

Retouching A Stable Affiliate Marketing Plan

This is a stage by stage plan for you to adapt into a financially successful affiliate marketing business, run from your own website or blog. If ever you've wanted to see a license to print money, this is it.

You will learn a plan of action that explains:

- how affiliate marketing works,
- helps you build your website,
- choose a niche for your marketing,
- choose the best products to introduce to your readers,
- target awesome traffic through your marketing and
- repeat consistently.

What is affiliate marketing and what is an affiliate?

Where we talk about a product or service within affiliate marketing, it belongs to a company or business and is not directly available from you. As the affiliate marketer, you provide the link from the customer to the company and their product.

Think of yourself as the 'middleman' – you are affiliated with the product or service for sale, but do not provide it yourself.

In reality; you're involved in the sales process where you earn a commission from each sale.

Here's the short version before the details. Currently you:

- own a blog or website or can design one
- can recommend a product or service to your readers
- can strike a partnership with the company that sells the product or service
- you can market the product or service from your blog or website
- you are now an affiliate marketer

You will be targeting specific customers to a website page from your affiliate link or banner. By linking customers and the best offers, you increase the chance of a sale and receive commission.

This is what happens in affiliate marketing, in real-time;

- you write a blog post telling your readers about the product or service from the company that you recommend, or
- you place banner ads or buttons on your website; these link to the company's website. The link contains a unique ID. The ID is you so the company knows who to pay
- the reader clicks on your link in your post or the advert on your website
- the reader is sent to the company's website
- when the reader purchases the product or service the company adds your payment to your commission statement
- the reader is happy

- the company is joyful
- you are ecstatic

As you set up your new business you have two choices to make:

1. You can choose to link to a few companies that are linked by niche to your current blog/website. This means joining an affiliate program direct from a merchant or through an affiliate network that manages the entire affiliate transaction.
2. The alternative choice is to set up your new blog/website as one gigantic affiliate marketing business and join several affiliate networks.

Take time to look at competition across the marketplace that interests you. This will help you decide which actions to take.

Let your thinking concentrate on three important points throughout your new business planning:

1. Choose the best possible products and services matched to good/great commission for your business
2. Targeted traffic to your website is vital. Great traffic will help your readers click your affiliate links for commission, even where your products are average.
3. Match the traffic to great products and hey presto!

Alternative websites

Instead of offering a website/blog, some successful affiliate marketing businesses use to other methods that you may consider as opportunities for you.

Coupon websites - everyone wants a bargain and where you are paid to generate traffic to a merchant that offers coupons, you will be paid a commission for your work.

Download websites - consumers often wish to try software before they will purchase it. By offering a download option and targeting great traffic to your website, you will be paid for each customer that downloads software via your website and then again, as an affiliate marketer, when they purchase the full product after the trial period has been completed.

How to start your business venture

You cannot achieve success without a website or blog. Where you already have a successful website, or a following on Facebook, Twitter or other social media, you already have a built in customer base.

Alternately, you're starting from the beginning.

You will benefit from operating direct from your own domain/website, even if you use Google for traffic elsewhere, use Facebook for attention and Twitter for marketing.

If Google change their rules or one of the social media companies cuts you off, you'll be pleased that you run your business from your own domain.

Rewards for your hard work

You will be offered two completely different types of commission from merchants and affiliate networks.

CPL; as an affiliate, you will be paid a commission for every enquiry which moves from your website to their website.

CPA; as an affiliate, you will be paid only when a sale is completed through the products or service provider's website.

You can choose to mix and match these different commission methods. Depending upon the price of the product or service, you will usually receive more commission when a product or sale is completed, compared to customers who use your website where a company pays you for clicking through, only.

As you consider your affiliate links, some companies will offer you a higher commission once certain sales targets have been reached. This is an incentive for you to send more traffic through to a particular merchant.

Website basics

Okay; let's get past the basics. We're not going to waste your time here with irrelevant clutter. You know how to do these:

- how to register a domain,
- get a hosting,
- install a blog,
- get an autoresponder,
- creating landing pages

If you're unsure how to complete these tasks, become an expert from lots of free resources online to enhance your affiliate marketing results.

Optimizing your website is vital; now is the time to perform the maximum SEO for search engines.

As soon as your website is up and running, maximize the use of Title tags, description tags, keywords, robots and other meta tags.

Niche marketing

Choose your affiliate marketing links carefully, attracting customers that will enjoy a range of advertising that is linked to a niche, rather than choosing links from anywhere, without a common thread.

Individuals that visit your website for more information about musical instruments will be interested in links to keyboard music, keyboard stands, guitar effects, singers on tour and so on. They may not be interested in Barbie doll sales, how to paint your garden shed or movies about how to create calm through yoga.

Small niche marketing can be good for you and may offer less competition. The greatest successes may come from extremely popular and lucrative niche markets, even though they offer more competition.

Buy your hosting

Now is the time to carry out these first necessary steps;

- register a domain
- get a hosting
- install a blog

- acquire an autoresponder

Avoid the free services and pay so that you remain in control of your domain, hosting, blog and auto responder.

Your WordPress blog will help build a relationship with your customers and boost your search engine rankings.

How to choose your niche?

You must narrow down your choice of niche marketplace before you can move onto the next stage.

To help you find your favorite niche consider this;

- What problems can you solve for your customers?
- When customers search Google or other search engines which other businesses advertise on the first few results pages?
- Is there space for your business or is your competition invincible?
- Do you need to know the subject completely or can you gain the knowledge quickly?
- Do you need to enjoy the subject to keep it fresh for you?

Keeping up with the times

Google are constantly and consistently upgrading algorithms for SEO. You will need to regularly check what Google considers to be positive or negative so that you can update the links in your website.

When they change their rules, part of your website may be affected and business temporarily reduced. By keeping up-to-date with Google information, you can keep your website ahead of the rest.

As long as you consistently think that affiliate marketing is all about quality rather than quantity, you will be heading in the right direction.

Working your affiliate marketing

As you stroll through the Internet, the highest traffic for affiliates is driven by SEO (around 80%) followed by social media (around 60 %.)

The key is to link with successful affiliate marketing businesses where you will both be pleased with profits and conversions.

Your next action is to choose merchant's websites which you can link to via an affiliate link.

As you start to research your potential merchants or affiliate networks, consider;

- How well each sales page at the relevant company will attract your potential customers?
- Is it a good product and will it help the customer?
- Does the sales page motivate the purchaser to complete the transaction?
- Is it easy for the customer to buy?
- Does the merchant provide great after sales support?
- Does the merchant care about the customer?

Choose an affiliate network

What is an affiliate network?

Effectively, an affiliate network is the business operator that links larger companies to deal with a high number of affiliates to promote their products and services.

An affiliate network works like this:

An affiliate network introduces you to a large number of companies and publishers who have a wide range of products and services for sale.

The affiliate network provides you with all of the necessary tools so you can promote the products effectively. You will be placing links and banners on your website/blog where they are relevant to the subject matter.

The tracking codes within each link or banner are the ID that links you to the commission you will receive after a sale.

You may gain a greater affiliate commission percentage with a direct link to a company. Alternately, when you link through an affiliate network, the network needs to take their share as well; but they may have negotiated a higher rate to cover the difference.

Which affiliate networks are best for you?

There is a good choice of networks which will be right for you. Visit them and evaluate which feels best, what affiliate sales they can offer, check out the deals, investigating the percentage of commission you can receive.

After joining, follow their training so you know how to search the network for suitable affiliate offerings. Also, make sure you know, 100%, how to copy the link from the product or service, to your website, to ensure you get paid when a sale completes.

Clickbank are one of the most well-known, one of the biggest, but this also means they have the most issues.

Of course, and here's a large hint; everyone has heard of Amazon. Don't they sell everything in the world?

Here is a list of some of the major affiliate networks. Search for more...

JVZoo <http://www.jvzoo.com>

Rakuten Linkshare <http://www.linkshare.com/>

CJ by Conversant <http://www.cj.com/> also known as Commission Junction.

Amazon <https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/gp/associates/join/landing/main.html>

Avangate <http://www.avangate.com/>

eBay Partner Network <https://ebaypartnernetwork.com/>

ClickBank <http://www.clickbank.com/>

ShareASale <http://shareasale.com/>

FlexOffers <http://www.flexoffers.com/>

Revenue Wire <http://www.revenuwire.com/>

AvantLink <http://www.avantlink.com/>

LinkConnector <http://www.linkconnector.com/>

Affiliate Window <http://www.affiliatewindow.com/us/>

oneNetworkDirect <http://www.onenetworkdirect.com/>

AffiliateNetwork <http://www.affiliatenetwork.com/>

Affiliatefuture <http://www.affiliatefuture.com/>

AdMedia <http://www.admedia.com/>

Tradedoubler <http://www.tradedoubler.com/>

Webgains <http://us.webgains.com/>

Impact Radius <http://www.impactradius.com/>

Valuleads <https://valuleads.com/>

As you investigate each merchant's product or service, you must decide whether it is worth promoting for the commission you might receive or whether you should move on to a different product or service that will be more effective to your bottom line profits.

The products you choose must;

- Be excellent products or services
- introduce an excellent commission structure
- offer great support to your customers

Important note about affiliate networks

Life changes and updates. Before you choose from any of the above listed networks or others, just because they are a top rated network now, doesn't mean they will stay that way in the future.

Check reviews, check other affiliate comments and feedback and keep up-to-date with changes in the marketplace.

Arrange for Google to send you direct notification any time that your favorite affiliate network is mentioned in the news so you can stay one step ahead and be prepared to change at a moment's notice when necessary.

Affiliate sign up process

Signing up for a network is easy. You just follow the prompts offered to you. For affiliate networks, you sign up to the network. With some networks, you sign up separately for each product or service you intend to use.

It'll take you around five minutes providing you have your account information available, so they know how to pay you.

For direct merchant affiliate sign ups, have ready:

- Your personal and business information

- Know which promotional methods you intend to use
- An estimate of your monthly sales (difficult to guess, I know!)
- Read the full terms and conditions agreement. If there are any parts you do not understand, find out what they mean to you.
- Have your savings or checking account information available. Many will pay you by PayPal, as an option.

Your website/blog

Add Google's AdSense banners to your blog to see which advertisements appear across your pages. These will almost certainly be good money earners.

Go to these companies direct and add them as an affiliate.

Remove those AdSense from your individual website pages, so they do not clash and lose your business large commissions.

How to place your affiliate links and banners

The content of your website is the key to your affiliate sales. Where the content and your affiliate sales are not of a high enough quality, your customers will quickly move on to another website.

Content is king

Good quality content on your website/blog will attract customers and help you to a higher page ranking within search engines. Poor quality content will result in low page rankings and your readers will struggle to find you.

Original content will always prove much more successful than generic or copied content, which is effectively wasting your time.

The best positioning for affiliate links and banners are within the content of your website/blog.

Affiliate banners in your sidebar may look pretty, but this is not where your customers will click.

The best way to make the content and link interesting for your customer is to ensure that the two blends well and mix kindly within your overall website. This is why products related to your website work best.

Your webpages should not appear as a mass of links for affiliate sales. Each page should be full of great content with links you hardly notice as you read.

Customers who are reading your content are interested in the information you are providing. This makes them more likely to click on your link and make a purchase.

Some merchants will provide you with custom copy for your website/blog. Where you can alter the content your page will appear as an individual option within the search engines.

Other merchants will provide you with custom copy that you are not allowed to change. This copy may then appear exactly the same in several searches across the Internet.

Writing content for your website

For those who do not know:

- Make the content great to read. Good quality information keeps readers on your page.
- You can use freelance writers to compose your content if you're not a great writer.
- Post at least once every day - as the bare minimum.
- You can try to place relevant guest posts across the internet to drive traffic back to your website.
- Respond to all blog comments and be friendly, not argumentative.

Targeted traffic

By combining your website/blog, social media activities and great content, traffic will be targeted to your affiliate links.

This is the time to organize;

- landing pages
- high quality reviews of the products or services
- tutorials on the subject

You will now;

- share your content through social media
- email your subscribers and auto responders
- create free downloads, such as PDF reports, with links back to your content
- repeat and repeat again

Work out a strategy to promote each individual affiliate link. By regularly managing and performing the actions of your strategy, you will consistently attract traffic to your affiliate links.

Consistently check the quality and increase content to your website/blog so that they remain fresh, rather than being left alone to die.

This regular maintenance of your website/blog content will ensure that your links and banners are unobtrusively monetizing each of the opportunities you offer.

Regularly check the search engines' latest rules to ensure that you have the correct number of links and banners on each page. Too many will lead to your page being removed from the search engine and too few will leave the customer with few opportunities to make you money.

Add a forum to your website to include long-tail keywords to decrease your bounce rates. You will increase visitor time on site and build a trust community.

Continue your exploration of merchant offers

Once your website/blog is up and running, you will benefit from consistently finding more successful merchant affiliate products and services which can be added to your website or may replace those that they are proving unsuccessful.

What works together?

As you update your website/blog, you will be able to consider relevant matched, yet different affiliate links for your suitable content.

Where your article is about road safety, you may choose to run affiliate links connected to vehicle tires and brakes.

Thinking outside of the box, consider the security aspects for a child to be transported safely and this will lead you to further affiliate links within the same content.

Thinking further afield, what other items related to children, within an entirely different marketplace, are applicable?

This provides you with the opportunity to try different affiliate products and test market them. Where you receive positive results you will continue. When the figures suggest you are wasting your time, remove the affiliate product and replace it with a better choice.

Every customer is important

Every reader that arrives on your website/blog is there for a reason. They want to receive high-quality information and will be pleased to click a link to give them the opportunity to better their lifestyle.

Each and every visitor to your website is either a potential customer for the future, a customer now or (hopefully) a repeat customer.

Your auto responder, perhaps introducing your customers to special offers or a regular newsletter, will provide you with customer contact details so that you can continue to target market these individuals.

Providing customers receive relevant emails through marketing, they will continue to read them and click through to your website. It is difficult to find the balance of how many to send and how often. Trial and error as well as receiving expert advice will provide you with the answer.

Each reader is a potential customer that can provide you with money, so it is vital that you do not give them the opportunity to click away from your website.

Seek expert opinions and advice for attracting targeted traffic to your website.

Pay per click

There are many pay per click opportunities where you receive payment each time an individual clicks on a link within your website/blog.

Research which pay per click opportunities are available and incorporate these into your website.

Pay per click is not the same as affiliate links, but they provide another opening for you to monetarize your website/blog. These clicks will be distinctly different links within your content in comparison to your affiliate links. They provide another opportunity for you to earn dollars for your business.

Research this subject separately to gain the knowledge so that it works efficiently within your affiliate marketing website.

Learn from others and don't make these mistakes

Other affiliate marketers made these mistakes and shared their story. You can move forward quicker by avoiding these mistakes:

Do not overload your readers - too many affiliate marketing activities make it difficult for a reader to choose which one or two to click. Where you offer a handful of links it is easier for a reader to choose

which to click. Should you offer a page of 100 affiliate links, readers are more likely to click away from your website and move elsewhere.

Be a customer yourself - test that the system works in its entirety by buying a product yourself and acting like a potential customer. This will prevent you from offering products or services that customers will be unable to purchase.

Be consistent - do not dramatically change from one strategy to another unless you have an excellent reason. A properly managed business is incredibly more successful than 20 half-hearted efforts.

Track your results - consistently reviewing your results can be a great motivator, especially when you see how much money is on the way to your commission account.

More importantly, well almost, tracking your results shows you how each affiliate choice is working. Where something is not working consistently - replace it.

Are you selling or suggesting? - The company and their website are the people doing the selling. Your aim is to suggest that people click on the link to investigate the product or service. Where you come across as an impartial review and not a relentless salesperson, you are more likely to see readers click through to your suggestions. Don't overdo the sales aspect of your blog or website.

Avoid spamming and phishing and your business will work long term. Use spamming and phishing techniques and you'll be out of business quite soon.

Specific considerations

During the course of running your affiliate marketing business, you may increase your business turnover and profits by;

- introducing different languages to your website, which allows non-American speaking customers to reach your content and click on your affiliate links
- work globally, by understanding specific laws of countries around the world that affect your marketing activities
- consider making videos for your marketing activities to bring you further affiliate links.
- you choose links for advertising with an audience that can reach you via every possible resource.