Blog Posts
- Ebooks, Emails and Webinars

– DRIVE TRAFFIC TO YOUR LINKS –

Now that you've created fantastic content and provided oodles of value for potential visitors, you need to get them to your site. There are a few strategies to consider when trying to drive traffic to your links.

- SEO - Search Engine Optimization
- Build an Email List
- Paid Traffic

– GET THE CLICKS –

Creating quality content is a huge first step in creating a solid affiliate marketing business but there are some other things to consider. You still have to get the reader to click on your links.

Here are a few things to consider about link placement:

- **Balance your link placement.** If you put the link at the bottom of a page, you're not going to see good results because people rarely scroll all the way to the bottom of the page.
- **Create links that make sense.** Link the product names or descriptions not just random words in your post.
- **Using a callout can be a great option.** Boxes, tables, and buttons can be a great way to draw attention to your link.

– CONVERT CLICKS TO SALES –

When a customer does what you want them to do, it's called a conversion. Conversions can be making a sale or they can be signing up for a newsletter, clicking a link, or any other thing that *you want them to do* - the purpose of your content.

There are two conversions that you want to happen in your affiliate marketing business. The first conversion will happen when the customer clicks on your link. You are completely in control of this conversion.

The second conversion happens when the customer makes a purchase, and this is not in your control. It will be to your advantage to choose affiliates with good conversion rates.



IF YOU WANT TO BE REALLY SUCCESSFUL

There are a few fundamentals to affiliate marketing that are necessary for success. Unfortunately, many people overlook them because they don't seem important, they take too much time, or they don't feel there is any benefit to the effort.

– KNOW YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE –

Your target audience is not simply people who are interested in buying your product. Knowing exactly who you are marketing to is critical to not only your success, but also determines the amount of effort you're going to have to put in. It may be helpful to create an avatar of your ideal customers.

Once you have this information, you can write content that this person would read and enjoy, post in social media groups where they might hang out, and make an overall plan to convert them.

– BUILD AN EMAIL LIST –

Having an email list is a great way to keep in touch with your customers, let them know what's happening over at your site, and keep them coming back to check it out. Organic search traffic is great but reaching out through email is a great way to stay in contact.

Building an email list may seem daunting but it's actually quite easy. As we noted, the key is offering prospects value in exchange for their email address.

– DON'T RELY SOLELY ON ORGANIC SEARCH TRAFFIC –

If you plan on relying solely on organic search traffic, you may be disappointed with your results. At least in the beginning. It takes a while to build up your SEO ranking on search engines and if you're not putting out quality content on a consistent basis, it can take even longer.

This is another reason building an email list can be a huge help. It can really help get the ball rolling with traffic.

– ANALYTICS –

Learn how to use analytics to track your successes and failures. It is incredibly helpful to know what's working so you can make adjustments and fine-tune your process.

Google Analytics is a great, free way to track your results and there are a ton of resources online to teach you how to use it.

– HONOR YOUR BRAND –

You can't promote every high commission affiliate you come across. If you just choose affiliates based on the commission you're not going to be perceived as authentic to your customers.

– DO THE WORK –

“I’m a great believer in luck and I find the harder I work, the more of it I have.” - Thomas Jefferson

Affiliate marketing has grown into a seven billion dollar industry world wide, but it is in no way an easy, get rich quick path. If it was, everyone would be doing it. The truth is that it’s a lot of work, and in the beginning there’s not a lot of return on your effort.



MYTHS YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF

There are a lot of myths out there about affiliate marketing. Here are some of the top myths, debunked.

– AFFILIATE MARKETING IS EASY AND OFFERS QUICK RETURNS –

Affiliate marketing is a very simple concept but is not easy to execute. Most people seriously underestimate the amount of time it will take for them to be successful and also the amount of work they will have to put into having a successful affiliate marketing business.

– ONLY CERTAIN NICHE ARE PROFITABLE –

This is a really popular myth that just simply isn’t true. There are thousands of niches and new ones emerge everyday as consumers' needs and interests change and evolve. Pick a niche that interests you. You’re going to be putting a lot of time and effort into building this business. Wouldn’t it be nice if it didn’t bore you to tears?

– AFFILIATE MARKETING IS NOT A SERIOUS BUSINESS –

This is a common myth that comes from people not really understanding how affiliate marketing works. The concept of promoting someone else's business or product for a commission has been around for a very long time. The internet has made that concept explode.

The affiliate marketing business model has been proven to work over the last several decades and advertisers know that.

– CUSTOMERS HATE AFFILIATE LINKS –

The truth is that customers hate being sold to but they love buying. If your approach is desperate, needy, and solely based on selling them something, people will not buy from you.

A much more successful approach is to build a relationship with your audience. Become someone they feel they can trust by posting valuable content and conveying how the product can solve their problems.

– AFFILIATES DON'T NEED A CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY –

Many people believe that they can simply have a great blog with good content or product comparisons or some other form of sales content and the sales will just pour in. If only.

– AFFILIATE MARKETING IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY –

If you're interested in building a business online, whether it be a side hustle or a full time gig, affiliate marketing is a great option.

A well-defined marketing strategy is the best way to figure out how you want your customers to go through your sales process.