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Introduction

Affiliate marketing is an outstanding way to get started making money online, because you don't have to invest much (or any) money, you don't have to have your own products, and you don't have to deal with customer service or shipping.

All you really need to be successful in affiliate marketing is a strong desire to succeed and the knowledge to make it happen. I can't give you the motivation you need, but I can certainly get you started with the knowledge you need.

In this report, you're going to learn the basics of getting started with affiliate marketing. You'll learn how to choose profitable niches, how to choose the right affiliate products to promote, and how to get traffic to your offers.

Everything I'm going to teach you will require little or no upfront investment, and very little technical knowledge. These are very basic techniques that absolutely anyone can learn!

So let's get started...

Choosing Profitable Niches

The first thing you need to do is choose a niche to promote. This isn't as easy as it sounds. You can't just choose a niche - you must choose a **profitable** niche. Not every niche is going to be as profitable as you might hope.

I have chosen niches in the past that I truly expected to be profitable, yet despite my best efforts I was unable to find a single affiliate product that would convert well enough to make the effort worth the time involved.

Fortunately, I have learned how to lessen my chances of choosing dud niches. Just a few simple steps can help you eliminate some of the risk of choosing these unprofitable niches.

Brainstorming

Your first step is to make a list of niches you're interested in promoting. Just make a long list of niches you think might be profitable, or that you're just interested in promoting.

Don't worry about anything other than making a list of 10-20 niches right now. If you need help, you can always look around you for inspiration.

Here are some places to seek inspiration:

- Look around your house. Things like kitchen appliances, outdoor barbecue equipment, office supplies, audio visual equipment, and musical instruments are all niches you might spot around your house.
- Browse a bookstore – either online or offline. Try Amazon.com or a bookstore in your local neighborhood. Browse the books or magazines.
- Take a look around news websites for hot topics. Check sites like Google Buzz for new trends.

Checking Potential Profitability

Once you have a list of 10-20 niche ideas, it's time to start narrowing them down by checking out their potential profitability.

There are three main ways I do this:

1. I check to see if there are any magazines being published in the niche. This is sometimes, but not always an indicator that a niche might be profitable.

2. I check to see how many people are advertising on Google AdWords for the niche. People aren't likely to advertise en masse in a niche that isn't profitable, especially if the CPC is very high.

3. I check the MSN Commercial Intention tool for some of the most popular commercial websites in the niche.

<http://adlab.msn.com/Online-Commercial-Intention/>

I really like the Commercial Intention tool. It's pretty accurate. Let's say I want to be an affiliate for golf equipment. I would enter something like "golf clubs" in the tool, select the "Query" radio button, and then click "Go".



Result for: golf clubs	
Status	Probability
Commercial Intention	0.97

For the phrase "golf clubs", the commercial intention is 0.97, which is almost a perfect 1.0. This means the niche is almost certainly profitable, as the vast majority of people who search for that phrase will probably be interested in buying.

Keyword Research

Everything you do in affiliate marketing will require keywords. Whether you choose to use PPC marketing, article marketing, blogging, or some other form of marketing, you will need to choose the right keywords if you expect to get a decent amount of traffic.

I use the Google Keyword Tool for quick and free research:

<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

This keyword tool is extremely easy to use. You simply enter your seed keyword phrase and you will receive a large number of related keywords. You can sort them by the average number of monthly searches.

You want to look for keyword phrases that have:

- At least 1,000 monthly searches
- Fewer than 50,000 competing sites

To check competition, you want to enter each keyword phrase in quotes into Google. This will tell you how many people are targeting that exact phrase.

Traffic and Marketing

Once you have a list of keywords that have at least 1,000 monthly searches and fewer than 50,000 competing pages, it's time to use those keywords to get traffic.

There are literally hundreds, perhaps thousands of ways to get traffic, but I'm just going through some of the easiest ways to get traffic quickly and with little to no money up front.

Article Marketing

One of the easiest ways to get free traffic is by writing articles and submitting them to article directories. Many article directories have very good authority with the search engines, so articles you submit will often rank well quickly and bring in traffic.

If you're going to send people straight to an affiliate link, it's a good idea to register a domain that you can use to redirect people to. There are a couple of reasons for this.

1. You can easily change the affiliate link if necessary, without having to go back and edit tons of articles.
2. Some article directories require it.

Articles should be between 300 and 500 words. It's actually a good idea to keep articles fairly short so you don't bore people, and because you don't want them to feel completely satisfied. To get the really good information, they need to visit the affiliate link in your resource box at the end of your article.

Some article directories to submit to include:

<http://www.ezinearticles.com>

<http://www.buzzle.com>

<http://www.goarticles.com>

<http://www.articlesbase.com>

<http://www.articlecity.com>

Blogging

Blogging is another great way to get traffic. It's best if you do it on your own domain with your own hosting, but you can also make use of free blogging platforms like Blogger.com if you want. Just be aware that they have the right to delete your blog at any time, for any reason they choose, even if you didn't break any rules.

Every time you make a blog post, be sure to include keywords in the title of the post, as well as the content. This will help ensure you get plenty of traffic from the search engines.

Social Content

Social content sites like Squidoo.com and HubPages.com have very good authority with the search engines, so the pages you create will often rank quite well.

They are free, and are also extremely easy to use, even if you don't have any technical experience. You don't even need to know HTML, because their online wizards will help you set up pages in no time flat.

As with blogging or article marketing, you need to be sure to use your keywords in your titles and content. This is the only way to ensure you'll get traffic from the search engines.

Forum Marketing

Forums can be great for affiliate marketing, but you have to be careful. Most forums don't allow you to post affiliate links in posts or in your signature, so read the rules carefully. You might be able to link to your blog from your signature if affiliate links aren't allowed.

Conclusion

Now you have the basics you need to get started with affiliate marketing. You can take this information and run with it, and you can be making money almost immediately!

Whatever you do, you need to keep at it. Never give up! Trust me, these things really do work. Affiliate marketing is extremely easy, and once you have some moneymaking methods in place, they can run mostly on autopilot!

Combine these methods with some of your own and you'll have an unstoppable money machine that just keeps cranking out the cash day after day.

Good luck!