Affiliate Program Mastery

AFFILIATE

MARKETING

MASTERY

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GET A LOYAL ARMY OF AFFILIATES TO SEND YOU BOAT LOADS
OF TRAFFIC WITHOUT PAYING THEM A DIME UNTIL
THEY MAKE YOU A PROFIT!

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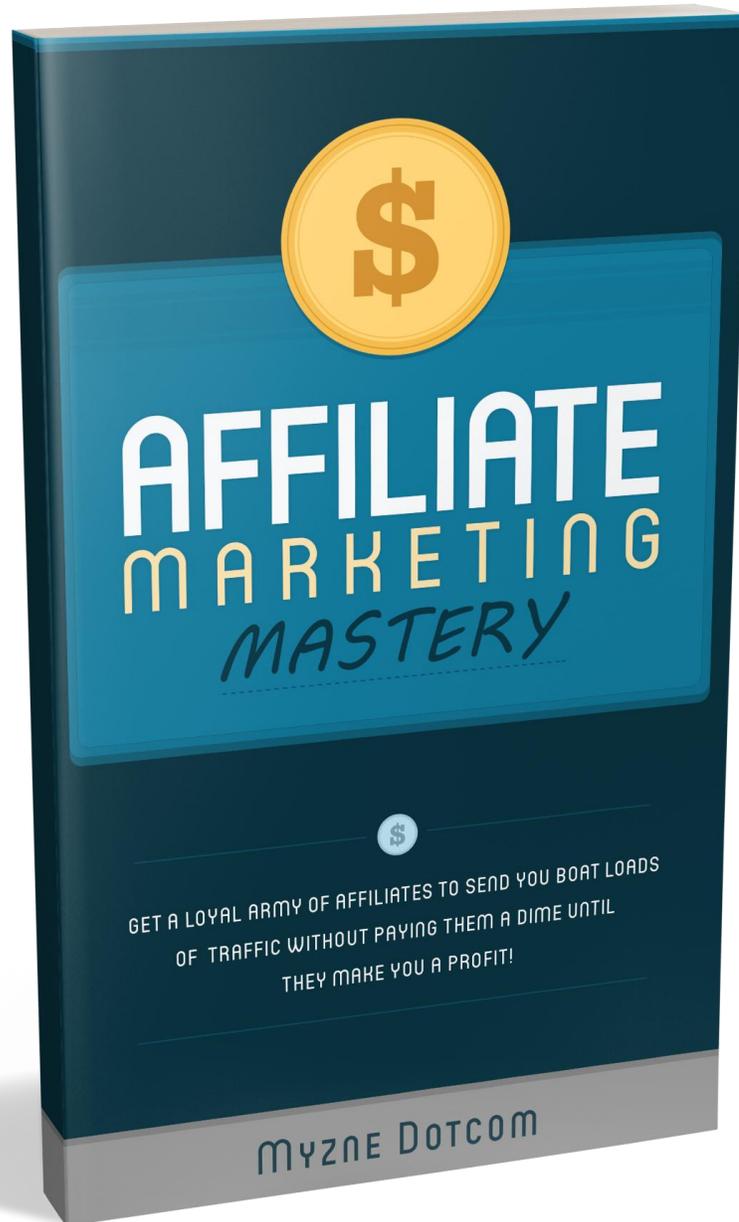
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THE BASICS TO ATTRACT TOP AFFILIATE PARTNERS

Creating a program that attracts top affiliates is one of the most rewarding ways to increase your bottom line and decrease your own work load. It provides you with the advantage of having a large "sales force" that works for you, but you don't have to pay them by the hour or employ them on salary. Affiliates that help to sell your products are as precious as a hard-working employee, though, in that they can bring in massive traffic to your website, generating sales leads and actual product sales. And, all they ask in return is that you make it easy for them to share in the profits of your success, at a generous rate of return. For the advantages that affiliates provide, their commission is well worth every penny.

The problem, though, that many new Internet marketers find (when they first start to create an affiliate program) is that it is easy to start, but not so easy to motivate their affiliate partners to continue with them long-term. There are so many competing affiliate programs that if your program is not generating the types of returns your affiliates desire, or if it is much harder to operate, your affiliate partners may decide to go somewhere else where the take is easier or fatter. So, you do want to implement a great program, but you also want to include strategies that help develop and keep your affiliates happy. For that, let's try to look into the mind of an average affiliate partner to see what it is they want out of any affiliate program.

WHAT YOUR AFFILIATE PARTNER WANTS FROM YOU

Your affiliate partners are generally going to find your affiliate offer at an affiliate bank that you've joined, whether it's clickbank, shareasale, or commission junction. An affiliate bank will list multiple affiliate offers that publishers looking to join a program will be able to search online and view.

So, already, we know that your potential affiliate partners are very well aware of your competition and can compare your offer to another very easily, without even leaving their seat. So, you have to know what types of incentives appeal to a potential affiliate partner, so that when they eventually choose a program, it will be your program, and not the competition's program.

First of all, it can't be repeated enough, affiliate partners are looking for two things the most with an affiliate program: To increase their income and to reduce their work load. Did you notice something about that? Isn't that two of your primary goals as an Internet marketer too? Well, now, you know! You're both in this venture together, and that's why they call it a partnership, and not something else. Your affiliate partner will work very hard for you if you can show them how they can make more money on your program than on other affiliate offers and how your program is far easier than others to implement. In return, your program should also provide you with additional income and less work because the system will be set up to divvy up the work to your affiliate partners in ways that are manageable and trackable.

INCREASING INCOME

There are a variety of ways to increase income opportunities for your affiliates. The most obvious is to offer a higher commission than your competitors, but that's not the only way. If you offer a high commission on a product that has a small market niche on the Internet, it doesn't matter if your commission rate is 100% if no one is interested in buying it. That's why you have to focus on what your affiliates want: They want affiliate offers that match their market niche.

Niche It!

So, before you even go out of your way to create an affiliate program for a website that is not going to be profitable, do a little research. Find out if you have a good chance of attracting many different affiliates who have an interest in this niche. There are numerous ways to do this, one would be to look at the Google Adwords Keyword Tool to see how many people are searching a particular topic, and the other is to simply check out the offers in the affiliate bank to see how many competitors found that niche to be profitable. The more affiliate offers there are for a particular category, the more likelihood it is a profitable niche, but also the harder it can be to attract affiliates from the same pool of people.

In this ebook, we are focusing mainly on Internet marketing websites, and that is a very HOT topic for 2009. You will see that there are numerous people who want to learn how to earn money online as the local economy they might be in suffers difficulties. But, you can still opt to have a laser-like niche that targets just the right cohort of advertisers out there by doing a bit

of upfront research by viewing what your competition promotes or checking out some keyword phrases and their popularity at http:// No doubt people looking for affiliate programs will want something that complements their SEO strategies too.

BE CREATIVE WITH PROGRAM STRUCTURE!

Next, you want to create an affiliate program that can provide the maximum income generating opportunity for your affiliates. However, you don't want to rely solely on offering large commissions. For one thing, a large commission may be great, but if you set it up as a one-time payout, it's not as great as establishing a program that creates re-curring income for your affiliate partners. And, one thing most people who are trying to make money on the Internet want is a way to keep making money from something they've set up and left to work on it's own, without much fussing. So, maybe the first month it doesn't make much, but as they continue to attract traffic to their sites, they will start to see more sales, and if those sales are tracked to provide income over 3, 4, or even 12 months after they referred a client to you, then you can expect that feature in your program to be of a very high value to your affiliate partners.

Another typical way to provide passive income to your affiliate partners is to offer multilevel affiliate programs. The most common is a two-tier program. In this model, you will give the affiliate partner who makes a referral or sale to your website a high commission and then if they sign someone else up to be an affiliate too in your program, instead of sending a customer, you can offer them a second tier of income based on what that affiliate ends up making in your program. Since this is income they don't even have to work for to get, two-tier programs are very attractive and can help you to increase the number of people involved in your affiliate program.

So, for instance, say you have a first tier that pays out 60%, with a 3 month cookie tracking mechanism for further commissions during that period, and a second tier that pays out 10% for the life of that affiliate. If the person referring an affiliate makes a sale that's low on the first tier, but manages to sign up an affiliate who is a genius at promoting your products, they can make far more from the second tier than the first tier, even with a lower commission rate. And, they don't have to add links, post banners, or do any of the work an affiliate would normally do to collect that commission. All they have to do is refer to you some really great affiliate partners!

<u>REDUCE THEIR WORK LOAD</u>

Next to increasing their income opportunities, the second priority for affiliate partners is to reduce their work load. If they find out that they have to create

their own banners and links and that it takes them quite a bit of time, in comparison to your other competitors, this will be an immediate turn off. Try to make everything in your program as simple and as efficient as possible.

EASY ENROLLMENT

The enrollment to your program should be incredibly easy. Don't try to limit who can join up as this is counter-productive in the short run. You can set up an affiliate program with a number of different affiliate managers and they can make the actual mechanics of an affiliate program very simple for the people that sign up. By signing up to the affiliate bank that the manage owns, your potential affiliate partners will be able to quickly see your offers and use the links provided by the partner to embed your offers in their websites.

GREAT TOOLS

Do think about offering promotional tools and training to your affiliates to help them make the most of the money-making opportunities without getting lost in the details. They aren't just going to use links to your products to sell your offerings, so think about the entire advertising program they might implement and help to make their lives easier by providing tools and feature that they can quickly install into their next marketing campaign.

The types of tools that will help them are the things that will reduce their work. So, for instance, if they need an article or review on your product, make sure they know where to get it on your website and let them know it is free to copy and put into their website. You may also want to do some keyword research for them, to help them link their Google campaign to your products and create more income and traffic on their sites. In the end, this will translate to more income and traffic to your site as more of your impromptu sales force dominates the Internet with your offers.

HASSLE-FREE AND FREQUENT PAY OUTS

There are a number of programs that require a minimum amount to be accrued before they pay out. Even if that payout is something as small as $30, the fact that the affiliate partner has to wait an excessive amount of time for it can defeat any motivational programs you have put in place. Let's face it, the biggest motivators for people who you sign up is going to be the money and if the money just sort of sits in an account, inaccessible until somebody makes a sale that tops $30 in commission, it can be months before they see their first pay out.

Added to that discouraging note, some programs don't even pay monthly! Some pay every three months, or quarterly. So, imagine you are the affiliate

marketer who has busted your butt trying to get over $30 in sales by March 1st to qualify for the pay out, and only made $29.95. Well, they've just worked three months, if they've started three months ago, and they still won't see a pay out until the next quarter, a full six months from when they started! Obviously, that affiliate partner will most likely walk away rather than wait for pay outs that are being held up by what they perceive to be as unjust rules to keep them from getting their money.

And, you can expect that many of your affiliate partners will be slow to start out because it takes time to generate traffic and sales. And, yet, you want to keep them motivated by showing them the money. So, it's really not a bad idea to try to make those pay outs as soon as they are accrued or as frequently as possible to keep your affiliates highly motivated. Once they see even $5 going from their affiliate account to their bank or PayPal, they will know it is possible to earn money with your program and very quickly too!

They will re-double their efforts and fine-tune their advertising strategies to make sure that the next pay out is even larger! So, how you pay your affiliate partners is just as important as what they get paid. Always try to make sure you are meeting your affiliate partners needs and keep them highly motivated to sell your products for you and retain them long-term.

2
TRAINING YOUR AFFILIATES FOR MAXIMUM PERFORMANCE

We briefly talked about the importance of providing tools and training to your affiliates to make them join you as a full partner in your business venture. And, that's what these people are: your business partners. Anything you do to bring them closer to you and your business goals, the better it will be in the end for both of you. So, you need to set up a training program from the start that will guide your affiliate partners into the best way to highlight your products and services. This training program should start from the moment they sign up, and continue there on after.

Many Internet marketers make the mistake of just contacting their affiliate partners once when they sign up (to acknowledge their registration) and another time when they are being notified of payment. That's really not enough to develop the type of relationship that will help get you peak performance.

It's up to you to take control of your affiliate program and literally mentor and guide your affiliates to be top producers for you. After all, who knows your products and services best – them or you? You do! So, they will welcome any advice you have to help them sell your products more efficiently. For this, you do want to provide them with tools, but the backbone of your affiliate training should be effective communication.

STAY IN CONTACT

So, once you have an affiliate sign up, that's not the end of your contact with them until they get paid, that's the beginning. You want to, of course, welcome them to your affiliate program, and also let them know that you are available to talk anytime they need help or have a question. Maybe you have an FAQ from prior affiliates that you can direct them to, to get them started. However, make it clear that you welcome and appreciate their feedback and questions and will do your best to respond to them promptly. This will give your virtual office an "open door" feel that will encourage more participation and camaraderie from your affiliates. When you value them as human beings, and not just cogs in your affiliate system, they will value you and you

begin to create the makings of a personal business relationship, even though it is online.

Another great way to stay in contact is to do a series of training videos that they can download online in a special affiliate members only section of your website. You can do one on the best ways to implement the program, what your leading products are, how to attract traffic, and/or what other tools and services you offer. Make the videos short and sweet. Remember that Internet marketers are pretty busy people. They want to learn, but they don't want to get a degree from you. Most of these people will already have a good idea about how to implement an affiliate program, so make sure you have several different levels: beginners, intermediate, and advanced tutorials.

Besides different levels of information available, the idea is to use as many different formats as necessary to get your message across. The videos are great for visual and audio learners, but some people won't have time to sit through a video or want a transcript so that they can highlight things on paper. So, provide a written transcript of the same material for those people who learn more through kinesthetic interactions, like holding a piece of paper in their hands.

It's a well known fact that many of the affiliates who sign up for your program may never get around to actually placing links on their site. They may be busy, have forgotten, or moved on to another niche. Either way, without sending out reminders that they are involved in your program, they will completely forget about you. So, stay in contact and flash some dollar signs in front of their eyes to get them motivated. If they see the potential for income, they will be more motivated to finally start implementing the program they signed up for. And, you don't have to be pushy to do this either, you just simply send them the materials they need to get them started, like a free report showing "The Top 10 Ways To Make Money With Our Program In 2009." As long as you are sending out reminders, they will have you in the forefront of their mind and be learning until they're ready to start.

GIVE THEM FREE CONTENT

Another way to really appeal to your affiliates is to offer them free content for their site. Webmasters are always looking for content and appreciate pre-made content, particularly if it's going to help them make a sale. Again, you know your products better than they do, so why write up a few articles comparing your products to others, as a product review, with the affiliate links built in? Then, all they have to do is change the affiliate id and post it to their website and they are done.

Content isn't just about articles, it's also about sales pages and short product descriptions. Anything that makes your products stand out and get those visitors to click is going to be appreciated by your affiliates. So, maybe you've created a video that shows a sample marketing strategy for one of your offers. You show them how to collect the sales lead (email) and then how to market with an autoresponder email, that you also provide. From there, you may or may not get a sale, but if they click on the link they should end up on a convincing sales page.

Well, why make the affiliate advertiser create that too? You probably have plenty of those lying around! If not, there are a number of software packages that can create unique versions of a sales page for each affiliate that wants one, using different templates. Just send those to your affiliates too and all they have to do is add their affiliate id to the links. They now have a professional sales page, an email autoresponder campaign, and maybe even a few articles – all written and developed by you to entice visitors to buy your products! Believe me, your affiliates will love you for providing the makings a full marketing campaign and making their lives easier.

HELP THEM UNDERSTAND YOUR BUSINESS CYCLE

If you sell diamonds, you know that Valentine's and Christmas are great holidays to ramp up the advertising. People associate diamonds with romance and gifts. However, there are other reasons people buy diamonds, and that also affects your business cycle. They buy them to celebrate anniversaries and to propose marriage. So, those special events are also associated with diamonds. If you set up an affiliate program, don't assume your affiliate advertisers know what events and timing will trigger sales. Educate them to make sure they understand your particular business cycle.

So, sometime in January, you want to tell them to start aiming for Valentine's Day. Send them what the latest styles are, what is most popular, what are the growing sales trends, and then provide them with the tools necessary to capitalize on that information.

No matter what you sell, there is usually some business cycle where you tend to throw more advertising and specials in front of customers than at other times. Even if there is no unique driver, like selling rain barrels in a drought, there are the classic spending holidays like Christmas that you need to prepared to take advantage of. So, if you are already preparing your own marketing strategies and campaigns for yourself, why not include your affiliate advertisers too? This way, you will educate them on how to best sell your products for you.

SPECIFIC TOOLS TO MAKE IT EASY FOR THEM

We'll go over here the specific tools to help you stay in contact and motivate your affiliate partners:

- **Your custom banners**
  Set up your own graphics to make it easy for them to add different types of banners to their pages. You may want a few different color schemes and sizes to help them fit into different websites seamlessly. Your banners should have product information too, so they don't have to write out descriptions or promote different packages. The banner should say it all.

- **Your product links**
  These also can be made very descriptive and persuasive to be mini-sales copy that will help them sell your products and services and make a commission. You can have individual product links and sets of links for products that sell well together, for cross sell opportunities.

- **Your affiliate button sign ups**
  Don't forget to give them sign up tools for sub-affiliates and remember to promote a two-tier program to get them excited about this money-making opportunity.

- **Different versions of sales letter**
  Maybe you want to make it easy for them to contact their email lists with a particular offer you've just set up. Provide them with sales letters they can cut and paste into their group email. Just remind them not to spam people as that can get you in trouble with the law these days, and it's poor marketing anyways.

- **Monthly newsletter**
  If you want to be sure your affiliates are keeping up with the strategies to sell your products, send them a monthly newsletter. It should include tips and hints on how to increase their pay outs. It can even feature those affiliates that are in the "top 10" or something similar, to motivate others to compete against one another. It can also give notice about contests and bonuses you may be setting up to help motivate the affiliates to stay focused and engaged.

- **Training videos, transcripts, and hints and tips emails**
  You want to be able to reach people the way they learn best: audio, visual, or kinesthetic learners. So, by offering the same content in different formats, the message is bound to get through. Plus, your affiliates will be better trained.

- **Virtual group meetings**
  This is one area that more Internet marketers will use in 2009 to not only provide feedback, but get feedback from their affiliates. It's very easy to do online by setting up a chat room or virtual meeting space where everyone can hash out what's working and what's not and give their 2 cents worth.

- **Special affiliate area on your website**
  Offer an area where your affiliates can log in and see archived information from years past, get into a discussion forum where other affiliate partners can offer tips and advice, or just be able to log a help request. Just make sure that you are maintaining that area so that it serves a productive purpose and doesn't become an area where people just come to complain.

FINALLY, REWARD YOUR TOP PRODUCERS

There's no better way to train people than to reward them for producing the results you want. They get positive feedback and you give others the incentive to meet or exceed the same high bar set by your top producers. You can spotlight them in your newsletter, or send out a congratulations email to the list and let them know that you are someone who recognizes hard work and is willing to reward it by either increasing the commission level, giving out a special bonus, assigning a special status, or some other affiliate perk. Then, you can make it a point to suggest that this bonus or special commission will be available to others who obtain the same milestone. It sets a good tone for your affiliate group and helps people compete against each other, while cooperating on other fronts to help each other achieve those milestones.

3
THE IMPORTANCE OF MULTIPLE PAY OPTIONS

We briefly discussed the importance of paying your affiliates often and well, and that's very good advice. However, there are so many different pay options that can be used to motivate your sales affiliates, that it deserves it's own chapter. After all, what you pay your affiliates is an expense to you, even if it is motivational, and you don't want to give away the store just to get your affiliates to put up a link on their site. So, it's going to be a little bit of trial and error to get the right pay options that provide enough incentive to your affiliates to get maximum performance while not robbing you of your own hard earned income.

FIRST TIER COMMISSIONS

When you first start you don't want to immediately put out a high commission in a niche that may not be highly competitive. Even if it is highly competitive, this isn't the only thing that affiliates will look at to determine if they want to join. So, you can start by offering a 50% commission and then upping it, if you don't get a response with your creative offer. The offer should include a two-tier program with the possibility of passive income from sub-affiliates. You should also be sure to let your affiliates know that they will collect commissions for a set length of time, like a month, three months, or more. By setting up a creative offer, you can start with only giving a 50% commission on digital products that cost little for you to produce. Other products may be less if they are more expensive for you to produce, but anything over 50% commissions is going to be attractive to affiliate partners.

PAYOUT TYPES

You also have the ability to set up programs with three different types of payment options:

- **Pay-per-lead**
  This is given to affiliates who get referrals to sign up for a

newsletter, fill out a survey, or complete some action that results in a sales lead for you.

- **Pay-per-click**
This is a commission for clicks on your links that affiliates have embedded in your site. They don't have to result in a sale, although they can later lead to a sale if you are tracking cookies for that affiliate. Then, they might get pay-per-click income and pay-per-sale income too.

- **Pay-per-sale**
This is a commission that is based on the sales level of a customer that is referred to you by your affiliate partner. It can even have multiple levels in that you can set higher pay-per-sale commission structures for selling more.

A good affiliate program will have a mixture of these three types, as some affiliates want instant payments from pay-per-clicks and are more motivated that way. Others, are interested in fatter returns and are willing to wait, so they will build up interest in your products and actively target higher commission priced products. And, if you offer pay-per-lead, some might do it just to get some additional income in new ways.

Typically, pay-per-sale will pay out more, but will be harder for affiliates to generate. Only a small percentage of people who click on the links will actually buy. So, they may want a program that rewards them both for getting the customer to click and then to buy. Obviously, you want to get leads and sales, so you will try to get them excited by pay-per-lead and pay-per-sale options by offering them more cash incentives with these.

So, a mixed option program might have 50% sales commission and only .10 cents for each lead. Pay-per-click are generally even lower, paying out a few cents per click, as there is no guarantee these people will convert to customers or subscribers. In addition, you might reward your better affiliates by giving out higher commissions for those that generate more sales. So, if they make 100 sales in one month, maybe they make it to the 55% commission bracket.

PAYMENT PROCESSORS

How you process and track clicks, leads, and sales, is a function of the affiliate software or third party affiliate manager you are using. Some of these also use specific payment processors that can affect how frequently you pay out and the minimum needed to accrue to pay out. Some will

integrate with PayPal or Stormpay, which are very popular with Internet marketers. And, they do work well to create an atmosphere where you immediately pay the affiliates their pay outs upon generating income, without too much delay, however, you will have to make sure your software or affiliate manager doesn't limit this ability significantly. It's very important that you pay our affiliates as quickly as they start generating income to keep them motivated.

Some Internet marketers might try sending out checks, using direct deposit, or other payment processing tools, but they also can be expensive to implement, especially if you are tracking and dividing up commissions. So, getting a third party solution or script that automates this for you is a good thing to have on hand. But, that's only easy to implement if you are also implementing your own affiliate program and not using an affiliate manager that has their own system.

USING YOUR OWN AFFILIATE PROGRAM

If you have a shopping cart already on your website, then you want an affiliate program that can be integrated with that shopping cart. You also want to be able to control the affiliates database so that you can contact your affiliates and motivate them with personal emails and private trainings. So, you might want to look at the following affiliate programs, rather than using an affiliate manager like commission junction to have better control of payment program and your contacts database.

- **AffiliateShop**
  This particular program will give you the option to use any one of the three payout options (pay-per-lead, pay-per-click, and pay-per-sale) or even create a program with a combination of the three. It works well with many different shopping cart systems and you can export the affiliate database so that you track your affiliates yourself and keep in contact with them. It does cost $395 to buy, and after that there is a $45 monthly fee, but it can be a very quick way to get your own system up very quickly, sometimes in less than a day.

- **Interneka**
  This is similar to AffiliateShop, with many of the same features. It is a popular affiliate software package that many Internet marketers use.

- **ShareASale**
  Another very popular software package that can be integrated with your website is called ShareASale. It has over 700 merchants in its system and can give you a combination of different programs.

Each of these should be researched well ahead of time before deciding on any system. You do want a system that is flexible with payment and also with your ability to directly contact your affiliates so that you can train them better.

AN ADDITIONAL SCRIPT OF NOTE

If you are going the route of installing your own affiliate program on your website, there is another script of note that can facilitate this: www.rapidactionprofits.com. This script will help you to develop not only the marketing strategy to use for different products and affiliates, but also you will have some very creative options for payouts that tie directly into Paypal.

One option, upon ordering and installing this script, is to pay out 100% of every other payment to your affiliates. That would be similar to a 50% commission structure, although the 100% is what your affiliates will read. They will be happy to get immediate payments and at 100%.

Another creative way to use this script is to offer 100% commission on specific products in your line-up. These aren't to generate income, but to generate sales leads for you. Generally, you want these tied to infoproducts that cost you very little to produce and nothing to deliver too, so that you don't end up losing a lot of money if there is a high demand. The 100% commission will make affiliates sit up and take notice and it's one way to fatten up both your affiliate sign up rate, and to generate multiple sales leads too.

CREATE MULTIPLE LEVELS AND MULTIPLE PROGRAMS

You want to create two-tier programs to generate passive income for your affiliates and create wider exposure for you on the Internet. In addition, you can create multiple levels of payment depending on performance, thus rewarding your top performers automatically upon reaching a set sales goal.

You can create multiple affiliate programs for different websites that you own and track what works best on each and start to learn how to implement those strategies on other sites.

If you do have multiple levels and programs, be sure to tell your affiliates about them. They need to be constantly reminded that you are there and

willing to reward them for peak performance. Don't be afraid to experiment and see what motivates your affiliates and then use that information to fine-tune the program as you go along.

4
MORE STRATEGIES TO MOTIVATE AFFILIATES

While affiliate marketing can be hard work, there's no reason you can't make it fun. When people find something fun, they're more apt to stay involved and to try harder. Instituting sales campaigns, contests, and other promotions, can help you to increase the level of participation of your affiliates, as well as, get them aligned with whatever offers you are trying to promote on your own site.

Of all these strategies, contests are, by far, the most popular with affiliates. Contests can take many forms and so we will go over different types of contests that might suit your particular affiliate program. While a contest is the optimal way to introduce a bit of fun and raise participation level, it may not be the easiest thing to implement online. So, you may need to hire third-party programmers to help you get a particular type of contest off the ground. But, once you have the basics in place, you should be able to re-use that format for other contests later in the life your business.

Before we get to the contests, let's go over some simple sales campaigns that can also be an affective way to motivate your affiliates, without too much of an additional technological or tracking burden.

CREATIVE SALES CAMPAIGNS

These are pretty easy to implement and you don't need to add things to your website to track them because they are usually based on sales, either dollar amount or number of sales. The idea is to create a campaign to really motivate your affiliates to outperform each other, by adding an element of competition to the offer.

FOCUS ON SALES OR BOTTOM LINE OFFERS

In one such offer, you might make each affiliate an offer that for a particular month or quarter, you are going to track the number of sales for each affiliate. Of course, your affiliate managing software already does that, and that means you don't have to do anything extra, or hire anyone to program a

contest for you. The idea of the creative offer is different though. You are going to track the "most improved" affiliate to give them a bonus. So, if an affiliate only made one sale before the first quarter, and then made 2, they've had a gain of 100%! So, even the slow affiliates can be motivated this way. You can set up different categories besides "most improved" to keep the super affiliates you have signed up in the game too. You might want to reward them differently. You can take your cue from the way people are recognized in sports games: MVP (most valuable player), for instance. You decide what criteria makes them the MVP and then you can reward them with a bonus or prize for meeting that criteria.

Another way to institute a creative offer is to base it on the dollar amount sold for a specific period of time. This works great for times when you are really trying to motivate high sales because of special occasions: a product roll-out, a major holiday, or a close-out sale. These can work well to keep everyone focused and on target to promote the products and items that you are promoting.

MORE INTRICATE OFFERS

Most of these offers require only setting up a spreadsheet to track all sales or dollar amounts per affiliate (typically calculated by your affiliate management software) and an email address to contact your affiliates to keep them informed on how the contest is going. That makes this type of promotion much easier to implement than a contest, but there's no reason, you can set the offer up competitively, to feel like a contest, without having a contest theme.

One example of that may be an offer to reward people with products, cash, or awards for doing certain actions. You might have a list of 20 things you want affiliates to do for you, to help you promote your products. This is a lot harder to track because you will have to double-check anyone who claims they've completed these actions to make sure it's true. But, it still only requires email, a web browser, and a spreadsheet. So, for all 20 done, they might get some cash. For 10 out of the 20 they might get some products from you.

For even getting one done, you might offer them a free video download, which can clue them into how to better promote your products and be informative and fun too. This type of offer will take a lot longer to track because you are asking for specific actions, like putting a link in a particular place, writing a product review, or anything that will help to promote your affiliate offerings. However, if all of the affiliates just did 1 out of the 20, you'd still end up motivating them more and getting more out of them.

Recruiting contests are a very effective way to get more affiliates, if that's your goal, and they don't require any special technology, since your affiliate

managing program already tracks that information. All you have to do is track it for all your affiliates on a spreadsheet. If you have very few affiliates, you can sponsor a contest that will give an affiliate that signs up the most affiliates a prize. You can have a runner up prize too, in case someone looms ahead of the crowd and kills the competition before it gets off the ground.

<u>CONTESTS</u>

Let's move on to implementing contests. As we mentioned earlier, this is going to take a little more forethought, planning, and technical skills. Typically, you may have the server set up to process entries automatically so that you can have a variety of different ways to win, and not just one way. It makes it more exciting to affiliates if they know that just for entering a contest, whether they do well or not, they might win something.

Here are some types of contests that can be fun and entertaining, that your visitors can play too, while motivating your affiliates to perform better:

- **Instant Win**
  This is sort like the scratch off lottery tickets that create an instant rush of adrenaline for winning. They are typically easy for people to play with and give anyone, randomly, the opportunity to win something of value. This is a really popular type of contest, but you will have to set it up to mimic a scratch off game online, or something similar. Obviously, it requires some programming to work automatically.

- **Scavenger Hunts**
  You can set up a scavenger hunt online for visitors, or one specifically for your affiliates. They would either have to go through the pages on your website to get the answers, or maybe the clues are in a newsletter they have to read to play. One way to do this online is to hide some icon on your website, on different pages at different times, and that is what allows them to enter a drawing for a prize. Or, you can have the entry form ask them where different things are on the site and you provide a drop-down list of different options for the correct answer. When they have all of the right answers, then they get to be entered in the drawing. So, if you are trying to get affiliates to look at specific product pages, understand different topics in your forums, or pay attention to a particular article in your newsletter, this is a way to motivate them to do it.

- **Trivia Quizzes**
  This is a way for people to show off how smart they are or how well they are paying attention to your affiliate program. You can set up the

contest to reward those who have been faithfully watching your videos, reading your newsletters, or know what the best way is to promote your products, based on information you passed on earlier. You can even add a bonus question, totally unrelated, to make it fun. Whoever gets the answers right might end up with a prize or it can be a way to enter into a bigger drawing at the end of the contest.

As you can see, these are quite a bit more complex in tracking the participants and getting the entire process automated. However, they are very highly popular strategies to drive traffic to your site and add an element of fun to your competitions. But, you do have to be much more careful when you set up a contest, then when you just make an affiliate group an offer. The reasons for that can be legal too.

LEGAL ISSUES OF CONTESTS

There is much more to organizing and planning a contest that has special features, as in the examples above. You not only have to hire someone to program it into your website, but you also have to set up the rules very clearly, so that there can be no misunderstanding of what a participant is eligible to receive or not, depending on the criteria you've set. You don't want to set up a contest with a juicy prize and later get sued by a participant who feels they should have won. So, be very careful when setting these types of offers up.

Have a legal person review the criteria and make sure that you are in compliance with any state and Federal laws that might regulate a contest, even if it's on the Internet. When you publish the rules for your contest, you will have to give out specific information information to comply with these regulations. You will want to have a description of the prizes available, their approximate value, and the odds of winning the contest. You'll also have to publish the list of winners or tell people where they can obtain that information. You want clear guidelines on the timeframe of the contest and any restrictions in giving out prizes, age of participation, or location of participant. As you can see, it's not that straightforward to set up a contest and get one off the ground. Seek the advice of a legal professional before proceeding too far with a concept that might not even be legal.

COST VERSUS BENEFIT CONSIDERATIONS

Contests can also get expensive fairly quickly, what with paying for programming and giving out prizes. So, be sure to evaluate the degree to

which the implementation of a contest is going to further your Internet marketing goals. Do a cost/benefit analysis to make sure you aren't digging a financial hole for yourself. There are some benefits to a contest that have no real monetary value, but can increase the effectiveness of your over all affiliate program.

Things like creating a sense of community for your affiliates is not something you can put a dollar value on, and may be high on your list of goals. So, decide how much you are willing to pay to meet that goal and that way, you know whether your money is well spent or not. If you keep the contest limited to your affiliates, you are going to reduce some of your costs, but also the participation. If you open the contest to anyone, then, it can work to give you a significant increase in traffic and generate great publicity for your website and offers.

However, the downside is that you can't target the contest to help train your affiliates as everyone will be involved. So, there are pros and cons to any strategy you take when implementing a contest. You need to think through what your goals are and then aim the contest at that. If you really only want to improve the performance of your affiliates, and not so much interested in rewarding loyal customers that you have on your site, then close the contest and make it only available to affiliates. It will be easier to manage this way too.

If you find that the contest was a hit with affiliates, you might try a different contest for your customers based on the same format. So, in a way, your affiliates can also serve as a test audience for the technology and contest theme that you decide to set up. If you get positive feedback and greater participation from your affiliates, more sales, etc. , then you know you can tweak that same package and create a similar contest for customers to create some of the same goals there. And, the beauty of that approach is that you'll have already test-driven the software, the rules, and clarified the program to make the second roll-out practically error-free, and highly enjoyable for everyone.

5
HOW TO PROMOTE YOUR AFFILIATE PROGRAM ON THE INTERNET

When you first start, before even a single affiliate has signed up, you may be facing the challenge of trying to generate sign ups and buzz for your program, without having it be already popular. It seems like a Catch-22, but it doesn't have to be. As an Internet marketer, many of the same techniques that you use to sell your products and services online can be used to sell your affiliate program to potential interested parties.

One of the keys to getting people to buy your products or services, and to sign up for your affiliate program, is advertising. Without advertising on the Internet, no one will find out about your affiliate program, so it's the first step to getting the word out about your program. Most of what we're going to cover in this chapter is how to use different advertising strategies to draw people in from other areas of the Internet back to your site. However, before we do that, let's discuss the advertising tools you need to create to make sure that you get attention on the Internet.

ADVERTISING TOOLS

Here is a list of a few, some we've already discussed, and a few more too:

- **Domain name**
  Pick a domain name that is easy to remember, functional, and not to hard to type out. Don't pick something that has no relation to your products and services. Remember that people looking for your products, services, or affiliate programs, will be looking for specific niches.

- **Affiliate program links**
  You should advertise your affiliate program by placing a link on your website, and asking people to join up. Make sure the affiliate program is as easy as possible to get signed up for and don't limit it. You should also try to set up links in your email signatures and newsletters to

advertise your affiliate program to your customers, who can be some of your best affiliates.

- **Join affiliate directories**
  This can cost you some to put your affiliate program up in third-party directories, but it gets you massive exposure to their marketing network where affiliate marketers are present in large numbers. So, think about adding a few affiliate directories to your advertising budget.

- **Create eye-catching banners and buttons**
  Don't assume your affiliates are going to graphic artists or be willing to create banners for you. Instead, offer a selection of different images that the people who sign up to your affiliate program can use to advertise either your affiliate program or your products.

- **Multiple sales pages**
  Provide your affiliates with multiple sales pages they can edit with their affiliate id and post, and thus get the offer up in record time.

- **Sample emails and marketing programs**
  You want your affiliates to send out information to their email lists about your products. Why not have some sample emails they can use to generate business for your products? All they have to do is add their own contact list, edit the affiliate id and they're done. If you even talk to them about how to effectively email market, they will be more likely to make sales this way.

- **Your contact information**
  Make sure your affiliates and those interested in being your affiliates know that you are easily approached and have an "open door" policy. This will help you to get to know them better and create a true partnership with them.

WAYS TO ATTRACT ATTENTION ONLINE

Aside from the tools that you need to make it easy for people to implement advertising for your affiliate program and products, you will also want to get the word out by adopting some of the following strategies:

- **Viral video marketing**
  YouTube has become an online phenomena, with anyone with a web camera able to post short 10 minute videos on practically any subject. If you are talented at humor, how-to instructionals, or just are an expert on your topic, you can post a video on YouTube and take a

chance on it going viral. To generate hits to your site, post your URL and website description to lure people back to your site. You can't be very commercial on YouTube, but there are ways to post informational or funny videos and let people know that you are sponsoring the video. If it goes viral, you have millions of viewers on YouTube, who can end up going back to your site. This is one of the most effective ways to advertise yourself. Even if you don't want to create your own videos, you can pay to be a sponsor to an already popular channel on YouTube and they will advertise your URL for you, for a fee.

- **Social bookmarking**
  There are plenty of sites on the Internet that rely on social bookmarking to get the word out. Places like Digg.com and StumbleUpon.com are both great ways of advertising your website and articles. If you get a lot of people to rate it well, you attract even more attention and rise in the rankings. StumbleUpon will even serve up your pages randomly based on the categories that you choose. Since each of these sites are very popular and have a large audience, you can see an instant jump in your traffic count. So, be sure to submit your website and articles to these sites, and always have the icons to some of these sites available for any new posting you have so readers can rate them or give them a thumbs up!

- **Article marketing**
  If you are good at writing, you can log into some article directories and post some free articles. As long as the subject matter relates to your website niche, it can be an excellent introductory way to get readers back to your site. These directories will allow you a resource box where you can have as many as two different links back to your website. The only caveat is that you can't put a link to a sales promotion, so sometimes you have to link back to your web home page, an intermediary blog, or some product review on your site, rather than a sales page. Even if you aren't good at writing, you can always hire someone to write these articles for you. There is an entire science to good article writing, including using Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques with Google keywords. However, it can pay off big time as these articles remain on the directories indefinitely and are highly indexed by major search engines, producing a lot of traffic for you in the long run.

- **Forums and groups**
  If you want to advertise your offerings, the best place to do so on the Internet is where people of like mind might be congregating: forums and groups. Yahoo has a number of groups and going through their categories, you can locate some that might be good to join. From there, you want to join the conversation and add something to the discussion. You can't actively spam any online forum or group that you join, or you'll eventually be kicked off by moderators, but you can add

a signature to all your postings that let's people know where you are located on the WWW. If people in the group already have an interest in their niche, and they should or you wouldn't be there, and they like what you have to say, they will eventually follow the link in your signature to look at your other offerings.

- **Niche blogs**
  It seems everyone has a blog these days, but not everyone has a successful blog. You will want to locate blogs that are within your market niche to get this strategy for attracting attention to work. For that, you want to visit Technorati.com and search blogs based on categories or keywords. There, you can find out how popular they are based on the number of people linking to them or subscribing to them. Once you've located a number of niche blogs that have a great audience, you'll want to go there and join in the conversation, much like you did with the forums and groups. Add your link back to your URL where it is relevant in the conversation, but remember not to spam. Many blogs have automated spam software that will moderate and ban any post that smells even faintly of spam. So, try to get trusted by the blog author first, so they will let you comment without moderation, and then make sure to add your information either in the comment area, or when it asks for a URL. This URL will be linked to your posting name and people who visit the blog can click on it and they will be sent back to your website.
- **Submitting reviews**
  There are a number of sites that collect reviews to different products and services. You can submit your own review and once it is listed, people will be able to use that to determine whether your products and services interest them. You will get a link back to your site too. If you're not good at writing reviews, then hire someone else to do it for you.

CREATING JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIPS

This ebook wouldn't be complete without discussing one of the keystones of a successful affiliate program: Joint Venture Partnerships (JVP). The key to your success on the Internet is networking, and JVPs are a special type of focused networking aimed at increasing your sales and exposure on the Internet.

A JVP is a formal agreement between you and another party, usually in the same or similar business as you, to join forces to promote each other's products for a specific period of time. In order to create a JVP, you have to have something to offer your partner and they have something to offer you

as well. You will want to create a formal, written, proposal that outlines what the details of partnership entail.

Before you send out a proposal, be sure to do your homework. Check out their website, their articles, their postings, offerings, and products. Try to understand their business philosophy and see if you match it. Don't force a partnership with someone who is walking to a very different drummer, unless you think it will complement your own style.

The two of you need to be in sync with each other to make a partnership work. If you think it will work, you may want to introduce yourself via email and set up a phone interview to go over your proposal with them. No matter what happens, remember to be as honest and respectful of them and their time. The fact that you even get them to listen to you is a major achievement, and a step forward in your marketing efforts. If in the end, your proposal is rejected, try to get some feedback to use on the next person you approach to make the next answer be a resounding "yes."

The benefits of a JVP is instant exposure, mentoring, and having two sets of hands ready to implement business strategies that will work for the both of you. This can really supercharge your Internet marketing strategies. And, the basis of all this is the written, formal, proposal that will outline everything that you want to detail about the proposed JVP.

THE PROPOSAL

Clearly outline what you are going to give and what you expect to get out of the partnership in your proposal. Many times a JVP is wanted by one partner to align themselves with a more successful marketer, but they fail to outline how the relationship helps the other person too. Remember, you are trying to sell this partnership to them, clearly explain to them the benefits of aligning themselves with you. Otherwise, they probably won't bother because if they're that popular, they probably have plenty of other people wanting to enter into a JVP with them.

Some of the things that you want to talk about, that can be of benefit to both of you are:

- **Cross selling**
  Maybe the products and services that you provide directly complement your potential partner's products and services. If that's the case, be sure to show how you can each cross promote and cross sell each other's products and thus both make more money. This works better for complementing products, and not competing products, but even sometimes marketers who have similar products will join up to give more variety to their clients, while taking a commission from the sales of their competing products.

- **Bundle Products**
  If you think that you have a product that would work great being bundled with your partner's product, then be sure to mention how this can increase their revenues and sales. Don't overuse this strategy because if you bundle too many of your items with your partner and their products have more "star power" they can make you look bad, in the long run. But, it is a good strategy for products of similar quality or complementary character.

- **Promote Their Products**
  You can say you'll give away their products in your contests, or promote their product in special offer, in exchange for similar consideration. This exposes each of you to a wider audience.

If things work swimmingly with your JVP, you can each mentor each other and learn more together, then you could ever do alone. And, if the partnership is proving to be very fruitful, you can establish a company with both of you having equal share in the profits. It can even be a fertile ground for new business ideas and strategies that can expand your core products, or take you into areas you might not have thought of alone.

If that happens, you've hit the mother load of the JVP offer. You can bounce ideas off each other and grow your joint business much faster than if you were going it alone. The creativity of having two people who are working together on the same goals and market niche can explode your productivity and positively impact your bottom line, even if you have to split that in half at the end!

CONCLUSION

You've gotten a good glimpse of how to set up an affiliate program that attracts attention and good affiliate partners that end up being virtual business partners.

By learning how to network on the Internet and locate top-producing affiliates and valuable JVPs, you can start reaping the benefits of these: more money, more attention, and less work.

While, at first, the amount of information may seem overwhelming, you can implement a little at a time to see what works best for you.

Pretty soon, you will have a good idea what works with your audience and your market niche, and these will be the primary tools for your websites.

In the area of Internet marketing, everything you do well eventually pays you back in experience and residual advertising that can lead many people back to the products and services that you are marketing.

So, while it may take a few months to appropriately amass enough people and attention to your affiliate program, the word will soon get out that you know what you're doing and are helping others to make money and achieve their dreams too.

<u>Resources</u>

1) [PLR Niche Blogs](#) – Ready-to-upload pre made WordPress blogs on various niches. Ideal as a starting template for any niches.

2) [PLR Products](#) – Download thousands of digital products like eBooks, Graphics, WP Themes, Software, and more.

3) [Ready Made Graphics](#) – In need of graphic templates for your online products? Get ready made templates at Premadegraphics.com at a very affordable price.

4) [Online Business Resources](#) – Online business tips, internet marketing ebooks, video training, and informational eBooks.