

AFFILIATE MARKETING FOR BEGINNERS

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Introduction

On July 24 2015, Amazon reported their 2nd quarter profit and loss statement. After enjoying a surprise jump in profit in that quarter, the online retailer that started as a website selling physical books reported profits of \$92 million. Why should you care, and what does this have to do with affiliate marketing?

It is important because Amazon.com became the world's largest retailer, online and off, when they reported those earnings. They passed retailing giant Walmart as the biggest retail store on the planet with those earnings. This is massively important as far as a beginner to affiliate marketing is concerned because of the way that Amazon makes most of its income.

Amazon.com is the largest affiliate marketer in the world.

That's right, Jeff Bezos has created the world's most successful and powerful global retailer by using the affiliate marketing model. This is the exact same type of online business a beginner to the Internet can have up and running in less than 24 hours.

Will you become a billion-dollar company like Amazon through affiliate marketing? You probably won't. However, the above story just goes to show you exactly how powerful this type of online business can be. You can market it off-line or online, you can start literally for \$0.00 out-of-pocket, and can begin making money your very first day.



In this report you will learn exactly what affiliate marketing is and why it is much more favorable than other online businesses, especially for the beginning Internet entrepreneur or coffee-table millionaire hopeful. There is a very good reason some of the most successful web business owners started out as affiliate marketers, and still make a passive, set-and-forget income through that business model.

I will also show you how you can sponsor products and services, and make money, without a website. That's right, you don't even need to own a blog, website or virtual piece of real estate to make very good money as an affiliate marketer. *(If you do already have a blog or website, your path to affiliate marketing profits is going to be easier, and faster!)*

The key to making reliable, repeatable money as an affiliate is to find a product that is in high demand, pays a good commission to you, and is backed by a company that takes care of their customers. That means finding the perfect affiliate products to promote. You also want to work with companies that have good reputations, and that work very diligently marketing to your prospects, so that they do a lot of the hard sales work for you.

I will help you find exactly those products and companies which make affiliate marketing as easy as possible.

You will discover how to write blog posts, articles and other pieces of content so that you attract buyers to your affiliate offer. At the same time, you will learn how to write content so it doesn't look spammy as well.

Finally, we will look at the downside of affiliate marketing. To be totally honest, there isn't much downside as far as financial or reputation risk, if you follow the steps we outlined in this report. However, to all light there is darkness, and to every up there is a down. Accordingly, there are possible negatives that you need to be aware of. Once you know exactly how to avoid or limit encountering a negative affiliate marketing experience, this type of online business can truly change your life in an incredibly positive way.

If you are a blog or website owner looking to get started with affiliate marketing, the first question you probably need answered is...

What Is Affiliate Marketing?

That looks like a pretty simple question, doesn't it? If you own a blog or website currently, you probably have some idea about this wonderful online business model. Let's look at the definition offered by blogger, podcaster and affiliate marketer extraordinaire Pat Flynn.

"Affiliate marketing is the process of earning a commission by promoting other people's (or company's) products. You find a product you like, promote it to others, and earn a piece of the profit for each sale that you make."

For instance, a friend may ask you what your favorite book is on a particular subject. You have a book in mind that you know can really help your friend out, you have purchased and read it yourself, and you recommend it highly. If you were an affiliate with Amazon, you could provide your friend with an affiliate link that Amazon creates, and if your friend purchases that book or anything else on Amazon, you get a commission.

That is really how simple affiliate marketing is. Recommend products, and if a sale is made, on that product or anything else on that site, you get paid a commission.

Pat Flynn goes on to point out why affiliate marketing is so attractive for beginners, and quite frankly, even for veterans who have been making money online for years. He says this...

"The beauty of affiliate marketing is that you don't have to invest the time and effort to create a product to sell. You can begin selling something as an affiliate as soon as you have a platform to sell it on."

Just make sure that you only promote products and services you are very familiar with, you have used/examined/tested yourself, and would be proud to sell to a friend or family member. You should also promote only those items that are very closely related to the topic of interest central to your blog or website.



Can You Market Products as an Affiliate Without a Website?

In early 2017, Wikipedia listed more than 300 social media websites. The truth is, there are probably many more than that out there on the World Wide Web. There are millions upon millions of forums that discuss and cover a limitless variety of topics and subjects. If you have an email list, you have a marketplace.

There are article directories where you can promote affiliate offers. You do not need to own a blog or website to be an affiliate marketer. There are people who make a good living mainly using Facebook to drive traffic to an affiliate offer. Affiliate marketing doesn't mean just an online situation either. You can use traditional off-line, real world marketing strategies to promote affiliate products like direct mail, billboards, flyers, etc.

If you can find a place online or off where people gather, you can promote affiliate products, and make money when a sale is made.

Can you market products as an affiliate without a website? You can undoubtedly do so. However, owning a blog or website is required if you want to make the most out of affiliate marketing, and the biggest names in the Internet marketing game all have a blog or website.



Finding Affiliate Products to Promote & Choosing Affiliate Programs

Decisions, decisions.

What product are you going to promote? What companies are you going to partner with? Are you going to be sponsoring physical or virtual products and services? Do you want to get paid once a month, or immediately upon a sale? How do you apply for partnership with a company that does business with affiliates like you?

There are a lot of variables here.

A recent search in Google for the term "affiliate marketing companies" showed 3.63 million results. Search for "affiliate marketing networks" and you trim that field to a still overwhelming 2.7 million results. The bottom line here is, there are so many choices for you out there in the affiliate marketing universe, as far as products to promote, and companies to partner with.

Finding a Product or Service to Promote

This needs to be your first step in becoming an affiliate marketer. Think about those things that mean a lot to you. If you blog about health issues for single women over 50, you need to think about the concerns those women have. Alternately, if your blog is all about becoming a better spouse, you probably want to promote some guide to improving relationships.



Once you have a general idea of a larger field that you want to work in, there is an easy way to narrow down your choices. Imagine for a minute that you struggled with weight loss all your life, but finally found a way to take the weight off, and keep it off. You want to share this information with others, so they can also transform their lives in the positive way that you did. It just so happens that you are a woman over 50 years of age.

You understand the thoughts, dreams and emotions of a woman just like yourself, and would like to help these women lose weight, keep it off and become healthy. With that idea in mind, you need to head to a reliable and trustworthy affiliate marketing network.

Top Affiliate Marketing Networks for 2017

- ClickBank
- Amazon Associates
- Rakuten
- CJ Affiliate by Conversant
- AvantLink
- AvanGate
- RevenueWire
- ShareASale
- eBay Partner Network
- FlexOffers

These affiliate marketing networks and online sales platforms are just the tip of the iceberg. There are so many affiliate marketing networks and businesses to work with. However, the 10 listed here are reputable, they take care of their customers and do massive amounts of marketing work for you, they pay regularly and reliably, and are highly regarded by the most successful affiliate marketers in the world.

ClickBank is a digital retailer that sells virtual, information products. There are many people who make quite a good living promoting just ClickBank products. Amazon sells physical and digital goods. Amazon starts you off with a 4% commission rate, which gets larger when you sell more products. On ClickBank you can earn commissions of 25%, 50% and even 75%. The other networks listed offer a wide variety of commissions, products and services, so you need to review each one to see which is the perfect fit for you.

At Amazon, use their search feature to browse the products that you want to promote. We used weight loss for over-50 women in the example above. Amazon makes it very easy for you to find the perfect product to sponsor, in this example or any other.

Head over to Amazon.com and type *"weight loss for women over 50"* into the search box (without the quotation marks). A recent search for that exact term produced over 10,990 results. Since Amazon pays a commission for anything and everything that is sold through its website, you are looking at more than 10,000 products to promote!

Do the same at ClickBank.com. Once there, go to the Affiliate Marketplace section of the website. You will see a search field titled "Find Products". We will use the same search parameter that we did on Amazon. Searching for *"weight loss for women over 50"* on ClickBank revealed over 85 results.

You can do this with each of the 10 affiliate marketing networks listed above to find just the right products to promote.

Understanding Your Audience

There will be several references to Amazon throughout this affiliate marketing beginner's guide. There are very good reasons for this. The company is the largest retailer in the world, beating every other Internet and physical retailer in that regard, so it pays to look at how they do business.

When you are deciding exactly what type of service or product to promote on your blog, don't just choose something that you think will work. Let that massive, billion-dollar marketing Goliath Amazon do all the work for you. Here is what you want to do.

We are going to stick with the weight loss for women over 50 niche we created in the example earlier. Head over to Amazon. Type that search term into the Amazon search engine. On the left-hand side of your 10,998 search results you will see filters. Click on the "4 stars & up" filter.

Amazon's rating system works on a score of 1 to 5, 5 being the best rating. If a product receives a score of 4 or higher, you can bet that the customers that purchase those products and left those reviews are very happy. These are the types of products you want to be promoting. You can then apply other filters to your search results depending on parameters that make sense for your prospects.

By the way, this is a great idea to see what products are highly rated in any niche or field, even if you are not going to represent Amazon. It only makes sense to uncover the best-selling products, and the highest rated, at the world's largest retailer before you try to promote some type of product or service that may not be in demand.

This simple tactic immediately tells you exactly what your audience is looking for.

Understanding Affiliate Network Terms

ClickBank, Amazon, ShareASale and the other affiliate networks mentioned earlier all have terms of conditions (TOCs). They have developed reputations as the most reliable and trustworthy affiliate networks, and they have a very specific way they want to do business.

Once you find a product or service you are going to promote on your blog at one of the networks above (or anywhere else on the web), you need to understand exactly what is expected of you. Every affiliate network or company that uses affiliates will have very clear-cut responsibilities you have to live up to.

They will also discuss their payout structure, how frequently you get paid, what your commission will be on particular products, what you can and cannot say when promoting or sponsoring their products, and everything else you have to know to make money with them.

You should also understand that in most cases you have to apply to become an affiliate. Companies do this for a very good reason. No reputable affiliate network wants just anyone promoting their products. By making you go through an application process, they weed out the individuals who may damage their reputation by operating in a shady manner.

They also want to find out exactly who you are.

You may be asked to supply things like your Social Security Number, national ID number or tax identification number, as well as the URL of your blog or website. In many cases this is just a formality. In other cases, someone will actually check out your website and see if they want to do business with you.

In nearly every case, you will have a special team of affiliate representatives that will answer any questions you have. To sign up for any of the 10 affiliate networks listed above (or any other), simply go to the homepage of the website. In the header or at the bottom of the page, look for phrases like "become an affiliate" or "affiliate program".

This will take you to a page that answers your questions, can put you in contact with a human being if you have further questions, and allows you to fill out an application. Expect an answer in 1 to 7 days. It makes sense to apply to several networks at the same time, so you can get started as quickly as possible with the first company that approves you as an affiliate.

How Do You Get Paid, When Do You Get Paid, and How Much Money Can You Make?

As far as money goes, the sky is the limit. There are affiliate marketers who quietly make \$100,000 dollars per month and more. We are not talking just a handful of affiliates here either. This is a business that rewards effort. The more time, effort and money you put into your affiliate marketing business, the better your chances of earning a significant income.



Amazon will pay you straight to your bank account, they will send you a check, or they will pay you in an Amazon Visa Card. They pay every month for the previous month's sales. So you are basically operating on a 60 day holding pattern before you get paid, after you sell something on Amazon.

ClickBank will pay you directly to your bank account through a wire payment. They may also send you a check if that is what you prefer. The company has you set up a payment threshold, and whenever that threshold is met, you are paid. You can keep this very low if you want frequent payments, or set it higher if you like the idea of receiving a big, fat payment less frequently.

What Products Sell the Best?

On ClickBank you want to filter your search results by "gravity". Products with higher gravity scores sell better than similar products with lower scores. If you are looking at two weight loss products to promote to women over 50, one has a gravity of 62 and the other has a gravity score of 20, go with the product with the higher score.

On Amazon, as discussed earlier, you want to look for products that have lots of reviews and a 4-star customer satisfaction rating or higher. At each of the top 10 affiliate networks discussed earlier, there will be some way to uncover which products are highly rated by previous purchasers, and which products sell the best, as well as those with the highest commission rates. This is true with any reputable company or network that works with affiliate marketers.

The Key Take Away Here: Don't spend too much time locating a product to promote. If you work with any of the affiliate networks mentioned above, you will be working with a reputable company takes care of their customers. Find a product that matches what your blogging audience is looking for, get approved by an affiliate network, and get started.

How to Market Products as an Affiliate on Your Blog Without Being Seen as 'Spammy'

Your blog is your brand. This is who you are. This is the reputation that you will be known by. The last thing you want to have people think about you is that you will sell anything just to make a commission.

The simple key to promoting products and services as an affiliate on your blog, without being seen as "spammy" or "sleazy" is this ...

Be upfront about earning a commission as an affiliate.

This is very easy to do. If you think that you will sell fewer products as an affiliate when you tell people you might make a commission from a sale, you are wrong. You will actually see your sales rise when you are open and forthcoming with your audience. People respect honesty, and when you provide amazing value through the content on your blog, your readers and followers are happy for you to earn a commission off of a product or service they purchase, if that purchase helps them in some way.

This is all you have to say ...

"If you buy some of the products I talk about on my blog, I might make a commission. I want you to know that I would never recommend a product or service I don't personally endorse 100%. The money I earn helps me keep this blog going, providing you with valuable information that helps you _____.*" (Fill in the blank with the goal of your blog. E.g. lose weight, make more money, become healthier, etc.)*

You can place that disclaimer at the bottom of every page on your blog or website, and on your About Us page.

You should also limit the number of products or services you sponsor.

If every month you are recommending a new product, it could begin to look like you are just after the commission from the sale, and are not concerned with helping your audience. Another way to make sure your audience sees you as really delivering value in caring about them, rather than being a spammer, has to do with how to write affiliate blog posts.

How to Write the Perfect Affiliate Post

You already have a blog or website (and if you don't, you should as an affiliate marketer). You may already publish content regularly. Even so, sometimes you see very little traffic on a post that you thought was really good. What did you do wrong? How can you make that post better? What can you do in the future to create the "perfect" affiliate post that drives a lot of traffic to a service or product you are sponsoring?

The answer comes in a simple 4 words – ***Think Like Your Reader.***

Know your marketplace. What do people in your niche really want? What are the biggest problems they have in their lives? What worries keep them awake at night, tossing and turning? These are the things you want to write about. Provide a lot of value. Write as if you are speaking to the friend of a friend, and are seriously concerned about helping the person.

This is the mindset you want to have. Forget about selling. Forget about making a commission. Forget all about affiliate marketing. Make your content full of information so valuable that someone would pay money for that info. Write to solve problems, the biggest problems on the minds of your prospects, and your affiliate post will be uber-successful.

You should also mention pros and cons. Don't just talk about a product or service with glowing praise. Talk about the downside as well. This will earn you a lot of points with your audience, and will actually increase the number of sales you make. If the company you are partnering with allows you to use their customer testimonials to promote the product, do that as well.

At the end of your post, simply say something like, *"I hope this post helps you in some way. By the way, there is a product or service that I highly recommend that can go even further than this post did in helping you solve a problem in your life. You can check it out here."* Then add a link that refers them to the product.

That's really all you have to do. But remember, always think about value first, solving a very real and very important problem in your readers' lives, and the sales will take care of themselves.

Traffic Tip – Make sure your posts are 1,200 words a longer, preferably more than 2,000 words. Google and the other search engines prefer longer posts to shorter ones, and this ensures you will get more free traffic from the search engines.

Drawbacks of Affiliate Marketing

The biggest drawback to affiliate marketing is that you are not in control.

At any time, for any reason, justified or not, company can kick you out of it's affiliate program. This is why is it so important to own your own blog or website, and your own product.



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There is no doubt you can make a very good living doing nothing but affiliate marketing. But since someone else is always going to have the last say over how you do business, what you get paid, when you get paid and even if you can be their partner or not, you should look into building online products and services that affiliates can promote for you.

Another downside is the inconsistent income.

Until you reach a really high level of notoriety in the Internet marketing community, your paychecks can vary wildly. It also takes a long time to get paid by some affiliate programs. We mentioned earlier that Amazon pays you every 30 days, for the past 30 days' sales. If you can't wait 60 days to get paid, this is not a good program for you. Other companies and individuals pay immediately upon a sale.

Some affiliate marketing networks and companies really put you through the ringer in the application process. This can definitely be a downside. You also may be looked upon by others as a "snake oil salesman". So be careful not to promote just anything. Your reputation is on the line. Only represent products and companies that are reputable, deliver great value, and always keep the customer in mind.



In the pros and cons argument of affiliate marketing, one con is that you could end up doing business with a company that simply decides not to pay you. Stick with the networks we recommended earlier, and this will not be a problem.

Also, you are in charge of finding customers. You have to develop traffic streams. If you cannot get your affiliate offer in front of enough people, you are not going to make much money. On top of that, creating content, consistently delivering high value to your blogging readers or website visitors, is all up to you. In the affiliate marketing relationship, the affiliate is responsible for creating traffic.

The Upside

Now that we've discussed the potential "dark side" of affiliate marketing, let's recap all of the positives. Because honestly, you wouldn't be reading this report if you haven't already heard of the amazing benefits that affiliate marketing has to offer, which include the following:

- **You can get started with absolutely no money.** This is because of the global reach the Internet offers, and free blogging, website, video and social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Blogger.com and Wordpress.com.
- **You don't need a product or service to get started.** That means within literally minutes or hours of reading this report, you can be making money as an affiliate marketer.
- **It is the fastest way to start an online business.**
- As an affiliate sponsoring some other person's or company's products and services, **you have no customer service problems.** You simply refer people to websites that pay you a commission. They handle selling, getting the product in the hands of your customers, and customer service after the fact.
- **It doesn't matter if you are a man or a woman, how old you are, how much you know about online marketing, or any other specific demographic.** The Internet simply doesn't care who you are. It will send you money through the affiliate marketing model when you do things a certain way, the way outlined in this report.
- **You can make a difference in the world.** There are millions of products and services offered through affiliate marketing. Find one that you are passionate about, one that can change lives for the better, and you make money while helping create a better world.
- If you own a product or service, **you can have hundreds of affiliates doing all the sales work for you.** This turns your small blog or website into a traffic center that churns out sales and profits every day, and other people do all the heavy lifting for you.
- Affiliate marketing **allows bloggers and website owners to create additional income streams.**

- **You can start your affiliate marketing business part-time, working it profitably for just a few hours a week.**
- **You can make money with this business model anywhere in the world.** If you have access to an Internet connected device, you can run your business.

Conclusion

For the blogger or website owner, affiliate marketing can be a great way to add a passive income stream to your piece of Internet real estate. If you have a product or service you offer, you can get others to sign up as affiliates, and they spend their time, money and efforts selling your offerings for you.

As an affiliate sponsoring products and services offered by someone else, there is zero overhead. You will not have to worry about customer service complaints, bookkeeping, order fulfillment, owning a physical retail outlet and all of the other things that traditional business owners need to be concerned with.

It costs absolutely nothing to get started. If you are a man or a woman, young or old, and live in the wealthiest city or the most impoverished suburb, you are on an equal playing field with everyone else. Truly anyone can make money online with affiliate marketing, which is easily the quickest and simplest way to get started with an online business.

If you are a blogger or website owner thinking about getting involved with affiliate marketing, there are a lot of attractive reasons to do so. The best time to become an affiliate marketer for bloggers and those with an Internet presence was years ago. The second best time to benefit from this business model is today. Use this report to develop some sort of affiliate marketing presence online today, and who knows, you could become the next Amazon.

