

Next Level Affiliate Marketing

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Affiliate Marketing Makes Sense

As you know, affiliate marketing is big business. It's genius actually. What better way to get the word out about products and services online than through advertising, right?

The original advertising method was word-of-mouth.

Affiliate marketing is word-of-mouth advertising for the Internet age. Using a variety of tools, those with an eye for entrepreneurship and an online presence can use their sphere of influence to sell affiliate products using their websites and blogs.

What's not to like? You get to promote products that appeal to you. Most affiliate marketers have either used the products they help to sell or it fits with their interests. It is easier to write and speak about an item or service that you identify with.

Many products promoted by affiliate marketers would interest their current business customers. People start businesses in areas where they have previous knowledge. Choosing affiliate products along those lines means content can do double duty. And, your customers will likely want to hear more about them.

In this way, affiliate programs offer additional streams of income for online business owners. Promote as many affiliate products as you have time for and interest in. sites with affiliate programs offer most of the tools that you need to advertise their products.

Best of all, there is no product order fulfillment or customer service questions to answer.

Those who have been using affiliate marketing as a business know all of this already. This business model is also the key to taking your affiliate marketing career to the next level.

Sure, you can continue to earn commissions for others and make a great living at it. But, what if you could also boost income in your direction?

Maybe you have since developed informational products for your website or an actual product. What's to stop you from using your affiliate marketing business to enhance the awareness of your services as well?

Affiliate marketing can be used to build your list as well.

Whether you have a blog or a website, there is no substitute for a dedicated group of subscribers who are interested in what you have to say.

Increasing that list requires work, research and time. You can kill two birds with one stone (so to speak), by using advanced methods through your current affiliate marketing scheme, to grow your list as you increase business for affiliate owners. It's time to raise the roof on your current affiliate marketing projects.

HOW TO GROW YOUR LIST THROUGH AFFILIATE OFFERS

Identify “Pillar Affiliate Products”

These are products that have proven to have a good track record for you as far as sales and appeal to your niche audience. As far as sales go, these products have earned you the best or most consistent commissions.

People want them and are happy to use your affiliate links to follow a specific call to action. Products with recurring payments (such as membership sites) continue to earn commissions on a regular basis.

Concerning appeal, these products align with the interests of your readership. Your subscribers and/or customers want to know about goods and services that coincide with the topic of your content. These links fall naturally within the content and are readily clicked by your traffic.

The best pillar products are those that you trust and believe in.



Where there are trusted brands, people will opt-in because of the reputation. Those who are your loyal subscribers will read your personal testimonials and use affiliate products on the strength of them.

To begin, select two or three pillar products with which to test your affiliate marketing strategies. Identify the content that you have used to promote these products.

Use Google Analytics to help you discover which content and which links have the best results.

By adding event tracking, you can see which posts are the most profitable. This content can be repurposed and updated regularly to increase sales. These tracking tools can also determine where the best results are coming from, such as social media sites (Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter, etc.), search results pages or emails.

Discover Unique ways to Promote these Products

Do something out of the ordinary. Go beyond advertising techniques that you are currently using to promote affiliate products.

Offer “bonus” products to your subscribers

Bonus products are really free products that offer some value to the subscriber. As an affiliate, these freebies can increase your opt-in rates. The bonuses can consist of your products.

Digital products sell well and can be downloaded in 60 seconds or less. This includes videos, eBooks, audio content and more. The appeal is that it will only be available to those who sign up through the affiliate link. And, you can add links to your site and the products that you sell within the bonus products to redirect traffic back to you from the affiliate site.

Choose a unique report or digital product. For instance, if you are promoting a line of cosmetics, the “bonus” could consist of a report on how to tailor makeup looks for day and night. Instruct subscribers to forward their receipt from the affiliate site to you and send them the bonus.

Now, they are aware of you and the quality products that you offer as well.

Using your affiliate links in this way also allows you to track your affiliate sales. Through each email sent to you from someone who used your affiliate link, you can verify every sale made through that link. It helps if there are any discrepancies with payment. Leave nothing on the table.

Record tutorial videos on YouTube for these products

What better way to convince your audience that these affiliate products are worth their time and money?

Demonstrate their usage in a video.

For instance, if you are promoting a new gardening tool, center your video on how to use that tool effectively. This is a way to build a trust relationship with the audience. People get to see the product in action, increasing their faith in it.

Hold social media contests

Use Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter to promote affiliate products. Post pictures of the products you are promoting along with links to your content.

Contests are a great way to draw attention to affiliate product launches.

Create compelling posts and captioned photos and boards to entice subscribers to join in.

Webinars

Want to get an audience interested?

Host a chat with the creator of one of the affiliate products that you promote. Discuss their product and the impact it can have in the lives of customers. Not only does the audience get to see you but the person

they will be buying from as well. Make sure that you pose questions that touch on potential audience concerns about the product and get definitive answers. Don't forget to include your affiliate links.



Coupons to the rescue

Everyone loves a coupon. It represents a discount on something that is a value product. Ask if a custom coupon is available for the affiliate program. Then, display it in a blog post or website content as a textual link or as a picture ad. Because it is actually a link to the affiliate page, you will earn money and your traffic will get a good deal when they click through. Picture ads may feature the coupon code prominently so it can be entered at checkout. These instructions can be spelled out in a post or article that mentions the coupon.

Write a product review for your audience

The secret here is to be transparent. The quickest way to lose the trust and confidence of your audience is to endorse a product that is worthless.

Just because you can make big commissions is no reason to try and fool your audience. Be honest in your assessment of the pros and cons. Include affiliate links at the end of the review to show your audience where they can buy the product.

Email autoresponder series

This is where you need to have a strong marketing strategy.

Through a series of emails, constructed with the goal of getting your audience to click an affiliate link, entice your readers into taking a look at the products you are promoting. A good autoresponder series is composed of "soft" and "hard" sell strategies.

Don't try to sell the readers something in every email. Use the first one as a welcome, "let's get to know each other" proposition.

Provide useful information in this first interaction as well. If you are promoting an eBook on retirement planning, fill the email with tips for how to get started with retirement accounts. The second and third email can, likewise, offer tidbits on various aspects of planning for retirement.

You are providing something of value to interest your subscribers. In the fourth email of the series, provide links to where they can buy the eBook through your site.

Streamline your Efforts for Getting the Job Done

We ended the previous section discussing emails because “the money is in the list.” Email is a great way to capture subscribers who may have signed up or clicked an affiliate link through your content but never really visited your website.

The content can be targeted to your list to ensure that everything you offer is something of value that they will want. So, here is where we get to make your job a bit easier especially if you are participating in several affiliate programs at once.

Set up link redirects – This is for your affiliate links. Platforms may change but you don’t have to track down each affiliate link in every piece of content you created and fix it. With plugins like Better Links Pro, it is as simple as creating redirects from the original links. Fix it here and the link will be adjusted everywhere automatically. This way, you can be assured that your affiliate links will send traffic to the right products and continue to earn money.

Track affiliate link results – It is possible that you could be leaving money on the table. Links clicked could be missed and not calculated as part of your commission check. A good way to keep track of affiliate links is through your bonus offers. Requiring confirmation through a receipt from the affiliate site merchant offers proof of a click and an earned commission. Compare these to be sure you are earning all that you are entitled to.

Use more than one email service – There is nothing wrong with using a variety of tools to accomplish your affiliate goals. Many do the same type of thing but using at least two can also be a way of segmenting your email subscriber list. Try AWeber, iContact or MailChimp for starters.

Each can offer you solutions for managing and adding to your list as well as automating your email autoresponder series.

The Benefits of Multiple Subscriber Lists

Have you ever heard the adage, “Never put all your eggs in one basket?”

The same goes for your list of subscribers. Depending on where you acquired your subscribers, their interests may be subtly different and that could mean more profit for you if you handle it right. As a website owner, you have traffic that has been driven to you by the keywords you promote.

Maybe your site emphasizes natural beauty, for instance. The products you create may center on the subject of facial care. This is your niche topic. A certain cross-section of the beauty population that feels strongly about facial health will be interested in your products and information. Natural beauty encompasses a wide variety of niche subjects and any one of them could be featured in an affiliate product.

Now, if you promote organic body lotion, that target audience may change a bit. They are still interested in natural beauty, but with an emphasis on the skin of the entire body and not just the face. This traffic is interested in an affiliate product but not necessarily your products on facial care.

Ease of use when promoting affiliate products

Each subscriber list will have its own focus. If you are promoting a variety of natural beauty products (to use the example above), knowing who is more likely to click those links will drive what content you send them and what bonuses you offer. email marketing strategies are easier to plan when each subscriber on the list has the same specialized interests. The results won't be “hit or miss” but “hit and hit.”

Targeted email marketing strategy

Every subscriber on your list should come in via some type of form. It could be an opt-in for a newsletter, a free e-course, a free eBook, a webinar or a free trial to name a few.

Once this information is gathered, you can further segment the list based on the form used. Using the example above, those who clicked on your affiliate link for organic body lotion may have been offered a free eBook as a bonus. When they go to claim their freebie, the link given will lead to an opt-in page that asks for their email address in order to get the download promised.

You get the idea. The eBook subscribers are not particularly looking for facial care but you can show the correlation between body care and facial care in a series of emails that culminates in an offer for one of your products.

Lead magnets can be used to draw more subscribers to your website as a by-product of affiliate marketing. In general, lead magnets are incentives to entice people to give you their email addresses. What they are getting in exchange needs to be something of value that would interest their subset of the niche you are promoting. The incentives that you offer may have to be created specifically for that group.



How will you present your lead magnets? When your traffic presents proof that they have followed the call to action through the affiliate links, it is time to reward them with their bonus or incentive. After they add their email address on the opt-in form, send the link to their lead magnet in a welcome email. Use this as an opportunity to get to know them as well as getting them back to your website.

Here are some examples of lead magnets:

- a. **Checklists** – Checklists are easy to read in a bullet format and can be used over and over to assess progress. The information you provide should give the reader a step-by-step process to follow that will add some value to their life.

- b. **EBooks** – Who wouldn't want a book for free? Digital products are easy to download and can be read on a variety of devices making it portable. Make sure yours is optimized for mobile devices and tablets.
- c. **Free resources** – These would probably appeal more to those who deal with website design or another area of technology where a free resource might consist of snippets of code, stock photos, free or "lite" versions of software products or samples.
- d. **Discount codes** – These are like coupons but can be offered as an additional bonus for signing up for your newsletter. Not only do they get helpful hints and tips each week in an email containing the newsletter but also a code to save money on your products.
- e. **Email courses** – Courses in your Inbox are like correspondence courses (if you are old enough to remember those). Just for sharing their email address, they get a weeklong course that provides helpful information about a topic like how to plant a vegetable garden, how to protect your face during winter or how to tweak your website design to attract more visitors. The content of the course is up to you.
- f. **Free access to upcoming events** – Maybe you are hosting a webinar about skin care or featuring experts in the field. Anyone interested in that topic or some portion of it would love to tune in. The fact that you are offering them a chance to participate for free is a win-win for them.

Lead magnets work best when more than one is used. If you are promoting a couple of pillar affiliate products, split testing your lead magnets can determine which ones get the highest conversion rates for each segment of your subscriber list. Then, use that particular magnet when looking to leverage the traffic for a certain affiliate product.

Benefits of multiple list strategies

The biggest benefit is that you can control the flow of information. The portion of your list that is interested in gardening tools won't receive the same tips and offers as the group that wants information on how to plant

a vegetable garden. The former knows about gardening and wants to know about the right tool for the job.

The latter may be beginners who need to learn about soil acidity, zonal planting and weed issues. They both center on the larger topic of gardening but with different subtopic interests.

Here's a practical example. If the affiliate product was a mulching tool, there are two lists you could create: (1) gardening and (2) gardening tools. If you had a group that wanted to grow a vegetable garden, this product would be useful to them as well as a group that were more interested in just tools. It could be mentioned in an article about prepping your ground for a vegetable garden. With the second list, the mulching tool would probably feature more prominently in an article that mentioned technical aspects of using the tool.

The same product is practical for both lists but with a different slant.

Multiple lists can drive social media interaction. The group that communicates through social media can be directed to your Facebook page or Twitter account. Here, you can build a relationship with them that may extend to them sharing your posts with others, widening your net of potential subscribers even further.

It doesn't cost much. Depending on your email service, creating multiple lists has more of a benefit as far as target marketing. If you have grown your vegetable gardening subscriber list to 10,000, that's a guarantee of at least several thousand sales if you sell a book on the subject. Remember, these people gave you permission to use their email address so they want to hear from you and are interested in what you have to offer.

Creating Content that Captures

It is about what you say as well as how you say it. Don't be afraid to give your content a facelift. Remember those posts and articles we mentioned that led to higher conversion rates with your affiliate links? Review them and add updated information that will appeal to your chosen audience. Add product reviews to the articles where they add value for your readership.

General pieces, or “evergreen content” is great to highlight a niche topic. The information is always valuable to readers because it provides a basic foundation. As you move into subgroups within a niche, the content you showcase must also zero in on its target by speaking directly to needs of the people on that subscriber list.

Keep your content in line with the products that you are promoting. If mineral makeup is your affiliate product, articles or posts about lotion, though both products may be “natural,” will not endear your audience to you. Stay consistent with the type of content you supply for any given affiliate product. And maintain a similar voice. Changing your perspective on skin care from one product to the next simply to gain a commission will look suspicious and untrustworthy to your subscribers.

UTILIZING THE POWER OF EMAIL

The Benefits of Email Marketing

Email can provide the personal touch. It is a chance to build a relationship with your traffic in the hope that they will become subscribers, surrendering their email addresses in faith. When it comes to affiliate marketing, people find out about the affiliate products that you are promoting through SEO marketing of your posts and articles, social media promotion and probably ads. Using targeted keywords in all these places increases the likelihood that someone with an interest in this niche will find you and your affiliate links. We are oversimplifying the process a bit but you get the gist of what is being said.

Email marketing captures traffic that could be left behind using the traditional marketing strategies of affiliate marketing. It picks up:

- **Those who don't use social media** – Yes, there are still people who are not a part of the social media age. But, that doesn't mean they don't use the Internet. And, including them in an email strategy will introduce them to not only your affiliate products but also your personal products on your website.
- **Those who haven't visited your website** – These people are on the other side of the coin. Maybe they use social media and find your affiliate products through ads.

Now, you have a chance to draw them into your website through an email marketing campaign.

Creating an Effective email follow-up series

These are the series of emails that you send out as a result of offering a bonus or incentive for clicking an affiliate link. In order to take advantage of a series of email autoresponder messages you need an email service. We mentioned a few earlier.

Once you have signed up with a service you can begin constructing the series you wish to send out to those who sign up for the free bonus offers.

Once someone fills out and submits your opt-in form, a welcome email should be sent out to them within 24 hours. Include instructions for claiming the free offers through a link. Everyone won't click this link in the first email. Maybe they got busy or accidentally deleted it.

Another email can be sent out a couple of days after the first to capture those who did not click through. Your email service can offer options to ensure that everyone doesn't get this second email, especially those who already accepted their bonus offer.

As new subscribers sign on through affiliate links, ensure that they begin receiving the same email series and any other information as previous subscribers so they don't miss anything important about your website or your products. Again this can be set up through your email service.

Use email broadcasts to keep subscribers in the loop. These are certain types of emails sent to your entire list or a segment of that list depending on content. It is designed to inform and maintain the relationship with those on your list who may or may not have bought anything lately. Here are a couple of types of email broadcasts:

- **Newsletters** – These are meant to inform and are sent to the entire list mostly on a weekly or monthly basis. They may include new product launches, affiliate links, fresh content, contests and more.

- **Sales blasts** – They can be sent to segments of your main subscriber list depending on the product featured. The idea is to highlight an offer through a clickable link.

Try not to concentrate on sales with email follow-up series. The idea is to build a rapport with your list. Offer valuable content within the first two or three emails (soft sell) to gain trust. Finish up with the product offers (hard sell). People don't want to feel like they are being pitched to even though they want to buy your products.

How to Rock Affiliate Product Launches

Product launches are a great opportunity for increased sales as you build hype around the big day. A product launch is simply the first time that the public has access to a new product. In advance of that event, buzz is generated through advertising. Businesses can use affiliate programs to build the anticipation for their upcoming products so sales pour in right from the beginning.

Launch Jacking

Launch jacking is a way to capitalize on the introduction of a new affiliate product. As the word gets out and traffic builds, it is time to get in position. Once you find a new product launch, sign up so that you are getting in on the ground floor. As an affiliate marketing tool, buy a domain name related to the product.

Here's an example. If the product is called *Magic Makeup*, buy the domain name *magicmakeupreview.com* and write a review for audiences. Once the product goes live, people will search for information on it. You can get ahead of the market by crafting content around this product's niche as well as writing an honest review of the product and including your affiliate links.

As the launch gets closer, add more content that updates the readers about what is happening. Link to your content on social media to further fuel the frenzy. You are now poised to win any prizes offered for top affiliate sales as well as receiving unbelievable commissions.

Affiliate marketing makes sense. Begin building your online business here by signing up to promote the products of others. Choose ones that

you believe in and can endorse to your traffic. But, affiliate marketing doesn't have to only benefit the host site. You can grow your list as well through your affiliate marketing efforts. Learning to use the power of email can take the sales from your most popular affiliate links and redirect them to your site through lead magnets and offers to flesh out your subscriber list at the same time.

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