

AFFILIATE

MARKETING FOR BEGINNERS



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Chapter 1:

What to expect as an Affiliate Marketer – The Lifestyle

If you're looking to make a ton of money online, then the best option for the widest selection of people is undoubtedly affiliate marketing. This is the online business model with the lowest barriers to entry that anyone can learn and anyone can master. At the same time, it is potentially one of the most profitable business models you can use online and certainly much more profitable than blogging for AdSense revenue or similar.

And this is a point that advertisers on Facebook often like to labour. Chances are that you'll have seen plenty of adverts for online money making schemes and 'programs'. And no doubt 9/10 times, they'll be based around affiliate marketing.

You'll know these ads if you see them. They're the ones where people talk to you from their private yacht and tell you how they make a 6-figure salary in just a few hours of work each week.

Likewise, you'll have probably have seen the videos of online 'billionaires' talking about their money-making systems while wearing smart suits in very pimped-out offices. They've created a 'digital empire' all their own using affiliate marketing techniques and now they're rich and powerful and you probably want to be them... But is this all true? Can you really accomplish all that through affiliate marketing? Is it really that easy? Or is there more to it than that?

How Much Does an Affiliate Marketer Make?

First of all, let's assess the claims about earnings. We don't have to guess at this. During the Affiliate Summit over 1,800 affiliate marketers answered a survey describing everything from their methods to their earnings.

How much were they bringing in?

Well, only 46% earned less than \$20K while 8% earned \$50K-\$100K and 12% earned \$100K+. At the very least, this shows it's certainly *very* possible to earn big money. (The rest were around the middle, but note that 19% elected not to answer at all.)

What's also interesting here though is the sheer *spread* of earnings. Affiliate marketing is bringing in from \$20K to \$100K and beyond, which you just don't find in traditional careers.

So what's making the big difference here?

It's the *skill* of the individual.

As an affiliate marketer, you're self-employed and working alone. There's no need to 'climb the corporate ladder' or to compete for promotions. You can get to the top overnight if you have the right skills because it's *all on you*.

And in this book, we'll be looking at the secrets you need to really start earning the big bucks as an affiliate marketer.

The Affiliate Marketing Lifestyle: What Does Affiliate Marketing Involve?

Perhaps the biggest draw of affiliate marketing though is not the money. Instead, for many people the appeal lies in the fact that this is a completely 'passive' business model. Once you've set everything up such as your sales funnel, your affiliate network account and your blog/sales page, then you can literally be earning money while you're sleeping or while you're on holiday.

But again this can get twisted. This lifestyle is what you can achieve once you're at the top of your game as an affiliate marketer – it doesn't come overnight.

In fact, affiliate marketing is likely to *initially* involve a lot of work. The idea here is that you put in the work up front so that you can sew the seeds of your labor further down the line. To begin with, you need to be willing to put in a lot of hours for very little reward.

Specifically then, what does affiliate marketing involve?

If you're reading this book, then there's a good chance you have a general idea but we'll recap in a little more detail for those who do not.

Essentially, as an affiliate marketer, you sell products for commission. This means you'll be finding products online and promoting them using your own affiliate link. If someone clicks on your link and *then* buys the product, you'll get a cut of the profit. Often, affiliate marketing involves selling digital products and you can expect your cut to be as much as 50% all the way up to 75% of the RRP.

There's no risk involved for you because you're not creating the product and there's nothing for you to ship or for you to store. All you have to do is sell but you earn *more* than the creator.

The hard part though is in doing that selling. This is where the 'marketing' part comes in and your job from here is to find yourself a large audience through a blog, through an e-mail campaign, through advertising or through social media; whichever tool you find the most effective.

This is why there's no steep learning curve or barrier for entry for beginners. All you're literally doing is making sure people see your affiliate link. There's no product creation

and no investment. You can get started tomorrow in minutes and it won't cost you a penny.

If you're a big blogger and you already have an audience of 10,000 readers a day then you're going to find this very easy. All you need to do is put some very persuasive text on your website along with the link and you'll start driving traffic. If this is your first attempt at affiliate marketing though, then you may well find this process a little more complex and little more hard going.

You now have two options:

- ☐ Build your own audience
- ☐ Advertise

(Actually, there are other methods and growth hacks you can use which we'll come to later, but for now this will suffice.)

Advertising

If you're going to use the route of paid marketing, then that means you're going likely going to be using PPC. This is 'Pay Per Click' and basically means that you pay for every person who clicks on an ad and thus gets sent to your site. The more you pay, the more visitors you get.

If you design your site well and you can really convince people to buy your products, then you should be able to convert a predictable amount of visitors into buyers. This in turn means you can work out your precise ROI. So if you pay a certain amount per visitor, and N percentage of those visitors earn you X amount of money, you can tell whether or not your strategy is profitable.

The amount you pay per click will depend on the amount of competition available for your ad. PPC ads work on a 'bidding' system, whereby the advertiser offering the most per click is the advertiser whose ad is most likely to show.

Meanwhile, even if your website is very effective at convincing people to buy, you'll still only get 0.5%-10% of visitors converting (and more often, you'll be at the bottom end of that spectrum). So you'll need your ad to be seen by about 1,000-2,000 people in order for you to get a single sale, which means you'll be paying a relatively high amount for your ad to be seen 10,000 to 20,000 times for about 100 sales.

This is a formula that takes a lot of adjusting and you can expect to lose a certain amount of money before you get it right. With a *good* set-up, you can expect to spend \$600 a day on PPC to make about \$200 profit. That's quite a big risk when you're first starting out and for the first few months you probably will be operating at a loss (until you learn the right keywords to target, the right products to sell, the right sales pitch etc.).

Building an Audience

If you don't have that kind of money to play around with, then your only other option is to build your audience naturally over time.

That means creating a blog and then using it to promote yourself through social media and to build up a mailing list full of subscribers. Again, you can't expect your conversion rate to be all that high and you're going to need about 10,000 views daily to make even close to a full time living.

Getting to this point is slow going. You can expect it to take at least a year before you're on 600 visitors a day and while you'll accumulate exponential growth at this point, it will still likely be a few years before you're at 10,000.

Oh and at this point, affiliate marketing is *anything* but passive. At this stage, you'll be investing huge amounts of time into writing a compelling blog that people will want to follow, emailing your subscribers and managing advertising campaigns.

It is *very much* possible to be highly successful at affiliate marketing. You definitely *can* earn hundreds of thousands from it and once you're all set up, the money will come in while you sleep.

But it also requires a big upfront investment of time and/or money, along with the right knowhow and strategy. If it didn't, then everyone would be rich, no one would work for an employer and the economy would have collapsed.

So it's a good thing really...

How to Approach Affiliate Marketing

That last paragraph wasn't intended to depress you and hopefully you haven't put the book/tablet down and abandoned all hope at this point. This is simply a *reality* check.

All it means, is that you need to set out with not only the right approach, but also the right expectations. Don't go into affiliate marketing thinking you'll be a millionaire overnight because you'll only be sorely disappointed and this will lead to your giving up. Instead, understand that this is a slow process and that to begin with, it's not going to be your sole income.

The way you can get around this is to make affiliate marketing into a kind of hobby on top of your regular job. *Or* you can set up some different, alternate online business model in order to earn the money you need to invest into affiliate marketing and in order to find the time necessary to be working on it.

This might seem like a lot of work but if you can find the time in the evening to upload three articles per week and do a little bit of marketing, you should be able to make some steady progress. If you can invest 3 hours a week, this is likely enough.

And while you won't be rich, the rewards for this will still be impressive.

Let's say you start making one sale a week at \$40 profit. You're not paying for advertising but rather building your blog organically.

This now means you're making an additional \$160 a month. That in turn is an impressive \$1,920 on top of your regular salary. Or in other words, easily enough to enjoy a free holiday. Or to buy yourself a nice computer and some new clothes.

This will accelerate pretty fast, earning you \$3,000 or \$4,000 over the year. Even if you never progress beyond that point, you've now massively increased annual salary and you can now live a completely different lifestyle.

You'll have financial security, a backup in case you ever find yourself unemployed.

What's more, if you've chosen to sell products in a niche you're interested in, then you'll be able to do all this while essentially enjoying learning about a subject you love. And as you build a big audience, you'll find it's highly rewarding becoming an 'authority' in that area and having fan mail and a huge captive audience.

Keep it up and *eventually* you can start earning millions while you sleep.

Just make sure that this isn't your initial goal. Initially, your goal should be to earn some nice supplementary income.

This might sound trivial but it really isn't. Starting out with the right expectations and intentions will be the difference between giving up and enjoying a great career ahead that eventually sets you free.

That is the first and most important ‘secret’ to affiliate marketing. But the rest are going to help you accelerate your progress with growth hacks and other techniques. This way, you won’t have to wait all *that* long until you start making the progress you deserve/that likely attracted you to affiliate marketing to begin with.

Chapter 2:

How the Affiliate Marketing Actually Works – The Mechanics

We've seen how affiliate marketing works but what we haven't addressed yet is the precise mechanics and how understanding this can help you to be more effective at your job.

What happens for example, when someone clicks on one of your affiliate links?

The answer is 'cookies'. Cookies are small files that get saved on the computer and are handled by your browser. Websites can store cookies and then look for them and they use this to keep you logged into Facebook, or to show you relevant adverts based on your browsing history.

When a buyer clicks on your link, they get sent to the checkout page for a specific product. At the same time though, a cookie will be stored on their computer which will identify them as having been referred by you. This then means that when they make a purchase, the profits can be allocated to you.

Understanding this is important because it introduces a potential risk – that people will see what you're selling and navigate there of their own accord. This is called 'link bypassing' and it's worth your while to prevent this using link *cloaking*. That means using a redirect that sends people to your affiliate link while hiding the URL from them. You can do this using a simple bit of code:

```
<meta http-equiv="refresh" content="0; url=http://www.example.com/affiliatelink">
```

Alternatively, you can use something like TinuUrl or Bit.ly.

It's also worth doing a little research into the affiliate scheme that you're going to be working with. That's because the creator of a cookie also gets to set the lifespan. A cookie can last a few minutes, or it can last until the user actively chooses to delete their cookies/changes computer.

Of course it's much better for you to have an affiliate scheme with cookies that don't expire at all. Amazon has a 'session limited' cookie scheme for instance that only lasts 24 hours. That's actually pretty good in this case though, considering that people already know about Amazon and you can make money from *other* things people buy from the site that day.

What's also key to note is whether a subsequent affiliate can 'override' your cookie. This becomes relevant if someone should click your affiliate link, not make a purchase, then click someone *else's* affiliate link and buy. Who gets the money? This depends on whether the affiliate honors the first click or last click. If you are a 'lifetime referrer' then you will *always* be given credit for the referral regardless of what else happens subsequently.

Types of Affiliate Program and Choosing the Best Product

With those technical details out the way, it's time to start choosing affiliate products and schemes. The first step here is going to be in deciding which *type* of affiliate scheme you want to join up to. Do you want to sell a digital product? A physical product? Or a service?

The best answer for most beginners will be a digital product. This means something like an eBook, a free report or a digital course. There's no cost associated with production, storage or delivery here and as such the product creator gets a much bigger slice of the profit. What's more, they have more profit to share with *you* and that means you can earn up to 50-75% from each sale.