

AFFILIATE MARKETING



CRASH COURSE

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Ever since Timothy Ferriss published his book “The 4-Hour Workweek,” people have been ditching their 9 to 5 jobs and taking the plunge into affiliate marketing. If you’ve dreamed of being able to make a decent living through passive income, then affiliate marketing is a path you should consider taking.

The idea behind affiliate marketing is that you promote the products of other people, many times through an affiliate network, and earn commissions when people buy those products as a result of your marketing efforts. Pretty easy right?

Unfortunately, there is a little more to the process, and it will take some upfront work on your part.

Before you can get started in affiliate marketing, it is essential for you to understand that there are four different parties involved in the process and how each fit in with the system.

When it comes down to the actual marketing part of the affiliate marketing system, there are two sides to the equation: the creator and seller of the product and the affiliate marketer. What does this mean?

You can look at affiliate marketing as the process of spreading product creation and marketing across various parties, where each of the parties receives a share of the profits according to their individual contribution to the marketing efforts.

This, simply put, means that you can be both the creator and the marketer and still make a profit from the underlying idea of revenue sharing.

Four Parties of the Affiliate Marketing System

The Merchant: The merchant is known as the creator of the product, the seller of the product, the brand, the vendor, or the retailer. This is who creates the product. It can be a big company like Dell, who manufactures personal computers, or an individual.

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Anyone can be the merchant behind an affiliate marketing program, from the solo entrepreneurs, to the startups, to gigantic Fortune 500 companies. They can be anyone who has a product to sell.

The Affiliate: This party can be a single individual or an entire company, that helps to market the products of the merchant. An affiliate marketing business can produce several hundred dollars in commissions every month to tens of millions.

This part of the system is where the marketing happens. The affiliate promotes one or more of the merchant's products, trying to attract and convince potential customers of the value of the product in hopes that they will end up purchasing it.

This can be accomplished through a review blog of the merchant's products or through an entire site that is dedicated to finding products that are related to a particular topic and promoting the affiliate products.

The Consumer: The consumer is what makes the affiliate system work. Without their purchases, there wouldn't be any commissions to be earned, and no revenue would be shared.

The affiliate markets the products to the consumer through the channels that they see fit. This can be through digital billboards, social media, or a search engine using a blog and content marketing.

The Network: The network works as an intermediary between the merchant and the affiliate. While technically, you could promote a merchant's product and arrange a direct revenue sharing system with them, having a network like Jvzoo or ClickBank handles the payment for and delivery of the product, eliminating the hassle. Sometimes, in order to even promote a product, affiliates have to go through an affiliate network.

When it comes to the affiliate marketing system, you can choose to become a merchant and have others market your products in exchange for a commission on the completed sales, or you can become an affiliate marketer, promoting products in order to make money.

While most people decide to take the affiliate marketer route, building enough traffic to make an income that makes it worth your while, isn't easy, or quick.

Becoming an Affiliate Marketer in 4 Steps

There are four steps that you need to take in order to become an affiliate marketer.

Step 1: Review Products in Your Niche

The first step to building a business as an affiliate marketer is deciding on your niche. This step is critical to your success, so don't ignore it.

When you are starting out as an affiliate marketer, don't try to find a "secret niche" that no one else is marketing. Instead, start with what you are familiar with and what has the most offers.

When choosing your niche, you want to make sure you do your research. Here are three things you can do to help you find your niche.

1. Look at popular affiliate networks like JVZoo, ClickBank, or Commission Junction.
2. Head to YouTube and look for keywords that may be used for the niche you are contemplating.
3. Use Google to do the same keyword search.

Keep in mind, if you aren't able to find any other affiliates in that niche, the chances are high that you are probably focusing on the wrong niche.

Step 2: Choose Your Approach

After you've decided on the niche that you want to promote as an affiliate marketer, you need to next determine the kind of affiliate marketer that you want to be. There are three approaches that you can choose from, but as a beginning affiliate marketer, it is crucial that you only pick one of these ways to focus on.

After you've been doing it for a while, you can choose to branch out into the other approaches if you wish.

The Reviewer

As a reviewer, you would purchase products to review. After thoroughly testing the product, you would post the review on your blog, YouTube channel or social media.

It is important that you form your own opinions about the product and provide honest, ethical reviews in the form of a video or written content. To do this efficiently, you have to go through the product and get a feel for the pros and cons and provide authentic feedback as one user to another.

By doing this, you can better engage with potential visitors, giving good recommendations for the products you are reviewing.

As a product reviewer, you should own or have access to the following tools:

- A computer with a microphone and webcam
- PowerPoint, or an equivalent product
- A website
- Social media automation tools like Hootsuite or Social Oomph
- A budget to buy new products
- A way to track the movements of your visitors
- A way to track each click

The Emailer

One of the most successful ways to start your affiliate marketing business is with an email list. The idea behind this affiliate marketing method is to grow an email list by providing a small offer to get people to join your list.

Once you've added them to your list of contacts, you can start using the autoresponder feature to promote products that you feel will help your contacts.

As an emailer, you should own or have access to the following tools:

- An email marketing platform or autoresponder like SendLane
- A product like a PLR you've written or video you've created to offer the consumer
- A landing page that attracts visitors
- A great eCover to attract interest
- A link tracking tool like ClickPerfect

The Social Media Personality

As social media grows in popularity, social media fan pages have exploded, giving fans a great mix of promotions and value.

If you decide to use social media to promote products for your affiliate marketing business, it is important to ensure that it remains classy, and not a place to post spam.

To be a successful social media personality, you need to create solid images and content while promoting your affiliate products.

As a social media personality, you should own or have access to the following tools:

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- A way to create social media images
- A posting tool so you can automate the posts
- A way to track each link

Step 3: Discover Your Affiliate Network

Once you've discovered your niche and style of marketing you want to do as an affiliate, the next step in the process is to determine the affiliate network you want to start with.

Your choice will depend on the niche that you selected and will require you to conduct some research. Here are just some of the affiliate networks that you can use.

- Clickbank carries an excellent variety of digital marketing products.
- JVZoo is mostly internet marketing products and other related products to make money online.
- CJ Affiliate by Conversant has a wide selection of products to choose from.
- Amazon is one of the biggest affiliate networks.
- RevenueWire is a global network with a large selection.

When you are first starting out, you should sign up for just one network based on the research that you conducted.

Once you become more familiar with how the network works, you can begin to use multiple interfaces or even use a private program.

Step 4: Find and Attract Traffic

Now that you've completed the easy steps of determining your niche, the style of marketing you want to do, and the affiliate network you want to use, the final step to becoming an affiliate marketer is finding and attracting traffic.

For new affiliated marketers, finding traffic can be a troublesome prospect, and many new affiliates get stuck on this step. However, traffic can be found in a lot of ways. Here are a few forms of traffic that are easy to start with as a new marketer.

Social Media or Forum Traffic

Using social media and forums is a great, free way to generate traffic. You can visit popular forums that are focused on your niche and offer free advice to the participants. In your signature, have a link back to your website, landing page, social media or YouTube channel.

It is essential that you offer accurate, practical advice on the topic. This can also be done with your social media pages by placing your links on your personal or fan page and offering information to different groups.

The quickest way to derail your efforts is by moving from group to group to simply post your links or contacting each person in the group via a private message with your link. This is called spamming and will not help you with your affiliate marketing.

Search Engine Optimization

This is another free way to gain traffic for your affiliate marketing business. This is one of the oldest forms of getting traffic and is based on keywords and search rankings. With search engine optimized content, you can leverage the power of search engines to get free traffic.

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This approach takes a lot of work and can be tedious and time-consuming, but when done correctly it can result in a ton of visitors to your site, without spending a dime.

Paid Solo Ads

Solo ads are simple to use if you do your research and use them correctly. Simply put, you are buying traffic from someone who has an existing email list.

The way solo ads work is that you pay for someone who has a targeted email list to send their contacts a recommendation to your site and send you targeted traffic. It then becomes your job to convince those people to buy your product or service or opt into your email list.

Paid Facebook and Google Ads

The fastest way to ramp up your traffic is through paid Google and Facebook ads. However, this option will cost you considerably more and has a higher learning curve than the other methods.

The intricacies of this process are too expansive to cover in this article, but you can find numerous resources online to help you out if you want to follow this path.

Conclusion

It can feel overwhelming to complete all the necessary steps in order to become an affiliate marketer, but the time you put into building your reputation will be well worth it when you have your first sale.

Making your first affiliate commission is going to require you to put in some hard work, but by breaking it down into easy to follow steps, it won't feel as overwhelming.

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When it comes to affiliate marketing, there is a tried-and-true strategy that will have you reaping the rewards of your hard work after making your first commission.