

THE POWER OF DIGITAL AFFILIATE MARKETING

HOW AUTHORS CAN WRITE MORE AND EARN PASSIVE INCOME



DR MEHMET YILDIZ



The Power of Digital Affiliate Marketing





How Authors Can Write More And Earn Passive Income





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Chapter 1: Purpose of This Book





Why Another Book About Affiliate Marketing?

You may ask why another book for affiliate marketing now. Good question! I know the importance of passive income for authors in this economic climate; thus, I designed this book to guide you so you can create a new revenue stream.

I author this book for a specific audience: freelance writers, including published and indie authors, bloggers, and other content creators because affiliate marketing can be a godsend for them. This book will make affiliate marketing so easy to understand that you can succeed if you apply the knowledge in it.

If you are a freelance writer, blogger, or some sort of content developer, you've most likely heard about the term affiliate marketing. The concept of affiliate marketing is old, but online affiliate marketing, which is the scope of this book, is new.

When you search for affiliate marketing in any search engine, you might become overwhelmed with the results. You may see a plethora of entries covering a myriad of angles to affiliate marketing.

It is a new industry and snowballing. Let me start with the definition.

From my experience, affiliate marketing is simply the practice of marketing a brand or a company's products and services in exchange for a commission.

Business organisations create the program and invite affiliates to participate.

Then, the affiliates choose which products they want to promote and proceed to earn a commission from every sale or referral they make.

Business organisations have a focus on branding. They invest a large amount of money in developing and marketing their brands. One of the most cost-effective ways of marketing the brands is the use of affiliates.

They want to grow brand awareness and increase exposure to a broader customer base. This may then lead to an increase in product sales.

From the marketer's perspective affiliate marketing offers an attractive value proposition. There is a massive amount of products and services that

an affiliate can market. This can be anything from physical goods such as beauty products or digital goods such as software.

In addition to products, affiliates can also market services, such as online courses, business consulting, and workshops. Whatever your background, specialty and niche is, you will most likely find an affiliate program for it.

Being an affiliate marketer is very simple. Nowadays, anyone can be an affiliate marketer. It is particularly easy for bloggers and freelance writers to meet the requirements of online affiliate marketing easily.

Affiliate marketing is not only for an individual looking for some passive income but also business organisations. For example, it is widespread for startup companies to earn cash quickly this way and contribute to the growth of the business.

When I run workshops for writers and bloggers, one of the first questions they ask is how would they know what type of products they should market.

Ideally, you should be picking things that you have a genuine interest, experience and at least a bit of knowledge in. The term niche is prevalent in affiliate marketing communities and publications. They keep saying find your niche. I agree. If you choose the products you understand, use and can recommend based on your experience and knowledge, it's easy to promote them.

The reason to choose products and services that resonate with you is to build trust with your customers. When they ask questions, you can easily and quickly answer the questions without going to search engines and find contrived answers. Your experience and knowledge can create confidence and trust for your clients.

The second most common question is how they can promote products and services without upfront investment.

The most straightforward answer to this is leveraging your current capability. They are your blogs, articles, and stories published online. I will unfold these methods subsequently.

In the meantime, it is, of course, up to you what content you create and share. From a delivery perspective, many affiliates choose to promote via blogs and social media channels.

For example, let's say you are a young girl into beauty products. You want to share your favorite beauty products on social media. You could post

creative pictures combined with your affiliate links on Instagram.

Let's say you are a young man with technical skills. You have a YouTube account showing people how to use a type of software application. You could create a video including your affiliate link for this software package in the description section. It's entirely up to you how to market the products. Over time you'll figure out what works best for you.

The third most common question my workshop participants asked was whether they need to have an extensive network to be accepted by affiliate programs.

Each affiliate program has different requirements for its affiliates. However, most affiliate programs do not have such requirements.

Obviously, the bigger audience and blog traffic you have, the more likely you are to attract clicks through your affiliate link. Although, even with a smaller audience, you can still attract a good number of conversions because your product is in a niche market.

And another common question is how companies know if you generate sales for them. It is straightforward. Each affiliate is provided with unique affiliate links. The affiliate would typically place these somewhere in their blog, website, or social media bio for their audience to access. These links take your audience to the products listing page to complete a sale. If the action is completed and a sale is made, the merchant will know this as the link is tracked. Following this, commission payments will be made.

This is the gist of affiliate marketing. Not rocket science! But behind this simplicity, there is significant complexity. It is the purpose of this book to make affiliate marketing crystal clear for you and get you started on this exciting journey.



Chapter 2: An Overview Of Digital Affiliate Marketing





Definition of affiliate marketing



As a short definition, traditional affiliate marketing is the process by which an affiliate earns a commission for marketing another person's or company's products. Digital affiliate marketing uses this model to leverage the power of the Internet and emerging digital technology stacks.

The concept is simple. You partner with merchants. As an affiliate, you find products you enjoy from merchant sites. Then you promote those products using your content, and earn commission from each sale the merchant makes. These transactions are recorded.

Affiliate marketing involves referring a product or service by sharing it on your blog, social media platforms, websites, and newsletters. The sales you make are tracked via affiliate links from your website to the merchant's site.

As an affiliate, you earn a commission each time your customers make a purchase through your unique links. If you perform this task well, you can go from a supplementary business to a profitable business. I know some affiliate marketers make an income of six-digits or higher. They work hard and smart. I cover the approach in this book, reflecting lessons from successful entrepreneurs.

Smart entrepreneurs know there is always more they can do to make their business grow, make them more profitable, and transform them into a sustainable business.

With an entrepreneurial and systematic approach, you can take things to the next level. As an author, your focus should be on finding alternative streams of income leveraging your content in the form of books, articles, stories, and blogs. As a content developer, you have immense opportunities in front of you.

When I mention the entrepreneurial approach, I don't mean starting a second or third business here. I mean finding ways to complement and grow the business you have by offering extended and enhanced value to your customers, followers, and potential clients.



Invitation to participate



If you aren't participating in affiliate marketing now, it's time to consider taking advantage of this dormant revenue stream. This business model is expected to grow exponentially as the value proposition is compelling to both merchants and affiliates. It is already a multi-billion industry. I can assure you that it is not hype. I teach this subject, provide consultancy since the mid-nineties, and even practice it a bit for over a decade. As a result, I gained substantial experience to assess this field and guide my readers.

I authored this book to inform you and encourage you to consider digital affiliate marketing as a second business. This is a special invitation to you.

Why am I inviting my readers to participate in digital affiliate marketing? The main reason is to create passive income leveraging your current capability with minimal effort. As an author, you are ahead of the game. Your books, articles, stories, blogs and other content are your assets.

Let me introduce digital affiliate marketing at a high level.

Digital affiliate marketing is an online marketing and sales approach. It allows merchants as product owners to increase sales. Merchants achieve this goal by leveraging the power of affiliates who create visibility to the products and services.

By creating visibility to products and services of merchants, as an affiliate you can earn money on product sales or service subscriptions. So affiliates don't have to create product or services, and they don't need to support them.

Even though I focus on freelance writers and content developers in this book, affiliate marketing is for anyone who has a strategy to convince an audience to make a purchase.

From my observations, most people who engage in affiliate marketing are writers, authors, bloggers, YouTubers, social media experts, online gamers, influencers, and podcasters.

So they are all content developers to some extent. This is because these creators command the attention of a large audience through their online presence.

Digital affiliate marketing depends on the power of the Internet. Traditional affiliate marketing performed without the Internet. They used the telephone, fax, print media, and door-to-door. These conventional techniques are not as scaleable as the Internet. While you could reach out to hundreds in conventional methods, now, you can reach out to millions with the power of the Internet.

Now I know you want to understand the benefits of affiliate marketing before accepting my invitation. As a freelance writer, your advantage is your books, articles, stories, and blogs.

Please keep in mind that you will be making more income compared to other freelance online jobs because you are not promoting your own products here even though you still can. You are earning by promoting and selling reputable products of big merchants.

Let me introduce key benefits so that my invitation can compel you:

Generating passive income without any physical stores involved is a substantial benefit. Getting exposure is the key to any marketing strategy. You can get more exposure and online traffic to your content.

Your content can get higher growth in search engine rankings because the traffic that you get from the publisher's site will help you increase your website's ranking.

You are not responsible for shipping or returns of the purchased product. In other words, no inventory management is required.

You get paid when your visitors buy from your links. You can get a commission for every sale your visitors make on the merchant site by clicking on the links on your site. Think about your role as an inviter to a concert. The merchant makes the orchestra and their massive coordination. By inviting the audience, you earn a substantial income.

You do not have to invest any capital in starting up your affiliate business. The merchant doesn't pay you if it doesn't work. Affiliate marketing is cost-effective as the advertiser will only pay if the customer or visitor clicks on links to buy a product from their site. So it's a win-win situation for both.

Affiliate marketing can be considered as a freelance job because you don't have to rent or own a business office to run your affiliate marketing venture. Yes, you can work from your home.

There are no time limits for this job. You have the freedom to spend your time as you want. Consider yourself as the boss of your own job. You

can choose your work hours as per your wish.

Affiliate marketing is free to join. You don't have to invest upfront to start earning.



How to start



Let me briefly explain steps to take to join an affiliate program.

To participate in an affiliate marketing program, you'll need to take these five simple steps:

- Find an affiliate program
- Join the program showing your interest
- Choose offers from the program to promote
- Obtain a unique affiliate link for each offer
- Share those links on your blog, social media platforms, website, and newsletters
- Always remember to declare your affiliate risks to stay compliant on content platforms.

Once you take these steps, you can start collecting commissions when your visitors use your links to make a purchase from the program.

You may ask how much commission you can get. Commission rates may vary from one merchant to another. On the lowest end, you may earn about 1% of the sale. On the high end, you may sometimes earn 50% or even more. In addition, some affiliate marketing programs provide a flat rate per sale instead of a percentage. We will discuss these in subsequent chapters.

I hope my points in this chapter convinced you to consider digital affiliate marketing as part of your content development and marketing business.



Chapter 3: Benefits





Benefits of Affiliate Marketing For Businesses



According to Statista, affiliate marketing spending in the U.S. alone is expected to reach \$8.2 billion by 2022.

Why are companies spending so much on affiliate marketing campaigns? Below are some of the benefits of using affiliate marketers in your business:

An affiliate program does not require that you have an advertising team for ad visuals or purchase ad space.

Rather than that, you'll depend on your affiliates to come up with their marketing content. Other than the initial effort of selecting and vetting affiliates, there's little effort required from you to market your products, which is one of the reasons it's become such a popular method of marketing.

Once a company is comfortable working with an affiliate and has built a good relationship, they can, for the most part, let them get on with marketing your service or product.

Customers are more likely, these days, to purchase items recommended by an individual they've come to trust.



Low ongoing costs



Since most of your marketing activities are done by affiliates, they'll also bear the chunk of the cost attached. And since it's a commission-based program, it means that you'll only pay affiliates from sales they bring in.

This marketing model makes cost easy to manage and does not interrupt your cash flow, unlike other marketing models such as PPC advertising that requires you to pay for every click leading to your website. But affiliate marketing ensures that you only part ways with your money when sales are made.



Targeted Traffic



Since the affiliates are handpicked by you, it can ensure that the traffic that comes to your site is from individuals that find your product or service useful. This is because affiliates that resonate with your brand will most likely have individuals within their area of influence that will find your brand useful.



Low risk



Lost cost means low risk. There's little risk of loss since payments are only made when there's an actual conversion, perfect for businesses on a tight budget.



High ROI



Having the keys to product innovation and effective management skills doesn't guarantee a high ROI; you'll also need to get your marketing right.

Affiliate marketing has been proven to have a much higher return on investment than the majority of marketing strategies.

One major reason for this is because your target audience will hear of your product or service from affiliates that are within their spheres of influence. In short, you're channeling your marketing efforts through an affiliate who has direct access and influence over a highly targeted audience that is receptive to what you have to offer.



Flexibility



You can easily make your affiliate program smaller or bigger at little or no cost. It also offers you a great way to scale up your business without breaking the bank.

Affiliate marketing is quickly becoming a central aspect of many marketing strategies, largely because of the high bang for your buck that other strategies cannot offer.

As the market continues to grow, the benefits of affiliate marketing are more apparent to businesses of all sizes, and we can expect to see more organizations use the method more frequently in the future.



Summary Of Benefits for Marketers



Now, let me reiterate the benefits so that my invitation makes sense to you.

Affiliate marketing offers several benefits to affiliates (i.e., you), one of which is its ease. Your side of the equation simply involves handling the “marketing” side of the business and selling a product—educating customers. You don’t have to worry about the harder tasks, like developing, supporting, or fulfilling the offer.

Affiliate marketing is low risk. Since there’s no cost to join affiliate programs, you can start making money with an established affiliate product or service without any upfront investment. Affiliate marketing can also generate relatively passive income through commissions—the ideal money-making scenario. Though initially, you’ll have to invest time creating traffic sources, your affiliate links can continue to deliver a steady paycheck.

Finally, successful affiliate marketing offers the potential to scale your earnings without hiring extra help significantly. You can introduce new products to your current audience and build campaigns for additional products while your existing work continues to generate revenue in the background.

Before you get too excited, know that great affiliate marketing is built on trust. While seemingly there is an endless number of products or services to promote, it’s best only to highlight those you personally use or would recommend. Even when a product interests you or fits within an existing hobby, becoming a great marketer for that product takes a lot of work.

I can hear your questions. You are asking how to start this amazing program and earn passive income. Initially, it may not be passive, but it will be once you set up the foundations.





Chapter 4: Key Business Stakeholders





Stakeholders In Digital Affiliate Marketing Programs



There are a plethora of online merchants. Some of them don't have time to market or promote their products and services. Some merchants don't have capabilities in applying their online marketing strategies.

So what could be the solution for these challenges?

The solution is digital affiliate marketing. Digital affiliate marketing is a proven solution for these issues that is rising day by day. The value is clear and globally accepted.

Businesses delegate some marketing responsibilities to their affiliates. So as an affiliate marketer, you are the one who gets a part of their profit.

Because affiliate marketing works by spreading the responsibilities of product marketing and promotion across parties, it manages to leverage the abilities of a variety of individuals for a more effective marketing strategy while providing contributors with a share of the profit. To make this work, three different parties must be involved:

- Product owners and sellers
- The affiliate, a.k.a publisher or advertiser
- The consumer

Let's have a look at each stakeholder and the relationship these three parties share to ensure affiliate marketing is a success.

Without product owners, no product will be available to the market to sell. The products owners are also sellers of the products. Digital affiliate marketers don't sell the products they market.

Let me explain this critical role. The seller, whether a solo entrepreneur or large enterprise, is a vendor, merchant, product creator, or retailer with a product to market. The product can be a physical object, like household goods, a digital product like a piece of music, or a service like tutorials.

Also known as the brand, the seller does not need to be actively involved in the marketing, but they may also be the advertiser and profit from the revenue sharing associated with affiliate marketing.

For example, the seller could be an e-commerce merchant that started a dropshipping business and wants to reach a new audience by paying affiliate websites to promote their products. Or the seller could be a SaaS (Software as a Service) company that leverages affiliates to help sell their marketing software.

The second key stakeholder is the affiliate. Also known as a publisher or advertiser, the affiliate can be either an individual or a company that markets the seller's product in an appealing way to potential consumers.

In other words, the affiliate promotes the product to persuade consumers that it is valuable or beneficial to them and convince them to purchase the product. If the consumer does end up buying the product, the affiliate receives a portion of the revenue made.

Affiliates often have a very specific audience to whom they market, generally adhering to that audience's interests. This creates a defined niche or personal brand that helps the affiliate attract consumers who will be most likely to act on the promotion.

The third key stakeholder is the consumer.

Whether the consumer knows it or not, they (and their purchases) are the drivers of affiliate marketing. Affiliates share these products with them on social media, blogs, websites, newsletters, and direct mailing lists.

When consumers buy the product, the seller and the affiliate share the profits. Ethically, the affiliate should choose to be upfront with the consumer by disclosing that they are receiving a commission for the sales they make. Sometimes the consumer may be completely oblivious to the affiliate marketing infrastructure behind their purchase.

Either way, they will almost never pay more for the product purchased through affiliate marketing as the affiliate's share of the profit is included in the retail price.

The consumer will complete the purchase process and receive the product as normal, unaffected by the affiliate marketing system in which they are a significant part.

Understanding the roles and responsibilities of these stakeholders is essential for all parties. The confusion is caused by thinking affiliate marketers sell the product. They don't. The sales process is managed by the product owner or the sales company. As a digital affiliate marketer, your role is to market the product and encourage the buyer to click on the product. That is it. The owner of the product manages the rest of the

process. If the sale goes successfully, you earn your agreed commission.
How good is that!



Chapter 5: How Does Affiliate Marketing Work?





Introduction



In my digital affiliate marketing workshops, one of the most frequently asked questions is whether affiliate marketing works. If so, how it works.

Affiliate marketing is a logical and flexible sales model that creates multiple income streams. However, it is not an easy, get-rich-quick model of income.

Earning an income through affiliate marketing requires:

1. Research into products, web traffic patterns, and follower interests
2. Consistent engagement with the products and brand networks that you choose to endorse
3. Hours of maintaining a relationship with the readers or followers who purchase products through your affiliate links
4. Understanding and using search engine optimization and social media marketing to attract new followers and generate additional income consistently.



Earning Money In Affiliate Marketing



As I pointed out, affiliate marketing is a passive income source. The market is highly competitive. However, it is still possible to make money online with affiliate marketing.

To be successful, you need to learn what works and what does not while promoting your products.

If you ask yourself, “How can I do affiliate marketing”, here are the tips for you.



Remain Patient



There are many affiliate marketing sites. So, you need to be patient. You can feed your website with qualified content to get high-ranking positions and raise awareness, attend affiliate marketing events, seminars or webinars and join a discussion forum or online communities to meet new people.

All make a significant contribution in developing your talent. Naturally, after investing in yourself these ways, you will be more passionate about making money from affiliate programs. If you are patient enough, you will make money.



Choose Attractive Products



Start with a specific focus. I don't recommend to promote too many products by registering with different affiliate programs. It is not possible to focus on each of them deeply. The result can be disappointing.

Instead of promoting too many products, just start with promoting a few products which are unique, profitable. Aim to reach large groups of people.

You need to understand market needs and desires. After that you can place your chosen products accordingly.



Consider Several Traffic Sources



Your chance of making money online rises by creating more traffic for the sales pages you registered. You can run ads on your own site and direct the traffic to the sales site.

For example, by making an ad in your Google Adwords account, your page can get targeted traffic from various channels.

Let me explain how to attract targeted traffic.



Attract Targeted Traffic



The core function of making money is to push people to click your affiliate links. So, you need to attract visitors. There are various ways such as paid advertising, free advertising, article marketing, and email marketing.

You need to combine ad copy, graphics, and a link effectively on services such as Google AdSense. You can place links and advertisements on free websites like Craigslist and U.S. Free Ads.

For content marketing, you need to have a higher ranking in search engine results to be a credible source. There are many article submission websites such as Ezine Articles.

Merchants can submit their article, and affiliate marketers republish those articles. The merchant who published the original article gradually earns higher search engine rankings.

For email marketing, affiliate marketers embed an email subscription option for website visitors. This is a useful way to attract targeted traffic.



Test, Measure, And Track



Testing any action and measuring the performance can help you explore what works and what does not.

According to tracking results, you may need to change or keep your approach. For example, your banner ads aren't gaining you much. In this case, consider to place them in different areas.

You need to compare and contrast all results. You can find some places earn you more.



Investigate Product Demands



If you remember, I said “understand market needs” at the beginning.

Let’s dive deep into this step. You want to view your daily, weekly, quarterly, and yearly traffic and sales chart in order to explore customers’ behaviors and choices.

If not, spend time to find out how the product you are thinking of promoting meets users’ needs.



Follow New Methods And Techniques



One of the most search terms on Google is “How to make money from affiliate marketing.” Many people want to make money with affiliate programs. There is a huge competition.

Digital marketing trends are very dynamic. So is digital affiliate marketing trends.

You need to stay current with the latest techniques and methods to be successful in this competitive environment.

Getting out of date results in falling behind. Staying current with trends results in utilizing new techniques.



Select The Right Products And



The quality and service of your website are as important as the advertiser's website.

If your visitors become unhappy and dissatisfied after purchasing the product you advise, they would not think of retaking your advice. Because it hurts your credibility.

You don't want this to happen. Therefore, focus on choosing reputable service providers, brands or products that offer good customer service while promoting the person or company.



Use Various Tools



You need to make your marketing campaigns efficient. There are many helpful tools that let you conduct market research, competitor research, and to track and convert your ad campaigns. We cover them in subsequent chapters.



Chapter 6: Affiliate Programs





What Are Affiliate Programs?



Simply put, affiliate programs, also called associate programs, are arrangements in which an online merchant Web site pays affiliate Web sites a commission to send them traffic. These affiliate Web sites post links to the merchant site and are paid according to a particular agreement.

This agreement is usually based on the number of people the affiliate sends to the merchant's site or the number of people they send who buy something or perform some other action. Some arrangements pay according to the number of people who visit the page containing their merchant site's banner advertisement.

Basically, if a link on an affiliate site brings the merchant site traffic or money, the merchant site pays the affiliate site according to their agreement. Recruiting affiliates is an excellent way to sell products online, and it can also be a cheap and effective marketing strategy; it's a good way to get the word out about your site.

There are at least three parties in an affiliate program transaction. They are:

1. The customer
2. The affiliate site
3. The merchant site

Jeff Bezos, CEO and founder of Amazon popularized this idea as an Internet marketing strategy. Amazon attracts affiliates to post links to individual books or for Amazon.com in general, by promising them a percentage of the profits if someone clicks on the link and then purchases items.

The affiliate helps make the sale, but Amazon.com does everything else: They take the order, collect the money and ship the item to the customer. With over 500,000 affiliate Web sites now participating, Amazon.com's program is a resounding success.

Over the past few years, affiliate programs have grown enormously in popularity, taking many interesting forms. For many Web sites that don't deal much in e-commerce (selling products or services online) themselves, functioning as an affiliate is a good way to participate in e-commerce.



Affiliate Program Payment Arrangements



There are three basic types of affiliate program payment arrangements.

- Pay-per-sale
- Pay-per-click
- Pay-per-lead

There are also two different programs:

- Two-tier programs
- Residual programs



Pay-per-sale



Amazon affiliate program is an example of a pay-per-sale arrangement. In this arrangement, the merchant site pays an affiliate when the affiliate sends them a customer who purchases something. Some merchant Web sites, like Amazon.com, pay the affiliate a percentage of the sale, and others pay a fixed amount per sale.



Pay-per-click



In these programs, the merchant site pays the affiliate based on the number of visitors who click on the link to come to the merchant's site. They don't have to buy anything, and it doesn't matter to the affiliate what a visitor does once he gets to the merchant's site.



Pay-per-lead



Merchants with these programs pay their affiliates based on the number of visitors they refer to who sign up as leads. This simply means the visitor fills out some requested information at the merchant's site, which the merchant may use as a sales lead or sell to another company as a sales lead.

There are a number of other arrangements as well. A company could set up an affiliate program based on any action that would benefit them and then pay their affiliates based on the number of customers the affiliates send them who perform that action.

Let me introduce a couple of very popular variations on these basic payment plans.



Two-tier programs



These affiliate programs have a structure similar to multilevel marketing organizations (also known as “network marketing”) such as the popular Amway or Avon programs, which profit through commission sales and sales recruitment.

In addition to receiving commissions based on sales, clicks, or leads stemming from their own site, affiliates in these programs also receive a commission based on referring new affiliate marketers to the merchant site.



Residual Programs



Affiliates in these programs can keep making money off a visitor they send to the site if the visitor continues to purchase goods or services from the merchant site. Many online merchants who receive regular payments from their customers (such as monthly service fees) run this sort of affiliate program.

Additionally, there are a few pay-per-impression affiliate programs. Companies running these programs, also called pay-per-view programs, pay affiliates based only on the number of visitors who see their banner ad.

Usually, this sort of arrangement is not structured as an affiliate program but simply as a traditional advertising program. For a business, the advantage affiliate programs have over traditional advertising is that in an affiliate program, an online merchant only pays its affiliates when it gets the desired result.

Traditional advertising, such as the ads you see on television and many banner ads on the Internet, are relatively risky for the advertiser. They spend substantial money on advertising based on a guess of its effectiveness. When an ad brings the company more money than it spent on that ad, the ad is a success.

If a merchant makes less money than it spent, it has to cover that loss. With a digital affiliate program, an online merchant only pays its affiliates when things are working for them.

As there is much less risk to the merchant, it is a lot easier for affiliates to join affiliate programs than it is for them to attract businesses to advertise. Therefore, many merchants use digital affiliate marketing as a growth strategy.



Chapter 7: Credibility, Influence, And Trust For Digital Marketing

Soft skills are as important as technical skills in digital marketing.

Digital marketing is an important business in this century. With the exponential growth in the Internet and advances in digital technology stacks, digital marketing became a mainstream business opportunity for merchants and affiliates.

Digital affiliate programs, as part of the digital marketing domain, are pretty simple in concept. However, a lot of behind-the-scenes work is necessary to make them work properly. The devil is in the detail. Both human and technology capabilities are necessary for the process.

In order for the participating affiliates to be compensated, a system needs to keep track of the actual activity surrounding the affiliate's link to the merchant site. In established merchants, this is an automated process thanks to technology.

Depending on the arrangement, the system needs to determine the number of people who click on the merchant site's link from an affiliate site. Such a system needs to calculate the number of people who end up buying a product or performing some other predetermined action once the affiliate sends them to the merchant site. In addition, the tracking system needs to record the number of people who see the merchant site's banner link on an affiliate site.

Someone responsible for financials in the merchant also has to keep track of the original arrangement between the merchant and the affiliate and make sure the affiliate receives whatever money is owed to them.

It's a lot of work for merchant organizations to recruit affiliates actively and for affiliates to search for affiliate programs they are interested in. Nonetheless, many companies, such as Amazon and eBay, deal with their affiliates directly because the administration is well worth their time.

Even though they take full control over the process and so determine themselves what they owe, these companies can attract a lot of affiliates because their offer has no real risk or cost: All an affiliate webmaster has to do is put the link up and hope the checks come rolling in.

For a lot of web sites, however, all the work of recruiting affiliates or merchant web sites is just too time-consuming. And a lot of web admins would rather not rely on the merchant site totally doing their own bill correctly.

I want to point out some essential items that you must know before signing up for an affiliate program.

Here are the factors you should consider as a beginner before you sign up for an affiliate program. The first question to ask is: how suitable the affiliate program is in your niche.

Before you join an affiliate program, make sure you research to find out if the product you want to promote is ideal for your audience.

Any product or service you want your audience to purchase must be in line with what they care for and what your niche is all about.

For instance, if your niche is health and fitness, it will be counter-productive to promote credit cards to your audience. You may confuse your readers and customers.

You can't compare it to when you pitch a supplement to them. They are more likely to engage with the latter than the former. One thing you should keep in mind is that presenting the wrong product to your audience diminishes your authority in that niche. You simply lose credibility hence new business opportunities.

Why is it so important? Because your followers will get the impression that you don't know exactly what their problems and pain points are or you have no clue on how best to help them.

You should to choose products and services that you have a genuine interest, experience and at least some background knowledge in.

The term niche is prevalent in affiliate marketing communities and publications. They keep saying find your niche. I agree with this statement because if you choose the products you understand, use and can recommend based on your experience and knowledge, it will be easy to promote them and gain influence with your customers.

The primary reason to choose products and services that resonate with you is to build trust with your customers. When they ask questions, you can easily and quickly answer the questions without going to search engines and find contrived answers. Your experience and knowledge can create confidence and trust with your clients.

Credibility, influence, and trust are critical for digital marketing. Product knowledge covers your credibility. Your effective presentations and communications can increase your influence and impact.

Influence is power. And your ethical behaviour and integrity can enhance your trust. With credibility, influence, and trust, you can make substantial progress in your digital affiliate business and get far ahead of your competitors.



Chapter 8: How To Start Affiliate Marketing





Introduction



After covering the fundamentals, in this chapter, I provide you with a step by step guide on how to start affiliate marketing.

Let's start with your purpose.

You are interested in tapping into the billion-dollar marketing industry. As I mentioned before, business spending on affiliate marketing will hit \$8.2 billion in the U.S. by 2022. So if you can start today, you will be in a good position to take advantage of this business model.

These are the key steps:

1. Decide on a platform
2. Choose your niche
3. Find affiliate programs to join
4. Create great content
5. Drive traffic to your affiliate site
6. Get clicks on your affiliate links
7. Convert clicks to sales



Step 1: Decide on a platform.



Theoretically, you can do affiliate marketing on any platform. Some teenagers even started on Instagram but I haven't tried it yet.

In my experience, it's much easier to build an audience and increase your affiliate sales via your blogs, articles, online books, online education programs, and YouTube channels.

Starting a blog is relatively easy and cheap. Any author can do that.

There are plenty of tutorials on YouTube that can teach you how to get started. The best part about blogging is it is cost effective. It can only cost you around ten dollars per month. I have a high traffic blog site with a \$12 dollar monthly plan.

Once your web site is up, you need to optimize it for search engines so that you have a better chance of a good search engine ranking.

You can add affiliate links to your content on your own website. There is an art to doing this, which we'll cover later in this guide.

When I chat with high earners, they swear on YouTube. I am not a YouTube guru but creating and uploading content to YouTube is free. It makes it ideal for beginners. You need to optimize your videos for SEO, and include affiliate links in your description. Remember, YouTube is owned by Google.

Note that you will need to disclose the fact that you're including affiliate links. The Federal Trade Commissions (FTC) requires you to be transparent when receiving income from an endorsement on YouTube.

If you're using a blog for your affiliate links, you can create a standalone page, or include the link in the footer of your website. If you're doing it on YouTube, include it in your video description.

From my experience, you may get more clicks from a blog than a YouTube video. For that reason, most of the examples going forward will be for a blog, especially for authors who are capable of writing content and posting multiple blog entries per week.



Step 2: Choose your niche



Let's be frank! If you're starting a blog today, you're facing a ton of competition. To stand the best chance of success, you need to find your niche.

You can choose a topic that focuses on a specific category. For example, the topic of "food" is an enormous category. Rather than tackling that, try something more specific, like grilling food or barbecue.

Keeping your topics tight can help you build a more focused audience and potentially help you rank higher in search engines.

For example, I read some stories that Quan, the famous rapper, did when he built his first site. Instead of talking about "dance" and "hip hop," he decided to limit himself to just "breakdancing". Not sure whether Quan knew anything about SEO back then, but he managed to rank for a few key terms generating 3,000 organic visits per month.

Later on, as you cover the bulk of your first category and build traffic to your pages, you can expand into other areas. If you are going to be the main content creator for your site, choose something that interests you. You know what you're very passionate about. That should be your niche.

I witnessed that many affiliate sites closed down due to a lack of consistency and traffic. So at the very least, if you're passionate about a topic, you will find it much easier to press on when things get tougher.

Don't worry if you are not an expert in a field. As Gary Vaynerchuk puts it, "document, don't create." The subtle difference in Gary's advice, documenting what you've learned, can make great content and attract people who are interested in following your progress.

If you're outsourcing the content, then it's better to work with experts in the niche. Experts can help you create high-quality, trustworthy work, which can lead to more traffic, engaged visitors, and more affiliate sales. This may require collaboration and some investment.



Step 3: Find affiliate programs to join.



There are various types of affiliate programs to choose from.

The most common type is high-paying, low-volume affiliate programs. These are affiliate programs for niche products with high payouts.

For example, I heard that ConvertKit's affiliate program pays around \$700 per month if affiliates refer 80 customers.

Keep in mind that there can be more competition for programs with high commissions. Since you are just starting, it can be quite challenging to make a meaningful amount of money competing against skilled marketers with deep pockets.

The next most common type is low-paying, high-volume affiliate programs. These are affiliate programs for products with low payouts but mass appeal.

For example, take PS4 games my children are obsessed with. Many young people play PS4 games, but the average cost of a game is only around \$50, and affiliate commissions are usually low. This means you may only earn a few dollars per sale.

The redeeming quality of these types of programs is that they usually offer many products to sell. Take Amazon's affiliate program, for example. You can earn up to 10% commissions on almost anything that Amazon sells.

The other good thing is that you often get commissions on the entire value of the purchase rather than just the product you recommended.

To make these types of affiliate programs pay, you may need substantial traffic.

The third common type is high-paying, high-volume affiliate programs. These are affiliate programs for products with mass appeal, which also pay high commissions.

One example is credit cards. Who doesn't need a credit card? The downside of these types of products is that they attract affiliate marketers with lots of expertise. Some also use spammy tactics that content

developers like authors and bloggers just cannot get away with. Just be aware that these programs exist.



Step 4: Create meaningful content



If you want your blogs and affiliate site to succeed, you need to create high-quality content where your affiliate links fit naturally.

Here's an example. I follow Tim Ferriss closely. Tim interviewed 100+ famous people and asked them this question:

“What purchase of \$100 or less has most positively impacted your life in the last six months (or in recent memory)?” He published the answers in a blog post and included affiliate links to the products mentioned. Judging by the comments, his fans loved it.

This is what you have to emulate when creating content for your affiliate site.

Don't just blindly curate products from Amazon's best sellers. Go the extra mile to make sure your content solves your visitor's problems and pain points.

How can you achieve this? If you're doing reviews, you may purchase the product and test it. This is what many successful affiliate marketers do.

If you don't have money to buy many products, you can start with what you have at home or in your office. For example, if you had a tech blog, you could create reviews on the gadgets you own. If you own make-up tools, you can create blog posts about them reflecting your experience.



Step 5: Drive traffic to your affiliate site



As an author, you have created great content. The next step is to get more people to read your content so that they can click on your affiliate links.

Here are three traffic strategies to consider:



1 - Paid Traffic



The first one is paid traffic. This is where you pay for traffic to your site. You can do this using pay per click ads.

The advantage of paid traffic is that the moment you start paying, you get traffic. However, there are some downsides.

First, running ads will dig into your profits. It's quite normal for affiliates to lose money before they make it, if they ever do.

You need to be realistic about how long it takes to optimize a paid traffic campaign.

Secondly, once you stop paying for ads, your traffic will stop. Generally speaking, ads are a great traffic strategy if you're part of a high-paying affiliate program and can make the numbers work.

But if you're completely new to paid marketing and have no marketing budget or are working with lower commission programs like Amazon Associates, then it won't be a great idea.



2 - Search Engine Optimization



The second one is search engine optimization (SEO).

SEO is the practice of optimizing pages to rank high in search engines like Google.

For as long as you can rank high in the search engines for your target keywords, you'll get consistent and passive traffic.

On the most basic level, SEO is about three things: 1) Understanding what your target customers are searching for 2) Creating content around those topics (blog posts, product pages), 3) Taking care of the "technical" stuff to push these pages higher in the search engines.



3 – Email Lists



The third one is building an email list. This is my favorite because this method produced the best outcome in my business.

Email lists allow you to communicate with your readers and customers anytime at your convenience.

You can use your mailing list to tell your fans about new content and they will keep coming back to your site for more. If you do email marketing properly, this leads to more affiliate clicks and sales.

If you build good relationships with your fans, you can send affiliate email promotions in your mailing list directly.

Building an email list takes time and effort. Initially, you need to persuade the readers on your site to sign up your newsletter. That means offering something valuable to your visitors. But there are many ways to do this. As an author you can offer a free eBook, or chapters, or an email course. You can also borrow some gifts from merchants that you represent.

All you need is some creativity, dedication, and trust-building with your fans.



Step 6: Get clicks on your affiliate links.



Just because you are an experienced author and have an attractive piece of content does not necessary mean people will click on your affiliate links.

Let me give you a few things you need to consider.



1 - Link placement



Link placement creates a dilemma for even the most experienced content developers.

If all your affiliate links are at the bottom of the page where people rarely scroll, clicks will be few and far between.

On the other hand, making every other word a link in your introduction, and your content will look spammy.

You need to balance link placement with the other factors that I introduce below.



2 - Context



Let's say you were writing an article on the best gadgets for under \$100. Your introduction shouldn't look like this opening line:

"Today, I'm reviewing the best gadgets". The links in this statement can look out of context and spammy.

This statement makes more sense: *"Today, I'm reviewing three different gadgets that you can buy on Amazon for under \$100. These are product name x, y, z. Let me explain."*

3 – Using Callouts

Using callouts like buttons, tables, and boxes can help attract your readers' attention. They can make your blog post more skimmable.

For example, the successful marketers use eye-catching boxes with product links when they share a top pick.



Step 7: Convert clicks to sales



In most affiliate marketing, two conversions need to take place for you to make money.

The first conversion is the click to the product page.

You're 100% in control of this action. Use the tactics above to improve your chances of getting that click.

The second conversion is the visitor purchasing the product. In the case of affiliate marketing, the merchant controls the checkout, and their conversion rates are out of your control.

The trick is to play the game to your advantage and look for merchants with programs that convert well.

Here are a few ways to find them:



1 - Public income reports



If people are making decent money from an affiliate program, then it's likely that the product converts well.

How do you know if people are making money?

Look at public income reports where bloggers publicly reveal how much money they're making from their affiliate deals.

You can find these reports on Google.

For example, if you search for "income report amazon affiliate," you'll see a few blog posts showing how bloggers have made money from Amazon Affiliates.



2 - Ask Questions



If you cannot find much information available about an affiliate program you want to join, sign up and ask questions.

For example, you might want to find out what their average conversion rates are and a ballpark figure of their top earners' monthly commissions.

This can help you figure out if the affiliate program is worth promoting.



3 - Use your intuition



From my experience, sometimes, it is good to go with your gut feeling. If the program or product you are checking out feels bad or if you feel you could not recommend the product to a friend or your family members, I recommend not promoting such a product. I call this gut instinct.

Your credibility and reputation are more important than earning a few dollars from a product that does not resonate with you.



Chapter 9: How To Be Successful At Affiliate Marketing





Introduction



It can be difficult to earn a steady income from affiliate marketing and even more difficult to stand out among other marketers promoting the same products.

Once you've built up a website, blog, newsletter, or your social media, there are steps you can take to become successful and generate a more reliable revenue stream.

To be successful, follow these steps.



Know your partners



Research each affiliate program you consider joining so that you will understand how and when you'll be paid. This preliminary research can save you time and effort in the long run.



Build trust



Buy the products you intend to market so you can personally attest to the quality.

You will be judged by the product or service you promote, so focus on the quality of your own brand and recommendations, not just the earning potential.

Your followers will come to trust your recommendations and be more likely to buy from you.



Have a brand



Choose affiliate items that match your niche and the content of your blog. Don't rely on SEO or social media alone to drive people to your website and affiliate referrals.

Understand who your target market is, where you can find your audience, and how to entice users to your site.



Use variety



Mix and match affiliate ads, so you don't overwhelm your visitors. Content-embedded affiliate links usually have the best click-through rates over image links.

Consider using a lead page and funnel system to market your affiliate business.

Lure prospects to your email list with a free offer and include links to your affiliate product pages.



Know the legal requirements



Most visitors will probably understand that advertisements lead to your personal compensation, but if you write a review or use an in-text link as a recommendation, you must explicitly state that each purchase using that link can generate revenue for you.

This isn't just good business. It is also required by law.

If you don't disclose affiliate or revenue-generating links, you could face legal and financial penalties.



Track your traffic and earnings.



Monitor the success of your affiliate programs, particularly if you work with several different ones.

Know which programs are the most successful and which products resonate with your followers so you can plan future campaigns.

Like any other type of home business, success in affiliate marketing depends on investing the time and effort to grow your business and build relationships with your customers and partner brands.

If you decide to pursue affiliate marketing, understand that it's not a fast or automatic business model. But it is possible to earn a reliable income as an affiliate marketer.



How much money can I make as an affiliate marketer?



Let's uncover the potential earnings. If you can imagine how much money you can make as an affiliate marketer you may focus on these items better.

In the start of every workshop, attendees always ask how much money they can earn from digital affiliate marketing.

My simple answer is there is no limit. It depends on your niche and the amount of work you put in. Some successful affiliate marketers make six or seven figures a month.

For example, when I was browsing the news in 2017, Pat Flynn from Smart Passive Income made over \$100,000 in affiliate commissions. I don't know how true it is though.

Another affiliate marketer, Ryan Robinson, reported over \$19,000 in affiliate revenue in 2019.

I remember reading stories like a successful affiliate website made an estimated \$10 million a year in revenue and was eventually sold to the New York Times for \$30 million.

Keep in mind, though, that these people have done an excellent job building their sites and brand. It has taken them years of hard work to reach this level.

You need to manage your expectations. You won't earn too much for a while. Every business require time and effort. Don't let smal earning to discourage you in the begining.

The success of others indicates that with hard work, time, and the right knowledge, you too can potentially reach those levels. Dedication and commitment are key attributes of successful businss people.



Chapter 10: Affiliate Marketing Strategies





Introduction



In this section, I introduce effective strategies that you can use for your affiliate marketing programs.



Only recommend products you are familiar with.



Building trust with your audience is paramount in affiliate marketing, and the quickest way to lose trust is to recommend products either you haven't used before or that aren't a good fit for your audience.

Make sure you never tell anyone to buy a product directly. Remember, you are simply recommending the product.

The more helpful you are and the more you make quality recommendations, the more likely your web visitors will come back for your expertise.



Promote products from many different merchants.



Diversification is critical in all businesses. It is the same for affiliate marketing.

Therefore, simply don't put all your eggs in one basket. If you only promote one merchant's products, you are stuck with their commissions, their landing pages, and ultimately, their conversion rates.

It is important to work with many different merchants in your niche and promote a wide range of products.

This affiliate marketing strategy will diversify the number of commissions you make and create a steady stream of revenue when building an affiliate website.



Constantly test and optimize your conversion rates.



Let's say you have a promotions page where you're promoting a product via affiliate links. If you currently get 5,000 visits/month at a 2% conversion rate, you have 100 referrals. To get to 200 referrals, you can either focus on getting 5,000 more visitors or simply increasing the conversion rate to 4%.

Which sounds easier? Instead of spending months building Domain Authority with blogging and guest posts to get more organic traffic, you just have to increase the conversion rate by 2%.

This can include landing page optimization, testing your calls-to-action, and having a conversion rate optimization strategy in place. By testing and optimizing your site, you'll get far better results with much less effort.



Focus on your affiliate traffic sources.



It's important to know where your traffic is coming from and the demographics of your audience. This will allow you to customize your messaging so that you can provide the best affiliate product recommendations.

You shouldn't just focus on the vertical market you're in, but on the traffic sources and the audience that's visiting your site. Traffic sources may include organic, paid, social media, referral, display, email, or direct traffic.

You can view traffic source data in Google Analytics to view things such as time on page, bounce rate, geolocation, age, gender, time of day, devices (mobile vs. desktop), and more. This is critical so you can focus your effort on the highest converting traffic. This analytics data is crucial to making informed decisions, increasing your conversion rates, and making more affiliate sales.



Chapter 11: Types of Affiliate Marketing

A decorative flourish consisting of a horizontal line with a central scroll-like element and small circular accents at the ends.



Introduction



In this chapter, I introduce types of affiliate marketing as this information can help you assess the programs you get involved with.

There are three main types of affiliate marketing: unattached affiliate marketing, related affiliate marketing, and involved affiliate marketing.

The most common affiliate marketing type is doing it by a website. However, with the increased amount of smartphone usage, we think it may also be useful to talk about another type of affiliate marketing: mobile apps.



Unattached Affiliate Marketing



Unattached Affiliate Marketing is an advertising model in which the affiliate has no connection to the product or service they are promoting.

They have no known related skills or expertise and do not serve as an authority on or make claims about its use.

This is the most uninvolved form of affiliate marketing. The lack of attachment to the potential customer and product absolves the affiliate from the duty to recommend or advise.



Related Affiliate Marketing



As the name suggests, related affiliate marketing involves the promotion of products or services by an affiliate with some type of relationship to the offering.

Generally, the connection is between the affiliate's niche and the product or service. The affiliate has enough influence and expertise to generate traffic, and their level of authority makes them a trusted source.

The affiliate, however, makes no claims about the use of the product or service.



Involved Affiliate Marketing



Involved affiliate marketing involves a deeper connection between the affiliate and the product or service they're promoting.

They have used or use the product and are confident that their positive experiences can be shared by others.

Their experiences are the advertisements, and they serve as trusted sources of information.

On the other hand, because they are providing recommendations, their reputation may be compromised with any problems arising from the offering.



Mobile Affiliate Marketing



Mobile affiliate marketing is simple; you will do mobile affiliate marketing by promoting affiliate links provided by the product owner (advertiser), which you share in your mobile app.

All you have to keep in mind for mobile affiliate marketing is that your mobile advertising inventory must be a user-friendly mobile interface.

It should have new functions and tools for comfortable navigation from any mobile device. So you need to be familiar with constant updates and upgrades.

If you apply these simple points to your mobile product, you can easily do mobile affiliate marketing.



Examples of Affiliate Marketing



In this section, I introduce popular affiliate marketing programs for your awareness and consideration



1 - Amazon Affiliate Marketing



Amazon's affiliate marketing program, Amazon Associates, is one of the world's largest affiliate marketing programs. Creators, publishers, and bloggers sign up to have Amazon products and services shared on their websites or apps, and in return, receive compensation for the sales their sites generate.

Amazon sets strict criteria for the types of sites and apps that host their ads. For example, sites must not contain replicated content from another site or creator and must be available to the public.

Websites must be active with fresh and suitable content according to Amazon's standards. For example, they must not contain obscene or offensive content, promote violence or illegal acts, or contain any content deemed harmful to others.

Approval is contingent on a thorough review by Amazon staff and meeting a qualified sales quota (3 within 180 days of the application). If an application is rejected, it will not be eligible for reconsideration. Once approved, commissions are earned as site visitors purchase products or services from Amazon.

Amazon Associates can earn up to 10% in commissions for qualified sales. Rates are fixed and based on product and program categories. As a bonus, Amazon offers special commissions on certain events.



2 - Etsy Affiliate Marketing



Etsy—a global, online marketplace for vintage goods and other unique items—promotes its products through various channels, including affiliate marketing partners.

To apply, applicants must submit an online application through its affiliate program portal. To qualify as an Etsy affiliate marketing partner, eligible candidates must be at least 18, have an active, unique website, have a brand identity, and meet other criteria.

If approved, Etsy pays a commission to the affiliate for sales they procure—sales resulting from their site’s promotion of the product. Commission rates vary and are paid on the order price.

Etsy sellers can be affiliates, but they cannot earn commissions on their products without special permission. Etsy declares that it has the right to terminate an agreement at any time for any reason and that it can withhold compensation for any legitimate reason.



3 - eBay Affiliate Marketing



EBay's Partner Network is eBay's affiliate marketing program that pays partners for sharing their personal listings outside of eBay.

The affiliate earns a commission and may earn credit towards their final merchant fees. eBay partners can also earn commissions on other seller's items.

Commissions are earned when a buyer bids on or immediately purchases an item within 24 hours of clicking the eBay purchase link on the affiliate's site. For submitted bids, the commission is paid if the buyer wins the auction within ten days of the bid.

Commission rates depend on the category of items sold and range from 1%-4%. No more than \$550 will be paid on any one qualifying sale. Gift cards, items sold by charities, and special promotions are generally excluded as qualifying sales because of their low revenue streams.



Key Parts of Affiliate Marketing



In this section, I introduce four critical terms that you need to know to understand the stakeholders of the affiliate marketing process.



1 - Affiliate Merchant



Affiliate Merchant here can be any retailer, brand, or company that creates a product or service and offers it to sell via affiliate networks.



2 - Affiliate Marketer



Affiliate marketers are the content distributors who advertise affiliate products and enjoy their profit through the merchant or affiliate network.



3 - Customer



The ones who purchase from the merchant site through an affiliate site. An affiliate marketing campaign is run by an affiliate marketer, which aims at converting a user to a customer for an affiliate merchant. And the affiliate marketer enjoys the commission.



4 - Affiliate Network



An affiliate network is the link between an affiliate marketer and an affiliate merchant. It's the base for the promotion of various products and services through freelance affiliate marketing.



Chapter 12: How Do Affiliate Marketers Get Paid?





Introduction



The most frequently asked question is how affiliate marketers get paid for their efforts. Let me explain.

You need to first create an account with “Freelance Affiliate Marketing Programs” like Amazon, Flipkart, GoDaddy, etc. Then get through the above-explained process of getting their links and pasting them into your site or blog.

When visitors click on the links on your site, they will be redirected to the merchant site, where they can buy the chosen products.

The best part is you will get a commission for this, and the amount per buy will be credited to your account immediately. There are some websites that use PayPal to pay you the commission, and some will do the same through a cheque.

A quick and inexpensive method of making money without the hassle of actually selling a product, affiliate marketing has an undeniable draw for those looking to increase their income online. But how does an affiliate get paid after linking the seller to the consumer?

The answer can get complicated.

The consumer doesn't always need to buy the product for the affiliate to get a kickback. Depending on the program, the affiliate's contribution to the seller's sales will be measured differently.

The affiliate may get paid in various ways:



Pay per sale



This is the standard affiliate marketing structure.

In this program, the merchant pays the affiliate a percentage of the sale price of the product after the consumer purchases the product as a result of the affiliate's marketing strategies.

In other words, the affiliate must actually get the customer to buy the product before they are compensated.



Pay per lead



A more complex system, pay-per-lead affiliate programs, compensates the affiliate based on the conversion of leads.

The affiliate must persuade the consumer to visit the merchant's website and complete the desired action.

The actions could be filling out a contact form, signing up for a trial of a product, subscribing to a newsletter, or downloading software or files.



Pay per click



This program focuses on incentivizing the affiliate to redirect consumers from their marketing platform to the merchant's website.

This means the affiliate must engage the consumer to the extent that they will move from the affiliate's site to the merchant's site.

The affiliate is paid based on the increase in web traffic.



Chapter 13: Choosing Your First Program





Introduction



As you brainstorm products or browse through affiliate platforms, the most important criteria to keep in mind is that the product should be aligned with your audience or the audience you plan to build.

Ask yourself these two questions:

1. Is it something your target audience would find valuable?
2. Does it fit with your area of expertise?

A food blogger probably wouldn't promote beauty products, for example. A wide range of other products would make more sense, such as cookware, meal kits, gourmet ingredients, or even aprons.

Also, make sure the product or service you're promoting is a fit for the platform you're promoting it on.

For example, home decor and clothing are well suited to image-heavy platforms like Instagram.

However, if you're promoting more in-depth purchases, like software, your review may convert better on longer-form platforms, like a blog or YouTube.



Creating a plan to promote your affiliate offer



As we mentioned earlier, affiliate marketing revenue eventually can become a form of passive income, but you still have to do some heavy lifting upfront. The success of your program will depend on the quality of your review.

To create a good review, it's best to get personal. Share your experience in your blog, social media post, or video. If you're writing a personal review, give a candid opinion based on your experience with and knowledge of the product. The more open you are, the more authentic you will be. People will be more comfortable following your advice if they feel they can trust you.

Trust is a crucial factor in your affiliate marketing efforts because people need to trust you enough to act on your recommendations. The level of trust you'll need to make affiliate sales depends on your industry and the products you're recommending—for example, it takes more trust to be an effective affiliate for a \$1,000 course than it does for a \$20 t-shirt.

Beyond just sharing your experiences, you can build trust by limiting the number of affiliates you promote or by only becoming an affiliate for products you personally use and sticking to your area of expertise.



Create a product tutorial



While your success with affiliate marketing can depend on the overall size of your following, another way to drive higher-converting traffic is by providing a tutorial on the offer. People often perform “how to” searches on Google, such as “how to save money for college” or “how to decorate a laundry room.”

If you offer a tutorial that solves a searcher’s problem and clearly showcases the value of the product, your referrals will make more sense in context, and you’ll provide the customer with a stronger incentive to purchase the product you’re recommending.



Consider your angle



Depending on your offer, figure out how much energy you should invest in instructional or tutorial content, which is often a natural lead-in to someone trying a product for themselves.

For example, you could record a video of yourself using and getting the most out of a physical product, or showing off the benefits of a digital product, like software.

Unboxing posts are popular, so if you receive the product in the mail, document your experience opening it up.



Find relevant search terms



If you're promoting an offer through a blog post, research which keywords someone might use in a search engine to find an answer to a related problem.

Google Ads Keyword Planner is a good tool that can help. It's free to use, but you'll need to create an account.

Just search Google Ads Keyword Planner in your web browser.



Talk to a product expert



Another option is interviewing others who use the product or service or even interviewing the person who makes or sells it.

This useful information can give your review more depth, creating a narrative for the reader.



Set your distribution strategy



Once you've written your promotional content, share it on your website or social media platforms. If you have an email list, you can create an email marketing campaign. And be sure to have an affiliate marketing hub on your website with a Resources page where you share a quick list of all of the tools you use and love.



Try offering a bonus



Sometimes marketers promote their affiliate programs by offering bonuses to anyone who purchases the offer. For example, you could give a free e-book you wrote to any follower who makes a purchase.

Promotions like this encourage customers to buy by sweetening the deal. They're especially persuasive if the bonus you offer is something you normally sell because then shoppers can see its actual dollar value right on your site.

Let me give you a few examples that you can easily find from Google search.

You can find several examples of affiliate bonuses in action when business coach Marie Forleo opens her popular B-School for entrepreneurs each year. To encourage sign-ups through her affiliate link, Laura Belgrade, Forleo's own copywriter, offers a one-on-one copywriting session as a bonus.

For example, if you check Facebook, you can find out that popular marketing coach Amy Porterfield adds a bonus bundle, with an invitation to one of her live events, access to a private Facebook group, Q&A sessions, and a variety of downloads.

Adding a bonus can be a good way to stand out if several other affiliates are promoting the same product.



Examples of Businesses Using Affiliate Marketing



Here two examples of the companies that participate in affiliate marketing will provide you with inspiration—as well as proof that this is a legit and lucrative revenue stream.



BuzzFeed



BuzzFeed Reviews started out as a gift guide and expanded into reviews of various product categories.

What makes the site unique is that it covers a variety of ordinary items, giving top picks at three different price points.

BuzzFeed's reviews are quite thorough, which provides lots of value to the reader.



Wirecutter



Wirecutter, a site promoting gear and gadgets—from kitchen tools to travel gear—that was acquired by The New York Times in 2016 for \$30 million.

According to their site they only make recommendations after “vigorous reporting, interviewing, and testing by teams of veteran journalists, scientists, and researchers.”



Chapter 14: Popular Programs And Resources





Introduction



This chapter introduces popular programs and resources that you can consider for your affiliate marketing goals. These resources can also help you find collaborators.



Content marketing programs - blogs and web pages



These are people who own their own sites and those who are also building websites. The number of web admins available is mind-blowing, and they all have different levels of expertise.

Most of these webmasters are already signed into ShareASale or C.J. where you can easily contact them for a partnership, or you can decide to directly contact them on their website and give them a proposal.

These are people who actually spend their own money to try and leverage the search engines, Facebook advertising, and many other paid advertising models so as to generate a return on investment for affiliate offers as well as themselves.

These types of affiliates are great when it comes to posting information about the company and reviews about your new products. All you will need to do is send them samples of the products and ask them to do a review which will help to spread the word about the products.

All the things that bloggers write about tend to rank in the search engine organically. It's quite important to look for a blogger who is willing to promote your products or your company and its services, as this will help to increase your traffic and ultimately the number of conversions you get.

A really good pool to get bloggers from is to Google "mummy blogger." They are many and essentially have the time to blog about you.



Coupon-site programs



Due to the recent recessions, most people are on the search for coupons from various merchants. This makes coupon sites a really important affiliate for your business.

These sites can sort of behave like a double-edged sword as it has equal parts advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that you will get increased traffic to your website and thus increase your revenue.

The disadvantage of working with coupon sites is that these sites will capitalize on the organic rankings that are associated with your company's name and the word "coupon".

These sites usually have an established member base that can be quite beneficial to you as a business looking to improve its conversion rate and revenue, thus making it somewhat important to overlook the negative of working with coupon sites.



Review-site Programs



These types of affiliates will build a website that will review up to six different advertisements in a particular niche. These review sites are quite popular with affiliate marketers.

This type of hosting is mostly used by hosts dealing with dating companies, flower companies, phone companies, and all others that require taking about five different advertisers, putting them on one side, and running an organic search or a paid search through all those pages that feature different reviews.

The affiliates will only earn a commission when they refer business to any of those advertisers.



Loyalty Portals



Loyalty portals are basically companies that have a very large membership base and are able to expose your offer as an advertiser to its members and sometimes may even contain a cashback policy.

There are very many loyalty portals in the market right now that work on a performance basis that you can choose from to improve your business.



Incentive Programs



These programs have both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that you will get increased traffic of prospects by giving points or some other incentive. The disadvantage will be that the people taking action on your advertisement tend to skew down the quality of the leads and sales while increasing the return rates.

There is also the problem of virtual currency, which is still a new development in the business industry.

Users will earn virtual currency through their social networking, and then you get some companies leveraging their affiliate advertisers to allow these users to redeem their virtual cash to make their purchases and thus making a saving. This is both good and bad as you may get very few sales while your volume increases.



Email Marketing



This type of marketing has been around for many years now and has gone through a couple of changes.

Ensure that if you choose to use email marketing, you choose only a few email vendors to work with on a performance basis.

Ensure that everything these vendors do is CAN-SPAM compliant so that you don't experience any issues.

Email marketing can be an additional source of income for you.



Digital assets



Digital assets are long-form content such as e-books, buyer guides, and research whitepapers.

Such content may get limited users when compared to typical organic traffic on a blog page. However, they are highly intent-driven and may contribute to high conversions.

The readers of such assets have already had to fill in details and download them or consume them on a browser, which are verifiers of purchase-readiness when the asset is contextual to the product or service being marketed via the affiliate program.



Traditional Media



These include television, radio, and print media which can be contracted on a CPA (average cost per action) basis on a revenue share.

All you have to do is make a proposal to each of these media outlets and individual stations.

This form of affiliate marketing is quite effective and has been used for a long time and is expected to be used in the future.



Chapter 15: Affiliate Marketing Best Practices





Introduction



In this section, I introduce best practices for your consideration. Understanding and practising these points can be valuable in running your affiliate programs.



Leverage existing and related organic- traffic pages



The biggest leverage for content marketers and web admins is already ranking articles and pages in search engines.

These pages can be easily identified using Google Analytics.

Assuming at least some of them are contextual and related to the product to be marketed via affiliate, you can use them as a reliable and continuous source of leads.



Avoid intermediate pages



When users click and jump to pages, every page filters out some users. While this may be a natural process based on user intent, it also contributes to user fatigue.

As a rule of thumb, when it comes to affiliate marketing on blogs and content pages, it is advisable to link directly to the final product page and avoid any intermediate landing pages.

Ideally, the product page of the vendor should contain all the required information to facilitate a smooth conversion.

In rare affiliate programs, there may be a requirement to educate the reader on the product before sending them off to the page.

In such cases, the affiliate marketer is always free to bargain for a better revenue share deal pertaining to the additional efforts needed for facilitating successful purchases.



Market on related social media groups



A part from informative blogs and articles, the next most contextual source of intent-driven users is social media groups dedicated to discussing a specific topic.

The balancing act here is to use a mix of direct product promos and informative content so as not to get thrown out by the admin. Alternatively, you can post the informative content page containing the affiliate link.

It is still risky if you post the same article multiple times in a row and are advised to use a mix of articles. It is always a best practice to be part of multiple such groups across multiple social media platforms.



Native marketing for non-ad looking promos



Native marketing is the best form of promotion nowadays, where a promotion code is carefully injected within a natural flowing informative content piece.

The appearance of this link may be in simple text format or can be HTML format for more attention-grab within the content's flow.

Please avoid any side banners that may give it an ad-type look, which users have learned to avoid. Even if ad-blockers block them.



Invest in advertising for high-value deals



Some high-value deals may be worth additional spending from the affiliate marketers.

As a benchmark, one needs to check the existing cost-per-click (CPC) or the keywords most directly linked to the product/ service to be promoted and correlate that to your profit margin.



A/B test multiple sources for ROI



One of the best ways to ensure long-term program success with any brand is to test pages and channels for the least effort and maximum outcomes. You can use A/B testing, also known as bucket testing or split-run testing.

For example, you should test promo pitch lines, locations to hyperlink from, email lists, etc.

Remember, even if your promo doesn't cost you money directly in additional advertising, time is always a cost incurred, and minimizing it is key for long-term sustainable success.



Must-Avoid Mistakes When Starting an Affiliate Marketing Business



In this section, I provide important points that you need to avoid in your affiliate marketing practice.

1. Don't go for marketing products that don't match your content.
2. Don't expect immediate income as it takes time because the process needs connections, huge traffic, content, and trust.
3. Focus on good and quality content with occasional affiliate links. Spamming will earn you a bad reputation.
4. Don't go for promoting bad products even if you get a high commission as people are not going to buy those.
5. Don't choose a niche in which you have zero interest because you will not enjoy talking or writing about its topics. So choose a niche that you are interested in.
6. Don't publish bad or low-quality content, as it will not help you gain traffic and redirection.
7. Not providing product reviews is the biggest mistake that you can make in your business because they are the biggest key part of an affiliate marketing website. People will only go for buying the products that have product reviews.
8. Don't go for joining any and every affiliate program you see because every affiliate site doesn't have traffic. So there is no point in joining them.



Chapter 16: Common Types of Affiliate Marketing Channels





Introduction



Most affiliates share common practices to ensure that their audience is engaged and receptive to purchasing promoted products.

However, not all affiliates advertise the products in the same way.

In fact, there are several different marketing channels they may leverage. Let me introduce them.



Influencers



An influencer is an individual who holds power to impact the purchasing decisions of a large segment of the population. This person is in a great position to benefit from affiliate marketing.

They already boast an impressive following, so it's easy for them to direct consumers to the seller's products through social media posts, blogs, and other interactions with their followers. The influencers then receive a share of the profits they helped to create.

Influencer marketing campaigns are particularly popular on Instagram, where brands partner with influencers who are seen as experts or authorities in their specific niches.

Depending on the deal, a campaign could consist of a series of product reviews with photos, account takeovers, or live videos. While an influencer might have their own branding and aesthetic, it's important to add elements that tie-up with your brand to ensure brand recall and recognition. This can be achieved by using apps like Instasize, where you can quickly edit and customize your campaign's creatives in a tap.



Bloggers



With the ability to rank organically in search engine queries, bloggers excel at increasing a seller's conversions.

The blogger samples the product or service and then writes a comprehensive review that promotes the brand in a compelling way, driving traffic back to the seller's site.

The blogger is awarded for his or her influence in spreading the word about the value of the product, helping to improve the seller's sales.



The paid search-focused microsites



Developing and monetizing microsites can also garner a serious amount of sales. These sites are advertised within a partner site or on the sponsored listings of a search engine.

They are distinct and separate from the organization's main site. By offering more focused, relevant content to a specific audience, microsites lead to increased conversions due to their simple and straightforward call to action.



Email Marketing



Despite its older origins, email marketing is still a viable source of affiliate marketing income.

Some affiliates have email lists they can use to promote the seller's products. Others may leverage email newsletters that include hyperlinks to products, earning a commission after the consumer purchases the product.

Another method is for the affiliate to build an email list over time. They use their various campaigns to collect emails en masse. Then they send out emails regarding the products they are promoting.



Large media websites



Designed to create a huge amount of traffic at all times, these sites focus on building an audience of millions.

These websites promote products to their massive audience through the use of banners and contextual affiliate links.

This method offers superior exposure and improves conversion rates, resulting in top-notch revenue for both the seller and the affiliate.



Chapter 17: Why Should I Become An Affiliate Marketer?





Introduction



I knew you would ask this question. I left this chapter towards the end so the prior information can help you understand the reasons I provide in this chapter.

Since my target audience for this book includes book authors, article writers, bloggers, and other content developers, I want to provide some compelling reasons you to become an affiliate marketer.



Passive income.



While any “regular” job requires you to be at work to make money, affiliate marketing offers you the ability to make money while you sleep. By investing an initial amount of time into a campaign, you will see continuous returns on that time as consumers purchase the product over the following days and weeks.

You receive money for your work long after you’ve finished it. Even when you’re not in front of your computer, your marketing skills will be earning you a steady flow of income.



No customer support



Individual sellers and companies offering products or services have to deal with their consumers and ensure they are satisfied with what they have purchased.

Thanks to the affiliate marketing structure, you'll never have to be concerned with customer support or customer satisfaction.

The entire job of the affiliate marketer is to link the seller with the consumer. The seller deals with any consumer complaints after you receive your commission from the sale.



Work from home.



If you are someone who hates going to the office or have valid reasons to stay at home, affiliate marketing is an excellent solution.

You will be able to launch campaigns and receive revenue from the products that sellers create while working from the comfort of your own home.

This is a job you can do without ever getting out of your pajamas.



Convenient and flexible



Since you are essentially becoming a freelancer, you get ultimate independence in setting your own goals, redirecting your path when you feel so inclined, choosing the products that interest you, and even determining your own hours.

This convenience means you can diversify your portfolio if you like or focus solely on simple and straightforward campaigns.

You'll also be free from company restrictions and regulations as well as ill-performing teams.



Cost-effective



Most businesses require startup fees as well as a cash flow to finance the products being sold.

However, affiliate marketing can be done at a low cost, meaning you can get started quickly and without much hassle.

There are no affiliate program fees to worry about and no need to create a product. Beginning this line of work is relatively straightforward for freelancers.



The Power of SEO



There's a ton of organic traffic you can get from search engines if you do SEO properly. The days when Search Engine Optimization was about cheating Google are gone.

Today, it is about making your website better for visitors. People naturally look for information online.

That's why you should learn the basics of on-page SEO, keyword research, and link building to be the information source they find first.

Who wouldn't want to rank #1 for terms such as "best product" or "product review" in Google, Bing, or other search engines?



Performance-Based rewards.



With other jobs, you could work many additional hours a week and still earn the same salary.

Affiliate marketing is purely based on your performance. You'll get from it what you put into it.

Honing your reviewing skills and writing engaging campaigns will translate to direct improvements in your revenue.

You will get paid for the outstanding work you do!



Chapter 18: Top Affiliate Marketing Trends





Introduction



In this chapter, I introduce recent trends that you need to be aware of.



Improved affiliate reporting and attribution



Many affiliate programs run with last-click attribution, where the affiliate receiving the last click before the sale gets 100% credit for the conversion. This is changing.

With affiliate platforms providing new attribution models and reporting features, you are able to see a full-funnel, cross-channel view of how individual marketing tactics are working together.

For example, you might see that a paid social campaign generated the first click, Affiliate X got click 2, and Affiliate Y got the last click. With this full picture, you can structure your affiliate commissions so that Affiliate X gets a percentage of the credit for the sale, even though they didn't get the last click.



Influencer niches are becoming hyper-targeted.



In the past, large affiliates were the mainstay, as catch-all coupons and media sites gave traffic to hundreds or thousands of advertisers. This is not so much the case anymore.

With consumers using long-tail keywords and searching for very specific products and services, influencers can leverage their hyper-focused niche for affiliate marketing success. Influencers may not send advertisers huge amounts of traffic, but the audience they do send is credible, targeted, and has higher conversion rates.



GDPR is changing how personal data is collected.



The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which took effect on May 25, 2018, is a set of regulations governing the use of personal data across the E.U.

This is forcing some affiliates to obtain user data through opt-in consent (updated privacy policies and cookie notices), even if they are not located in the European Union.

This new regulation should also remind you to follow FTC guidelines and clearly disclose that you receive affiliate commissions from your recommendations.



Affiliate marketers are getting smarter.



Merchants receiving a large percentage of their revenue from the affiliate channel can become reliant on their affiliate partners.

This can lead to affiliate marketers leveraging their important status to receive higher commissions and better deals with their affiliate merchants.

Whether it's CPA (Cost Per Acquisition), CPL (Cost Per Lead), or CPC (Cost Per Click) commission structure, there are a lot of high-paying affiliate programs, and affiliate marketers are in the driver's seat.



Chapter 19: Analyzing a Merchant's Affiliate Program





Introduction



After you have identified a suitable product for your niche, the next factor to consider is how best to promote your affiliate link.

All products are not the same. Also, ways to promote them are different. The promotion method that works for a product in the Parenting niche may not work for the Marketing niche.

Some affiliate programs limit you to methods through which you can promote their products. They state this in their terms. There are cases where you are not allowed to run a campaign on Google targeting some keywords, for example.

As an affiliate marketer, it's left for you to figure out the method that will guarantee results without going against the terms of such an affiliate program.

Blog posts, YouTube videos, email campaigns, and social media posts are some of the more popular methods affiliates use to promote their links.



Payment methods for commission earned



The main reason you promote someone else's product is to earn a commission. That's the reward for the time and energy you invest in convincing your audience to make a purchase through your affiliate links.

That's why you should pay serious attention to the payment method of any affiliate program you want to join.

Nothing is more heartbreaking than earning huge commissions only to realize that you can't be paid.

Why? Because the payment methods of that affiliate program are not supported in your country. Many affiliate programs use PayPal as their payment method. An example is ActiveCampaign's Affiliate Program that pays commission only through PayPal.

This service is not available in some developing countries. Even some of its alternatives may have hitches that you may not be comfortable with. The idea is to take your time and review the payment methods to see if it is possible for you to get paid for the commissions you earn.

Most affiliate programs state their payment methods in their terms and agreements. And you must agree with them before submitting your application for such an affiliate program.



Cookie life



When your audience clicks on your affiliate link, there is a duration for them to make a purchase after clicking for you to get the commission.

If a purchase is made outside such duration, the commission doesn't count. This is what cookie life simply means. Always check for the cookie life of affiliate links for any affiliate program you want to join. Again you can see this in their terms. Cookie life impacts the amount you can make in commissions.

It's better to have a longer cookie life so as to give enough time for the affiliate link to count for you. Some affiliate programs have a cookie life of 30, 45, 60, 90, and even 120 days. For example, GetResponse's affiliate program has a cookie life of 120 days.



Terms And conditions



These are rules, guidelines, and restrictions that you must adhere to as you join an affiliate program.

Some of these terms and conditions may not be in your favor. That's why you need to take time and, if possible, get a legal expert to interpret them for you if you can't.

They involve promotion methods allowed, payment methods, commission, termination, fraud, etc. You should keep these terms in mind, abide by them so as to continue to be active on any affiliate program and also earn your commissions.



Commission rate



The commission rate these affiliate programs pay should matter to you. It is because of this that you invest your time, energy, and resources in promoting their products.

While some affiliate programs have high commission rates, others have low rates. Although it all depends on the product or service, you must make wise choices in this aspect.

Some affiliate programs have commission rate tiers which are one-time and recurring. An example is GetResponse that pays a \$100 one-time commission or \$33 monthly recurring commission.

Some are also based on the number of customers who subscribe to their service using your affiliate link. The idea here is to examine the commission rate and decide if signing up for an affiliate program is worth it.



Payment threshold



Before you can withdraw your commission and receive payment, it must reach a certain amount. This is not the case with all affiliate programs, as some don't have any minimum threshold.

Some affiliates won't have the patience to wait for their commission to reach a specific amount before they can withdraw it. They prefer to withdraw it immediately as they earn it.

This minimum payment varies per affiliate program. Some have set theirs at \$50, \$100, \$200, etc. For example, if you sign up for the Clickfunnels affiliate program, you have to earn at least \$100 in commission before you can get paid. Whereas on ConvertKit, there is no minimum payout. Once a commission is approved, you get paid immediately.



Affiliate kit and support



To effectively promote a product or service, you must be provided with an affiliate kit. By this, I mean different tools you need. Examples are email swipe copy, videos, written reviews, different sizes of banners, images, etc.

You have to check for all these before you submit an application for any affiliate program. Some affiliate programs disclose this in their terms.

You can also see them in your dashboard when you are approved as an affiliate with them. Another is support. There is no way you won't need the assistance of an insider of an affiliate program you join.

There are days you will encounter challenges, and you'll need help. That's why some of these companies assign you an affiliate manager who will assist you and also be your guide.



Chapter 20: How to find affiliate programs





Introduction



If you're wondering how to get your feet wet in affiliate marketing, you've got a few options. Not every company offers affiliate programs—some businesses manage their own affiliate programs while others use an affiliate network.



How to find a program



An easy way to find affiliate programs is to visit an affiliate marketplace or platform. Browse your niche to find top-performing affiliate offers.

Here are some of the most popular:

- Affiliate network
- Avantlink
- Cj by conversant
- Clickbank
- Flexoffers
- Linkconnector
- Revenuewire
- Shareasale

Another option is to visit the websites of the products and services you use and like to see if they have an affiliate program. Large companies often have programs they promote on their sites, such as Amazon Associates or the Shopify Affiliate Program.

You also can take a more direct approach. Reach out to the owner of a great product you come across and see if they offer an affiliate marketing program. If they don't, they might be happy to set up an arrangement with you, such as offering you a special coupon code to share with your followers.

The best deals often are found when you're the first to inquire and have a relevant distribution channel, such as approaching the seller of a new fitness product if you're a health and wellness blogger.



Top Affiliate Marketing Websites And Programs



It'd be nice to make more money off of your blog, right?

After all the effort it takes to make a blog successful. And the continued effort that content requires every single week, without fail, for your blog to continue being successful. You need to start making some kind of revenue from it.

But the question most bloggers struggle with crops up: "Where do I begin?"

That's a pretty difficult question to answer. There are a lot of right and wrong answers to it, too, depending on your blog niche, traffic, etc. However, for this post – the answer is simple. It's "affiliate programs." More specifically, the best affiliate website for you, as any kind of blogger.

Let's get into the top affiliate websites any level of blogger can benefit from.



ShareASale Affiliates



ShareASale has been in business for 17 years now, and they've definitely kept up with the times. Featuring a plentiful marketplace full of merchants catering to almost everything you can think of, there's always going to be relevant products for you to promote.



Advantages



Flexible payout options. Digital and standard payout options are available. With digital payment options being so rare among the popular affiliate websites, this earns major points for them!

Wide product selection. As you're picking and choosing which merchants to work with, you get a huge library of products to choose from to promote.



Disadvantages



Not as straightforward as some of its competitors, meaning it'll take comparatively more time to set up. Not a major issue, but it does require a little technical know-how.



Solvid Affiliates



Solvid Affiliates offer a 20% commission on all purchases, including those that are made by the referred client in the future. This means that if you refer a client that spends £3,500/month with Solvid, you will be receiving £700/month for as long as the client stays with them.

Similarly, if you refer a client that makes a one-off order of £12,000, you will receive a one-time commission payout of £2,400. Basically, there are no limits to what you can earn.

They are simply the highest paying affiliate program in the field.



Amazon Associates



Everyone knows Amazon. The online marketplace that can deliver anything from candy to a fully functional drone to your door in a day.

Every niche has its space on Amazon, which is why it's such a great starting point for an Affiliate Marketing venture.



Advantages



Up to 10% on any qualifying product sale that comes from your link.

All purchases the referred traffic makes on Amazon, even if it's not the product you linked to, count towards your affiliate revenue.

A massively diverse selection of products. A one-stop-shop for many people, causing orders to be far larger than the one product link they click on.



Disadvantages



The affiliate cookie only lasts 24 hours. If they come back and purchase after 24 hours, no revenue for you, sadly!

Lack of payout options means that you can only get paid by cheque, bank transfer, or Amazon gift card. Hopefully, they will branch into digital payment methods soon.



eBay Partners



Even the user-based colossal marketplace that is eBay wants you to help advertise and sell the items on their platform.

All you need to do is find listings you want to help promote, promote them using Ebay's Partner Network tools, and get paid!



Advantages



There is no marketplace more diverse than eBay. It's user-based. Someone, somewhere, is selling any legal product you can think of. Nothing can rival that diversity.

The most straightforward affiliate sales methods. No complex rules to follow; simply post your share link for the listing, and you earn if someone buys off it.

Double Commission for the first three months. The extra revenue is always nice.



Disadvantages



If an auction takes over ten days to end, you earn nothing – even if you’re the one that sent the winning bidder there—the downside of the auction side of things.

This point could be considered more neutral than a disadvantage as it is a bit complicated. You earn a percentage of what eBay would earn off the sale. Instead of affiliate merchant and you, there’s the seller, eBay and you – meaning you’re splitting the profit 3-ways.

You get a large portion of what eBay would earn, but it’s worth being aware of how that works.



Shopify Affiliate Program



Shopify is one of the leading eCommerce software that is used by bloggers and online retailers. As a blogger yourself, you're likely familiar with it. So, for those of you in niches where your audience will also be trying to sell online, Shopify is a great affiliate partnership for you to point them to.



Advantages



You earn a lot per referral. You earn the first two months of your referral's subscription fee (200% bounty), up to \$598 on standard plans —100% bounty on the enterprise plan, which pays \$2,000.

It's a platform worth referring people to. Shopify is the leading contender in its space. Very few other eCommerce platforms come close.



Disadvantages



It's pretty niche. While the payout is great, your audience needs to be selling things online for Shopify ever to be relevant to them.



Clickbank



Clickbank is much like ShareASale.
A diverse marketplace filled with merchants that you pick and choose to promote, based on what your audience would be interested in.



Advantages



You will always find something to promote.

Their product database is one of the easiest to navigate out of any on this list.

The Clickbank site makes finding products to promote really easy. And they have a user-friendly system to track everything.



Disadvantages



No digital payment methods yet. Sadly they only offer checks, Direct deposits, Wire Transfers, or Payoneer as their payment options. They need more digital options.

Maximum of \$150 earned per referral sale, regardless of product. That feels pretty limiting. It'd be nice to see a higher limit or to allow for unlimited scaling.



Rakuten Marketing Affiliates



Rakuten is a leading online store, stocking everything from high-end electronics to pet supplies. If you need it, you can more than likely get it at Rakuten. And they want to pay you for helping to sell anything sold in their store.



Advantages



A service you can trust. Rakuten is an award-winning store with partnerships with brands as big as the N.B.A. itself. You can confidently promote the products they stock.



Disadvantages



You have to apply to each individual brand you want to promote. It does make you more mindful about the products you're going to promote, but it takes up a lot of time.

Their knowledge base is hard to navigate. It's always frustrating when help material isn't straightforward. Luckily, they have a great affiliate support team you can contact.



Bluehost Affiliate Program



Bluehost is currently one of the top-recommended WordPress hosts available. With affordable prices, flexible packages, and a great customer support team – there’s a convincing argument as to why they’re so highly recommended. Maybe it’s time you partnered with them too.



Advantages



Straightforward referral process. Simply sign up (free and short), share your referral link, and get paid for anyone that signs up to any of Bluehost's packages from it.

Quality you can trust. Bluehost comes recommended by WordPress to host their platform; that's a recommendation you can absolutely trust.



Disadvantages



Requires your audience to need web hosting. Being one of the top web hosting services out there doesn't mean much if your audience isn't looking for web hosting.

Minimum of \$100 within 12 months of first referral for payout. Realistically, that's not a hard feat to meet. But it still feels like an unnecessary deadline to be paid out on.



ConvertKit Affiliate Program



ConvertKit is a leading email marketing platform. With ideology based around being customizable and uniquely fitting to every user, you can understand why they come highly recommended by many top names in the email marketing industry.



Advantages



If your audience uses email marketing, they will love ConvertKit. It's just a fact – if you're in that space, ConvertKit easily reaches every need of it that you can conceive.

No cut-off of the affiliate revenue. As long as your affiliate's account is active and paying – you're getting paid. There's absolutely no point where they'll cut you off.



Disadvantages



Not everyone uses email marketing. That's just the reality. If most of your audiences will not be using it, this isn't a great affiliate for you.

Every commission takes 30 days to confirm. As they have a 30-day, no questions asked, refund policy – they can't credit you with the commission until 30 days have passed.



Google AdSense



Google AdSense is an Online Advertising Network, not an affiliate platform. I included it in this section because, it is arguably the most popular way to earn off a blog. And it works on the same principles.

Promote something on your site, get paid for the interest your audience expresses in it.



Advantages



You don't need to find a product to promote. Google AdSense handles what they'll display on your site. You just need to give it the space to do so.

You can disable specific types of ads if they're not right for your site, which is a mandatory option to have, really.

The most reputable platform online. Google and AdSense are known by everyone, so you don't need to build credibility for what's being promoted.



Disadvantages



You have to know an ad is a problem to address it. You won't see ads, so you're relying on your audience to let you know of problematic ads (if they occur).



Chapter 21: Affiliate Marketing For Business Organisations





Introduction



The purpose of this chapter is to give some ideas on how merchants earn business and why they support affiliate marketers.



Affiliate marketing increases sales



The common question by new business owners is: How does affiliate marketing drive sales?

As affiliates promote a company's product or service, they are helping to bring exposure to a much larger network of viewers than what would otherwise be possible.

The added exposure drives interest, which ultimately leads to sales.



Reach a wider audience



The wider the audience reach, the higher the potential for sales growth. Although a product or service will not be suitable for everyone, utilizing affiliate marketing to broaden the market you are targeting, alongside increasing the volumes of reach, brings with it a large opportunity for traffic conversion.

Once a business joins an affiliate network, it introduces them to a whole range of different affiliates and publisher types, which opens up the opportunity to target users they could not previously reach. This means businesses can permeate new sectors with their brand, optimizing performance growth.



Partnering with bloggers, other businesses, and influencers



The premise of affiliate marketing is about building relationships, extending reach whilst monetizing performance. By connecting your business or brand with bloggers, influencers as well as other businesses associated with your field, you expand your audience into new territories.

Bloggers and influencers have become increasingly dominant in the digital space, sometimes even influencing without consumers' intent, resulting in reactive regulations.

New regulations mean any kind of marketing used on social media would need to use the hashtag #ad to ensure consumers are aware they are being targeted by a form of marketing. This helps to highlight how much affiliate marketing is prevalent in our day-to-day lives, and therefore how much influence it can have on your business growth.



Increase website traffic



In the digital world, driving a consumer to your website is the most important step to gaining sales. For some businesses, this is the final gateway to the purchasing process.

For others, their website serves as just one vital marketing tool upon which their customers can gain the information they seek and further solidify the brand awareness their business needs.

Using a network of affiliates to increase general website traffic can also spike the search algorithms and notify search engines of the validity and popularity of your website, thus improving your SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and S.E.R.P (Search Engine Results Pages) rankings.



Social proof through user-generated content



People enjoy receiving recommendations on a product or service. User Generated Content (UGC) from bloggers, writers, authors, influencers, and customers enables this reviewing function as a form of social proof and belief in a product, service, or brand.



Chapter 22: Affiliate Links And Conversions





Introduction



In this chapter, I introduce how to track affiliate links and conversions. Affiliate links are unique URLs used for tracking affiliate performance and traffic which came directly from them.



How to know which links bring conversions



In order to know exactly how useful affiliate links are, it is best to track affiliate conversions.

Essentially, you need to know which links are leading to new customers, purchases, subscriptions, or whichever user action you define as a conversion.

Thus, you need to have some sort of a system for conversion tracking.

It all starts with a click – it precedes any other action a user makes.

By clicking on the affiliate link, users open a certain landing page of a product or service.

Every affiliate link has to have a set of different parameters in its URL to answer a few questions:

1. Where did the user come from (which affiliate link did they click on)?
2. Did they make a purchase (did a conversion occur)?
3. Is that conversion valid?

It's important to note that a click is one thing, but a conversion is a whole different ball game. If you are a more experienced reader, you probably know all too well that not every click leads to a conversion. We do not live in a perfect world.

There are a couple of ways by which you can measure conversions. Let's look more closely at the most common ones:



Client-based tracking



Client-based tracking utilizes cookies on the user's end. Cookies are placed in the user's browser when they click on an ad, which leads them to a landing page.

If they make a conversion there, a conversion pixel will appear, which then reads the cookie information (transaction I.D.) and sends it to the system used for tracking conversions.

The system then processes this information, registers a conversion, and awards the affiliate which drew the user to the page.



Server-to-server tracking



This method of tracking works basically the same way, but without the cookies. Surprisingly, it is even sweeter.

This time, no cookies are stored in the user's browser when they click on an ad. Instead, the advertiser stores the transaction I.D. on his end.

So, users click on a unique tracking link, which sends them to a landing page. If conversion occurs, the system on the advertiser's landing page (or Offer URL) sends a so-called post-back with the transaction I.D. to the conversion tracking system.

However, to employ server-to-server tracking, the advertiser needs to own technology or a platform capable of sending this kind of notifications/requests.



Chapter 23- Growing Your Business With Affiliate Marketing





Introduction



This chapter is for both business owners and affiliates.

TIn essence, affiliate marketing is a strategy that has a huge potential to grow and help you expand your business.

You should not forget that it is still a part of online marketing, which makes it directly related to all other segments of online promotion, so it is only logical to expect it to evolve along with other online promotions and strategies implemented.

Both merchants and affiliates should focus on several key points to help them grow their business with affiliate marketing.



Expansion



The moment you notice that the affiliate program is a part of your daily business routine and that it shows results, it is time to think about expanding.

Merchants will try to provide more products inside the program, reach more affiliates, boost the visibility of their program through online advertising, etc.

On the other hand, affiliates need to explore more program options, find new products or services to promote, and create more content that can help them boost the exposure of affiliate links. They both have one goal in common with this expansion – to increase profit generated through affiliate links.



Involvement



Once the program is up and running, one might think it is time to have a break. Still, the changes happen all the time when doing business online, so you can never be away for too long.

This also includes the management of affiliate marketing. Merchants need to keep an eye on program performance and regularly communicate with the affiliates, as well as to look for new ways to improve the program.

Affiliates have to pay attention to their links and regularly check for broken links. Affiliates also need to keep up with the changes merchants may be introducing to their products and services, as well as creating new content that will be a part of the promotions they are running.

All of these tasks require both affiliates and merchants to keep monitoring their affiliate marketing strategy and analyze its performance constantly.



Mobile-friendliness



Being mobile-friendly has become a must-have attribute in the online world, which means that affiliate marketing has another segment that will affect its performance.

Starting from optimization of web pages for mobile devices to optimization of email messages and leveraging the promotion on social media and apps, targeting mobile users is extremely important for growing your business. Merchants and affiliates should explore mobile optimization and how well their content is adapted for mobile users.

In the end, it all depends on your business and how you manage to integrate affiliate marketing. It is obvious that this kind of promotion shows great potential, especially with the growing popularity of influencers and bloggers.

Creating a customized approach and a plan that is based on your business resources and potential is of the highest importance. This way, you make sure that affiliate marketing integrates well into your business and helps you with achieving your goals.

Using the power of the internet, you can now expand the borders of your reach with online exposure enabling you to affect thousands and millions of people worldwide.

Regardless if you are an internationally known company or a blogger starting out, affiliate marketing is an asset many will find worth exploring. It provides a chance for everyone to succeed in doing business online, as long as you explore and utilize best practices on how to integrate and get the most out of affiliate marketing.

Affiliate marketing has its root in the more traditional type of marketing – door-to-door sales. This type of marketing has proven to be effective and still lives on today in the offline world. Affiliate marketing took this approach online, and guess what? It worked. This type of marketing is based on positive word of mouth.

It is proven that people are more inclined to make a purchase if they hear good things about the products from their friends, family, or someone they trust.

Affiliate marketing is also a highly lucrative investment for merchants as the risks are low, yet potential returns high.

This type, on the other hand, also made it possible for bloggers and video bloggers to monetize their online presence, allowing for a new modern breed of professional bloggers and YouTube stars to emerge, who can now both do what they love and still make a living.

If you feel that your business can benefit from affiliate marketing, then you should definitely do a trial run and see how it goes. It might just be the perfect type of online promotion to help your business reach new heights.



Chapter 24- Conclusion

Affiliate marketing is a good way to earn a living, but before you can start counting your commission earnings, there are a lot of things to be done.

You need to find the product or service you want to promote, identify your target audience's needs, and adjust your website for affiliate marketing purposes.

Steady passive income only follows well-planned and executed activities. Making substantial efforts across all channels will help you to establish yourself as a credible promoter and reviewer, a position every affiliate marketer craves for.

Constantly exploring the possibilities of improving the business is something that comes naturally to everyone running an online business.

The online environment is the world that continually changes, and anyone who wants to stay in the game needs to follow the changes and adapt. This leads to discovering new opportunities, one of those being affiliate marketing.

The starting point is examining your online business and how affiliate marketing can become a part of that business. Depending on the business type, some will choose to be merchants, while others will be affiliates.

The next step is the integration of this business model into your own business. Affiliates and merchants will take different paths when it comes to the integration process.

Let's look at this from the angles of affiliates and merchants.



Affiliates



Affiliates have their own workflow when it comes to affiliate marketing becoming part of their online business. It all begins with choosing the perfect programs.

Those are the programs you can benefit from as you drive the right people to the high-quality products they will be interested in. The integration continues with the following processes:

- Implementing affiliate links in your content
- Optimizing the content with affiliate links
- Content promotion

As you are discovering the potential of affiliate marketing and how this monetization tactic pays off, you will soon stumble upon new products and programs worth exploring and promoting to your target group. Through content performance analysis, you will also be able to see which promotion strategy works best for your content.



Merchants



From the moment your products are available to the customers, affiliate marketing can become one of your promotional strategies. There is no perfect time to wait to get started with this since it is a strategy that runs independently from your other business projects. Follow the guidelines mentioned earlier in the e-book to implement the affiliate marketing seamlessly and focus on:

- Creating and setting up the program
- Developing a strategy to promote the program
- Managing and monitoring the program using affiliate software and network
- These are the crucial tasks in affiliate marketing that merchants will need to take care of in order to get started.

It is important to understand roles and responsibilities in affiliate marketing programs. Here is a summary to remember them.



Vendor



This is the product or service company or a reseller/ channel partner of a brand that puts the affiliate marketing program in place and partners with marketers for sales and revenue sharing.



Marketer



The marketer is the person who needs to sell the affiliated products and services to earn commission on the items. This is typically done through blogs/ online content with links to the product/ service page.



Deal qualifiers



The vendor and the marketer come to an agreement on what qualifies as a successful sale. This may be simple for online products such as software and apps. But it gets more complicated for industries such as e-commerce, where an order once placed may be canceled before or after dispatching the item.



Revenue sharing



Typically, the pay percentage may range between 3% to 50% of the product price, depending on the niche of the industry, brand recall of the product company (less brand awareness equals more pay), and profit margin of the seller that they can afford to share.



Key consideration before making a business decision



I covered many benefits of affiliate marketing. However, like anything in life, affiliate marketing may have some drawbacks. We need to consider these points before starting a program. If you agree with these drawbacks, these points can also help you reduce risks.



Drawbacks of Affiliate Marketing



Like any business model, there are drawbacks and challenges to affiliate marketing.

Time: It takes a commitment and experimenting over a length of time to generate the amount of traffic needed to result in income.

Lost payments: Affiliate hijacking can occur in which you're not given credit for your referral. Some companies fail to pay their affiliate marketers.

Lack of control: You have no control over the businesses' fulfillment of a given product or service. A bad affiliate referral can ruin your credibility with followers, so it's crucial that you research and select quality businesses.

Competition: Affiliate marketing is highly competitive. Many affiliates promote the same products and compete for the same traffic and customers. It can be difficult to get approved as an affiliate for popular companies or products.

Lack of ownership: The customers belong to the merchant. Your stats will let you know how many sales were made of what product, but in most cases, you'll have no information about who made the purchase. This can make it difficult to tap into recurring sales.

To reinforce your learning, reviewing the following chapter about the key terms will be valuable.



Chapter 25 - Glossary



This chapter covers important affiliate marketing terms and concepts used in the book.



AFFILIATE MARKETING



It is a type of marketing that is based on performance. In affiliate marketing, affiliates are paid for successfully promoting a product or a service.

For example, a person running a fashion blog can be an affiliate of a clothes company that wishes to advertise its product on that blog. The affiliate earns money each time they refer a visitor to the company's landing page, i.e., when a blog visitor clicks on that company's ad.



ADVERTISER



Advertiser is a person or organization that owns a business and offers services or products to customers. Advertisers are willing to pay affiliates for each new customer or lead they bring. It helps them promote their brand and acquire new customers.



AFFILIATE



An affiliate is a person or an organization that promotes offers. Affiliates are usually publishers (owners of websites or mobile applications), media buyers, or ad networks. Affiliates are sometimes also called partners, publishers, and external marketers.



AFFILIATE PROGRAM



It is an arrangement in which the advertiser pays commissions to affiliates. The commission model is usually based on actions performed by users. It usually involves a purchase, lead generation, subscription to a service, etc.

The advertiser uses performance tracking software to track users' actions and affiliates that have helped in that process. Many service providers run their own affiliate program, meaning that they buy traffic for themselves to increase their profit.



AFFILIATE NETWORK



An affiliate network acts as an intermediary between affiliates and advertisers. Affiliate networks allow affiliates to easily find and participate in affiliate programs that are suitable for their target audience.

Advertisers who offer affiliate programs work with affiliate networks to reach larger audiences, i.e., all affiliates participating in the affiliate network. An affiliate network is an organization that makes its profit on the difference between revenue from advertisers and costs which they have to pay to affiliates.



OFFER



An offer is promotion of a service or a product. Offers are created by affiliate managers, and they usually contain all relevant information about the payout model and marketing prices. The alternative name for an offer is a campaign.



OFFER URL



The final URL where the visitor will land after clicking the promotion link or banner.



CONVERSION



Conversion is an event generated by a user that an advertiser is willing to pay for.

This is usually a target action of the end-user, defined by the advertiser. It can be a subscription to a service, lead generation, sale of a product, installation of a mobile application.

Conversion is the final goal of advertising for which advertisers pay affiliates.



CLICK-THROUGH RATE (C.T.R.)



C TR is the percentage of clicks for the number of advertising impressions displayed to visitors or bought from other networks.



CONVERSION RATE



Conversion rate is the percentage of clicks that converted, i.e., turned to leads or sales. For example, if one in every hundred visitors to your site makes a purchase, then your conversion rate is 1%.



TRACKING LINK



Tracking link is also called click tracking link or affiliate link. It is a unique URL to which a certain affiliate sends clicks for a particular offer. This is the advertised link, e.g., the link behind the banner. When users click the banner, they go to that specific URL.



POST-BACK URL



This is URL used for server-side conversion tracking; also called server post-back URL or server-to-server URL.



THIRD-PARTY TRACKING



Third-party tracking is a principle of notifying affiliates in real-time for every conversion.

When a new conversion is received, Affiliate Software automatically fires a conversion notification to tracking systems at the affiliate side or other third-party systems.

For example, if an affiliate program or network works with another affiliate network, each valid post-back can be forwarded to that affiliate network.



CREATIVE



Creative refers to advertisement in a more narrow sense, i.e. banner. There are many types of banner ads. Choosing the right type depends on the advertising channel, target audience, and advertising message.



AD TAG



Ad tag is an HTML element that is used to display ads by dynamically fetching them from an ad server. Sometimes it is also called ad snippet.



AFFILIATE MANAGER



a person who communicates with affiliates. Affiliate managers often — create offers and take care of maximizing the performance of the affiliate program.



REFERRAL BONUS PROGRAM



a special type of payout awarded to affiliates who brought new affiliates to the affiliate program. For each referred affiliate they can receive a fixed-price sign-up commission and a percentage of their total earnings in a given period.



CLIENT-BASED TRACKING



a tracking method in which information is stored on the user's computer.
— A cookie is saved in the user's browser when they click on an ad and then linked back to the affiliate which brought the user.

After the user completes a conversion on a page, the tracking platform records a conversion for the proper affiliate using a piece of tracking code called a tracking pixel. This pixel is sometimes called an impression pixel or iFrame pixel, depending on which of these two methods are used. Client-based tracking is simpler to implement on the advertiser's side but is less accurate since it employs cookies.



S2S TRACKING



a tracking method based on sending post-backs from advertiser's systems to an affiliate tracking software. Advertisers have to support this type of tracking on their back-end. This makes it more technically complex than client-based tracking, but it is more accurate, provides better security and greater flexibility.



LANDING PAGE



a website or webpage to which affiliates refer traffic. For example, when users click on banners, they are redirected to a landing page that provides more information about the product advertised on that banner (usually with purchase options).

The main purpose of a landing page is to complete an action. It can be a purchase, service sign-up, download, or any similar action that has a certain value for the advertiser.



COST PER ACTION (C.P.A.)



A payment model according to which advertisers pay their affiliates for
— conversions only.



PAY PER CLICK (P.P.C.)



Closely related to C.P.C., P.P.C. stands for pay-per-click and refers to a model in which advertisers pay a fee for each click on one of their ads.



COST PER CLICK (C.P.C.)



A payment model according to which advertisers pay their affiliates for — each click their online ads receive.



Pixel



A tracking pixel is a code snippet that allows the tracking of visitor behavior on a website. When a user visits a website, a pixel is loaded.

Tracking pixels let advertisers acquire data for online marketing, web analysis, or email marketing.



NICHE MARKETING



a type of marketing focused on a specific group of consumers. A well-defined niche enables marketers to create more personalized campaigns that will yield better results.



AD BLOCKER



- the technology that prevents online ads from displaying on a website.
- Since ad blocking is on the rise, IAB has launched its L.E.A.N. program to make ads better and, therefore, encourage users to give up adblocking.



E.P.C.



Earnings per click are what you earn on average for each unique click sent. If you earn 1.000 and have 10.000 clicks, your E.P.C. will be 10%

$$\text{Earnings} \div \text{number of unique clicks} = \text{E.P.C.}$$



ATTRIBUTION



 the process of identifying which affiliates are driving conversions.



LEAD



 a contact that has the potential to become a customer.



L.R.



Lead rate is the percentage of leads received from the total number of unique clicks. If 1.000 unique clicks have turned in to 10 leads, your L.R. is 1%. $\text{Leads} \div \text{number of unique clicks} = \text{L.R.}$



SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)



- the process of getting a better ranking on search engine results pages.
- The purpose is to achieve higher visibility and attract more traffic (visits) to a website, resulting in more sales or leads.



Tracking link



A tracking link, often referred to as an affiliate link, is a unique URL to which an affiliate sends an audience for a particular offer.



S.E.M.



Search engine marketing can include search engine optimization, paid ads, and other search engine-related services.



About The Author



Dr Mehmet Yildiz is a published author, editor, blogger, digital marketing strategist, and content developer with four decades of industry experience. You can contact him via his writing platform digitalmehmet.com. Dr Yildiz also is the owner and editor of multiple significant publications on [Medium](https://medium.com), writes articles for [News Break](https://newsbreak.com) and [Vocal Media](https://vocalmedia.com).

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