

Affiliate Classroom

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15 Personal Questions for the Aspiring Super Affiliate

Being a Super Affiliate

The Super Affiliates Speak

What Merchants Look for in Super Affiliates

How to Become a Super Affiliate

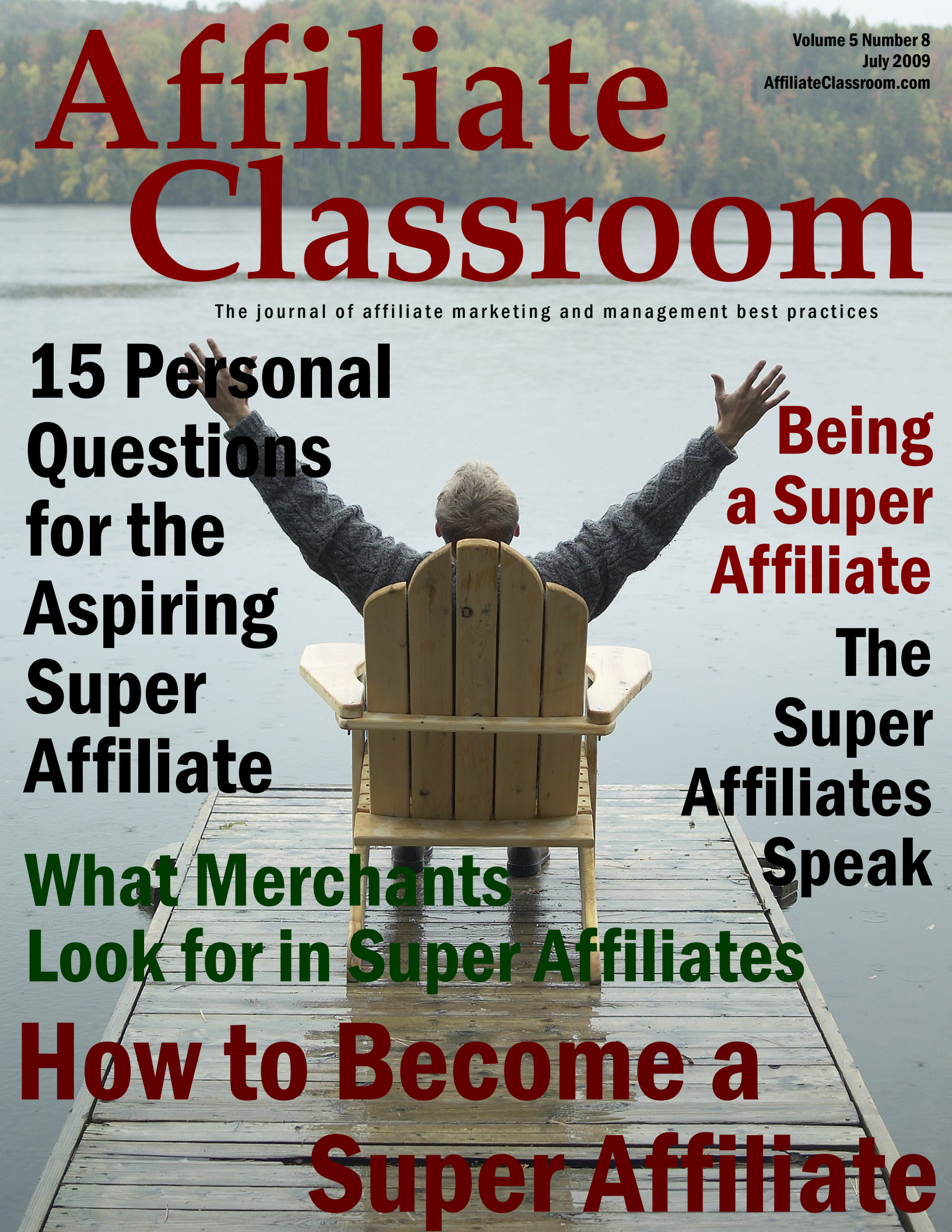


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By Katalin Torok

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15 Personal Questions for the Aspiring Super Affiliate

By Katalin Torok
www.mktg.idared.net



Becoming a big player comes with its risks and disadvantages, and deciding to stay small can be just as wise a business decision if it suits YOUR life and goals better.

The affiliate marketing space is inundated with buzzwords and big expectations — making money on the Internet, building a website and watching the dollars roll in, cashing in on the social media boom, etc.

However, to truly succeed in this business, you need much more than interest in the latest web trends and the knowledge of how to build a website: you need to treat your affiliate endeavor as any other business you would start.

Here are 15 questions to ask yourself before becoming an affiliate entrepreneur — that is, a super affiliate.

1. Do You Really Want to Be in the Affiliate Business?

Just as with any business, affiliate marketing is not for everyone. Working in this industry has its own advantages and downsides, and only you can decide if it is ultimately the right one for you: if you feel comfortable here, and if you can accept the negative as well as the positive side of the market.

We arrive in the affiliate space from many walks of life. Some of us have built websites for years before researching how to actually make money doing it.

Some of us have had a successful website that we started to monetize using affiliate marketing. Some of us have read an affiliate marketing success story in a business magazine and become inspired.

No matter what brought you into this industry, before you dedicate time and money to building a business here, you need to decide if it is indeed the place where you want to be.

Get a grip on the realities of working as an affiliate marketer — including the hours spent in front of the computer, the virtual nature of the business, the “black hat” side of the industry that does affect the whole industry’s reputation, and the rapidly changing marketplace.

Consider these realities carefully to decide if you wish to do business in this environment. The best way to go about this is to connect with other affiliates who have been in the business for a few years.

Talk to them about starting up; about successes, failures, and lessons learned; and about where they are now.

2. Do You Really Want to Grow Big?

While it may sound tempting on the financial side of things, not every affiliate is destined to become the next superhero of online business.

Becoming a big player comes with its risks and disadvantages, and deciding to stay small can be just as wise a business decision if it suits YOUR life and goals better.

Maybe your knowledge and niche are more suitable for keeping things small and cozy.

You can decide to use this to your advantage and replicate your success in more industries and niches instead of trying to become bigger than what works comfortably for you, both personally and business-wise.

3. Are You Ready to Commit Your Time?

Maybe you started your online ventures with a hobby site or blog about your trinket collection. Then one day, you added an affiliate link. Later, you added AdSense ads.

Then you realized, "Hey, I could make real money with this." Up to that point, maintaining the site was a hobby, and while you may have already put hours into it every day, it sure did not feel like work.

However, once you start working on your site with a business mindset, seeking monetization opportunities and building on them, much of your online time will not be devoted to the hobby part, but the minute tasks of running an affiliate business: managing and optimizing ads and pages, editing links, communicating with merchants, and more.

With this in mind, ask yourself whether you are still ready to make that kind of time commitment.

4. Are You Ready to Make a Plan?

An affiliate business needs to have a business plan, just like any other venture. Lay out the goals, and how you will reach them. Calculate the needed investments and returns. You will benefit from the time invested into planning the future of your affiliate business throughout the life cycle of your business.

5. Do You Have the Discipline to Stick to Your Plan, and to Change It if Necessary?

Once you have a plan, it takes discipline to stick to it. You can't afford to jump at any opportunity that presents itself, because doing so takes

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If you decide to work towards becoming a super affiliate, you will have to consciously take on a business mindset. You need to present yourself as a business, as a professional, with confidence in yourself and your ideas and business.

away time and resources from realizing your original business plan.

On the other hand, you need to have the confidence to trust your intuition regarding whether it's time to change the plan and take another road. Are you ready to make decisions like this?

6. Are You Ready to Invest Money into Your Affiliate Business?

Once you decide to "turn professional" with your affiliate business, you will find many solutions available on the market that promise to make your business run smoother, faster, better, etc. Costs that you considered outrageous while this was a hobby may well be justified if you have a plan on how to make a return on your investment.

7. Are You Ready to Reinvest Your Profits into Your Business?

As an entrepreneur, you will need to familiarize yourself with basic accounting and financials. You need to learn to separate your personal earnings (your "paycheck") from the revenue of your business.

You will need to decide how much to take out for yourself and how much to reinvest into growing your business. Do you have the financial discipline to make such decisions?

8. Are You Ready to Compete, and to Deal with Copycats?

The affiliate market is fiercely competitive. You will deal with both friendly and hostile competitors, as well as copycats on a daily basis. Sometimes, competition will feel like a battle, and you may not come out as the winner. Because the barrier to entry is relatively low in the online space, copycats who mimic your every move and strategy can spring up easily at any time. They may not last long, but they will affect you both professionally and personally. Are you up to the challenge?

9. Are You Ready to Learn?

What works today may not work tomorrow. Are you ready to keep learning about affiliate marketing every day? Are you ready to change things around on a daily basis as new tactics and strategies become available?

10. Are You Ready to Consider Yourself a Business?

If you decide to work towards becoming a super affiliate, you will have to consciously take on a business mindset. You need to present yourself as a business, as a professional, with confidence in yourself and your ideas and business. Are you ready to face the world as such?

11. Are You Ready to Get Organized?

Becoming a professional will also require organization, both in your work and for the sake of separating your personal and work lives. Work-life balance is something most entrepreneurs struggle with on a daily basis. The more organized your business life becomes, the more you'll be able to actually have a life besides having a business.

12. Are You Ready to Learn about Accounting and Business?

Being an affiliate is much more than coding HTML and seeing the dollars roll in. You will need to handle the boring operational side of running a business.

This includes familiarity with accounting terms and balance sheets; calculating expenses, returns, and profits; and dealing with legal matters and bill payments, to name just a few. Are you ready to learn more about, and to dedicate time to, these everyday tasks?

13. Are You Ready to Hire Someone and to Delegate?

There may come a point, maybe not even that far down the road, when you decide you need outside help to run your business. Hiring someone to work for you is a big decision to make and brings with it a whole new set of needed skills and knowledge. You will need to learn about managing people, delegating tasks, payroll expenses, and so on.

More notably, you will need to be able to separate yourself from a part of your business, which may not be easy. After all, your business is "your baby." Delegating some of the tasks that realize your dream requires confidence in yourself, in your plans, and in the person you hire.

14. Do You Have a Plan B?

The affiliate market is constantly changing, and a lot of outside factors can make or break an affiliate business on any given day. You start out with a plan, and one month later, an important piece of the chain — a key merchant, a key advertiser, or a key software provider — can go out of business.

But it doesn't have to happen overnight. Consumer behavior, demand, and product availability changes and you may find your income diminish. Do you know what will pay the bills should your affiliate business falter? Are you ready to move onto something else if necessary? Unfortunately, failure is a possible outcome of any business.

But with the right planning and the right mindset, failure can also be an opportunity.

Being an affiliate is much more than coding HTML and seeing the dollars roll in. You will need to handle the boring operational side of running a business.

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expectations.**

15. Are You Ready to Quit Your Job?

This is the biggie. Are you ready to take the risk, and to take your affiliate earnings as your paycheck?

Does your family depend on your income to pay the bills and put food on the table?

Do you have the confidence and the discipline to decide that your income will come entirely from your affiliate business?

There is no right or wrong answer to any of these questions. There may not even be one answer for you, but a bunch of them, or a constantly changing one.

The important thing is to ask yourself these questions, and to answer them honestly, before deciding to turn pro in affiliate marketing.

Ultimately, YOU make affiliate marketing a success or a failure, and success depends on your level of confidence and having realistic expectations.

Deciding not to pursue becoming a super affiliate may be the wisest decision you ever made, depending on certain circumstances, just as much as pursuing this dream can be. Whichever path you choose, good luck on this journey!

About the Author

Katalin Torok is an independent marketing consultant with a focus on Web 2.0. Her website and blog contains many helpful tips at: <http://mktg.idared.net>.

Becoming a Super Affiliate

By Mark Thompson
<http://mjthompson.net>



Perhaps you've decided that your career path in Internet marketing will lead you to become a super affiliate. If so, then the first thing you should do is to make sure you are clear about what a super affiliate is.

Recently I was talking to someone who claimed to be a super affiliate and wanted a review copy of one of my products. I asked him how many sales a day he made, and he told me that he made at least 10 a day covering four products — an average of 2.5 a day for each product.

He got quite upset when I told him that this really didn't get him into the realms of being a super affiliate. I've seen ebooks claiming to show you how to become a super affiliate, and then they tell you how to set up a simple one-page website.

The term "super affiliate" is thrown around and regularly used incorrectly. If you want to be a super affiliate, you have a long, hard road ahead of you.

What, then, is the definition of a super affiliate?

Basically, an affiliate who can generate a large proportion of a product's sales is regarded as a super affiliate. If a product made 100 sales a day, then the super affiliate would be expected to make 25 or more sales a day. If the product made 1,000 sales a day, then anyone making 100 sales could be called a super affiliate.

As you can see, the level of sales that defines a super affiliate is dependent on a number of factors, and not all super affiliates are created equal.

Benefits of Being a Super Affiliate

Most affiliate managers will have hundreds or thousands of affiliates. Unfortunately, most of them will make zero sales or just one or two a month.

The affiliate manager needs to attract a super affiliate who will sell more products than the majority of the other affiliates combined.

This need for genuine super affiliates gives the super affiliate great leverage. It means he or she can generally negotiate a higher percentage of commission or a nice bonus payment for a certain number of sales.

The level of sales that defines a super affiliate is dependent on a number of factors, and not all super affiliates are created equal.

If affiliate managers approach you on a regular basis, you should consider yourself on the way to super affiliate status.

In addition, super affiliates will often get approached by affiliate managers and get asked to promote a program. I made \$10,000 worth of sales of one particular product through CJ one month, and the following month I had lots of offers from affiliate managers who had previously turned me down as an affiliate.

Generally, if affiliate managers approach you on a regular basis, you should consider yourself on the way to super affiliate status.

If you do make genuine super affiliate status, then be prepared to negotiate higher rates and favorable terms. For example, if you want a direct deposit each week rather than a check each month, then ask for it.

How to Become a Super Affiliate

Let me tell you here and now: you won't become a super affiliate overnight. It takes a proper plan and hard work to get to the level at which you can consider yourself one. The first thing you need to do is to create a plan of action along with a business plan for yourself.

You need to treat this like a proper business, because this is what it's going to become if you are successful. If you want to emulate the four-hour work week and do the minimum amount of effort, then super affiliate status is not for you!

With income coming in from multiple sources, you are going to need a good record-keeping system and a good accountant. You may even need a lawyer to negotiate those contracts with the advertising networks.

You'll probably end up employing staff or outsourcing much of the menial work to outsourcing companies abroad. But that's not all; before you get to that stage, you'll also need to develop a lot of skills and invest a lot of time in your future.

First on your list of skills to master is PPC marketing; you need to master AdWords and Yahoo! Search Marketing. I don't mean just being able to manage a few \$50-a-day campaigns, but campaigns that can run into hundreds or thousands of dollars worth of ads every day.

You'll need to refine your tactics and techniques so that your campaigns are profitable on a daily basis. This includes the ability to test and refine different compelling ads plus manage your funds so that you don't run short of credit. All this takes time and practice.

You'll need to know how to write ads that convert and design landing pages that result in a high Quality Score so your advertising costs are as low as possible. You'll also need to keep up to date with what Google expects from its advertisers.

In addition to PPC, be prepared to constantly build large responsive subscriber lists in the niches you are going to target. It's no good building a list of people interested in losing weight and then trying to sell them a cure for acne, so you'll need to manage several large lists at one time.

Your subscribers will need to be engaged and to trust you, so you need to contact them on a regular basis and give them useful information. Don't make every email a sales pitch.

You'll need the ability to build and maintain professional-looking websites and landing pages that convert visitors to sales. This means that you'll need to master SEO in addition to all the other skills you'll need.

Finally, you'll need to become an authority in the niches you target; aim to become the "Go-To Guy" in your niche. The first step is to aim to top the search engine rankings and drive traffic to your sales pages. Make sales, lots of them, and you have made the first steps to becoming a super affiliate.

Is It Worth It?

By now you are probably wondering if it's worthwhile trying to become a super affiliate. It is.

With the hard work and effort come rewards that you can probably only dream about now. Imagine what it would be like to send out a series of emails to your subscribers that result in huge commission checks, or starting a PPC campaign that costs \$1,000 a day but makes you five times that amount every day.

As you have grasped from reading this article, it's not easy to become a super affiliate. Maybe only one or two people reading this will ever achieve super affiliate status. But it sure is good fun trying to get there.

Even if you don't quite make it, you'll still have built up an excellent business that will give you an income for years to come.

Seize the opportunity, and you'll have a fun ride ahead of you; but if you don't, you will probably regret it in the future. So go and create your plan to become the next super affiliate.

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About the Author

Mark Thompson spent many years working in an IT consultancy in London. Following a re-evaluation of his goals and lifestyle in 2004, he sold everything he couldn't fit into the family car and moved to rural Spain, where he now pursues a variety of online ventures. Visit his blog <http://mjthompson.net> to learn more about the benefits of his low-cost online business coaching.

What Merchants Look for in Super Affiliates

By Evelyn Grazini

www.bestaffiliateniche.com



Many super affiliates are simple “work-at-home” type people. They probably became affiliates because they liked the freedom of working when and where they want.

The term “super affiliate” seems like a big word to some. After all, if you’re a super affiliate, then you must have it all: the big house with a pool, a lavish lifestyle, all the things that every affiliate wishes for.

I was amazed one day when a merchant called me a super affiliate. Granted, it was a smaller merchant. But I was making only a few sales a day for them. So I began to wonder — what really is a super affiliate?

Of course, I wanted to be seen as a super affiliate by more merchants because super affiliates get special treatment. They get higher commissions, approval to bid on PPC terms that other affiliates can’t, and much more.

However, not all super affiliates are alike. Since there are a variety of ways to market, every affiliate can do something different. With that in mind, we’ll take a look at a few different types of affiliates, then discuss what merchants look for in these affiliates when selecting and recruiting super affiliates for their products.

Super Affiliate Marketing Models

Many super affiliates are simple “work-at-home” type people. They probably became affiliates because they liked the freedom of working when and where they want. Most of them select the marketing model that is the most fun for them to do.

In reality, though, there are only a few standard models to choose from. And, an affiliate could work all of the models if they choose to.

Merchants take these qualities into account, and realize that super affiliates will ask for special treatment when contacted to market a product or service. They can do this because they know they can outperform other affiliates doing the same tasks. Here are just a few things super affiliates may require of merchants:

- Many super affiliates spend five to six figures a month on PPC, and earn anywhere from two to four times their PPC budget back in affiliate commissions. For these affiliates, the commissions MUST be high enough to make PPC advertising viable.

- Sometimes these affiliates refer to their business model as “buying money.” Their goal is to buy traffic and then “flip” it for a profit. Merchants must realize that since the affiliate is buying the traffic, they may put up their own landing page to capture the names and email addresses of the visitors before sending them along to the merchant’s site.
- Super affiliates ask for, and usually receive commission upgrades, bonuses, and sometimes permission to bid on trademarked keywords or search terms normally forbidden in the affiliate agreement. Merchants may have to do some hard thinking before allowing super affiliates special PPC keyword arrangements.

They may not want anyone to outbid them on their company name. At the same time, if super affiliates can get more sales than the merchant can, it might be a winning proposition for both sides.

The advertising methods of super affiliates might be quite similar to those of the merchants. Therefore, when selecting an affiliate, merchants sometimes prefer to select those who are using different marketing methods than they are.

Some super affiliates run their entire business on PPC and landing pages. They buy traffic and send it to landing pages designed either to make an immediate sale or to get a click-through to the merchant’s site. Some use article marketing; others focus on list building, using subscribers for sales; and others combine a few different methods.

Here are a few different types of marketing that merchants look for. Of course, since things are constantly changing, this list is by no means all inclusive.

As I said before, many marketing methods are available for today’s super affiliate, but there are still a few tried-and-true methods that are used most often. If you’re currently striving to be a super affiliate, know that merchants usually look for super affiliates who are at least efficient at one of the following methods:

Pay Per Click (PPC) Affiliates

PPC affiliates usually think more about making a sale than capturing the visitor’s information for their list. Sometimes, mailing to a list can be time consuming. PPC affiliates spend most of their time formatting their PPC campaigns for the highest sales possible.

They also track each sale down to the very page and keyword that made the sale. Merchants look for these affiliates because they can quickly set up a campaign, and begin making massive sales almost immediately.

The advertising methods of super affiliates might be quite similar to those of the merchants. Therefore, when selecting an affiliate, merchants sometimes prefer to select those who are using different marketing methods than they are.

Merchants know the types of affiliates they want to contact. But a few things need to be in place before a merchant contacts any affiliate. As a merchant, you don't HAVE to offer the world, but you DO have to make affiliates want to market your product.

JV Affiliates

JV affiliates incorporate affiliate sales into a more comprehensive product mix. They usually begin with viral marketing and list building, concentrating on building massive subscriber lists. Then they use modestly priced affiliate products as their "entry-level" product to qualify purchasers for cross-sells and upsells for other venture partners.

Because JV affiliates usually have very large lists, one good mailing to a list could account for more sales than the merchant can make by themselves in a year! JV affiliates usually prefer to participate in large roll-outs of new products, as opposed to a line of products offered by any one particular merchant.

Multi-Merchant Affiliates

Merchants recognize and understand that affiliates don't usually "work" just for them. There's what we lovingly call the "closet super affiliates." They earn small but steady sales every month from dozens, even hundreds of programs. This type of affiliate also prefers to quietly glide well below the radar. Merchants who are well established and plan to be in business for many years into the future greatly benefit from this type of super affiliate.

Niche/Content Affiliates

Niche affiliates have a passion for a particular topic, product, or idea and want to build a web-based business around it. These affiliates create large independent content sites and are known as the subject matter expert in the niche. As we know, content sells, so this is another type of affiliate merchants look for. Merchants who can get this type of affiliate interested in their product are very lucky indeed!

Merchant Responsibilities

Merchants know the types of affiliates they want to contact. But a few things need to be in place before a merchant contacts any affiliate. As a merchant, you don't HAVE to offer the world, but you DO have to make affiliates want to market your product. Here are just a few things super affiliates look for before marketing for a merchant:

A Common Affiliate Program

Super affiliates prefer larger checks from recognized companies. Therefore, if you're a merchant that has just one or two products, consider using a large marketplace such as ClickBank or PayDotCom, since most affiliates are already registered at these sites.

Pay a Reasonable Commission

When selling digital products online it is recommended that you give the largest percentage you can. A minimum of 50 percent should be of-

ferred; 60 percent is nice, but 70–75 percent is a generous commission. You might be thinking to yourself, “A commission of 75 percent? That’s crazy! I want to make ‘some’ money as well; why should they get more than me?”

Quite simply, the more you give affiliates, the more likely they are willing to spend their money to promote your products so you will make more sales and get the potential for more repeat products in the long run.

Pay Quickly and Reliably

Affiliates have an inbuilt fear that the product owner will run off with their money. So the sooner you pay them, the more comfortable they are, and the more willing they are to promote your products. Pay them reliably at the agreed time each month (preferably twice a month).

Make It Easy for Them to Promote You

The last thing you want to do is make it hard or complicated for your affiliates to promote your products. You have to make it very easy for them to promote you by providing them with easy-to-brand solo ads, banners, articles, and ezine ads.

Now, if you’re a merchant, you know what to look for when looking for super affiliates to market your product. And if you’re an affiliate, you know what special treatment other super affiliates are asking for.

So strive to become a super affiliate, and soon merchants will be knocking on your door with special promotion ideas, support options, and — best of all — larger commission offerings!

About the Author

Evelyn Grazini has been marketing as an affiliate for over five years, and teaching marketing for two years. Find her blog and affiliate marketing resources at <http://www.bestaffiliateniche.com>.

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The Super Affiliates Speak

By David Long
JDavidLong@gmail.com



Everyone learns from observing others, listening to their advice, and emulating their example. When those others are bona fide super affiliates, the opportunity to learn from the best is literally worth its weight in gold.

We've been fortunate here to have gained responses to a few questions asked about how to become a super affiliate — from those who have actually done it! Let's listen in as the pros relate their views:

Question #1:
What is a super affiliate, in your view?

From **Shawn Collins, the co-founder of Affiliate Summit**, one of the premier networking events in the industry:

"It varies from program to program. I'd say it's the top 2–5% of any given affiliate program. Certainly, there are exceptions, in cases where affiliate programs are on life support. I'm talking more about active, high-volume affiliate programs."

And, from our very own **Anik Singal, founder of Affiliate Classroom (now Lurn, Inc.)**:

"In my opinion, a super affiliate is an affiliate who generates at least \$10,000 in net profit every month AND commands a lot of traffic in a niche."

You can bet that when super affiliates like Shawn or Anik say "in my opinion," that view is backed by years of experience struggling, making mistakes, and breaking through to success — i.e., it's more than "mere opinion." You can see that in their answers to the next question:

Question #2:
What motivated you to become a super affiliate, and how do you stay motivated?

Shawn tells us:

"I desperately needed to supplement my income, because my wife was pregnant with our first child, and she was going to be

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Question #2:

What motivated you to become a super affiliate, and how do you stay motivated?

Shawn tells us:

"I desperately needed to supplement my income, because my wife was pregnant with our first child, and she was going to be

staying at home. We had a mortgage, two student loans, car loan, etc. and she was the higher earner. Long story short, my salary in the low 30s wasn't going to cut it, especially in northern New Jersey.

"So, I'd focus on building my affiliate business on evenings and weekends back then, and became accustomed to a seven-day work week.

These days, I've got four kids, and my wife has been able to stay at home with them all the way through (over 10 years now). Financial security and my wife being able to stay home with the kids is plenty of motivation for me."

And Anik adds:

"Money, really, in all honesty! I needed to start a business without much investment — I was a college student at the time. I realized affiliate marketing lets you start a business with \$100 or even less!

What keeps me motivated is the fast pace, the challenges; business on the Internet is always changing and requires constant adjustments and tweaks. I love to see what I'm made of when confronted with challenges!"

Not surprisingly, both were interested in making money. Hey, that's what being an affiliate is all about, no? But look deeper, and you'll see more at work.

You'll see an interest in financial security, independence, and the like.

That's brought out clearly by some comments the super super affiliate **Rosalind Gardner** offers on her website advertising the *Super Affiliate Handbook*:

"Just like you (perhaps), I wanted to quit my job so I started looking for ways to replace my income and doing business online seemed like the best option.

While working full-time as an air traffic controller, [I] started promoting online dating service memberships as an affiliate marketer through Sage-Hearts.com"

So here, you see, it's possible to start small — as small as \$100 and a single website — and through hard work and some wise choices, you can reach the pinnacle of affiliate marketing. It may sound corny and old fashioned, but that dream still comes true for some.

So, what are those wise choices (and some not so wise from which we often learn even more)? That leads us to ask:

It's possible to start small — as small as \$100 and a single website — and through hard work and some wise choices, you can reach the pinnacle of affiliate marketing. It may sound corny and old fashioned, but that dream still comes true for some.

But don't get stuck trying too long, as Anik Singal wisely points out. Sometimes, you have to cut your losses and accept that something is not working.

Question #3:

What are some of the signs that tell you/told you that you were on the right/wrong track?

Shawn explains:

“It was a matter of meeting the bills, at first. I was satisfied paying the cable bill, and then tacking on the electric, property tax, etc., until my affiliate revenue was beating my real job income. This took a couple or three years for me.”

And Anik says:

“Well, what I look for right from the start is whether I'm starting to generate income — or at least traffic and opt-ins. I always try to build a list if I can, so if I'm getting visitors and if they are opting in, then I am doing something right and just need to find the right products to promote to them. But if after weeks of doing it all and doing it right, and I'm not making sales — then I move on.”

Here we see a common theme. They try something that sounds good, then measure, measure, measure. Trial and error, and sometimes much more the latter, will generate the data you need to make those measurements.

But don't get stuck trying too long, as Anik wisely points out. Sometimes, you have to cut your losses and accept that something is not working.

When Thomas Edison was asked about his process of inventing the light bulb, specifically the 999 designs that didn't work, a reporter asked him if he'd become discouraged. He answered, paraphrasing, “No, now I knew 999 things that wouldn't work. I knew I was that much closer to knowing what would.”

So, how do you judge that? What things should you try, or not try, and in what mix? We asked our super affiliates:

Question #4:

How important are different venues/business models for becoming a super affiliate, such as conferences, creating dozens of different sites vs. one or a few you pour all your effort into — ebooks, blogs, etc.?

Shawn was first out of the gate with this:

“It's tough for me to be objective, since I am a cofounder of Affiliate Summit, but I think those in-person interactions are invaluable for learning and cutting deals. Also, there are many blogs and people on Twitter that can provide an ongoing education in various areas of affiliate marketing.

I just put out a new edition of the AffStat report for free, and it

includes a couple dozen data points, as well as lists of blogs and Twitter accounts to follow for affiliate marketers. People can get that report at <http://www.affstat.com>.”

Anik chimes right in with some superb details, appropriate for his status as the founder of the premier affiliate learning organization:

“1. Focus on one business model to start. Don’t try them all initially, you’ll get scattered and confused. So pick any one good business model, with a proven product, get training in that model, and then refine it until you are making it work. [Ed. Note: We’ll be talking a whole lot more about this in next month’s issue.]

“2. I try to attend at least 2–3 Internet marketing conferences every year. Networking at conferences has really helped me. Even if you are not in the standard “Internet Marketing: Make Money Online” niche, you can learn a lot from attending a conference where the Internet Marketing crowd hangs out — they are often the first to innovate new marketing techniques, which you can then apply to any niche that interests you.

“3. Mastermind with other marketers that are BIGGER or more successful than you! Again, this is where attending conferences can be a great opportunity. Many successful marketers are very willing to share their techniques — you just have to ask. What really impresses them is if you take ACTION on that knowledge, then they are likely to listen to you and share more with you.”

Finally, you may want to know how long you can expect all this to take before you start reaching a level above the norm. Well, naturally, that will vary enormously from person to person. But it’s not necessarily as long as you might think.

Question #5:

How long do you think it takes, on average (total span, hours per day, any way you want to break it down) to achieve the super affiliate level?

Shawn says:

“There are so many routes you can take — success can be achieved relatively fast with paid search, but it’s a lot harder than it looks, and carries plenty of financial risk if you’re going to scale up quick.

“For the average affiliate, I’d suggest starting out while still fully employed and to focus on areas that really interest them. Then build out sites that have some sort of unique value proposition. So long as it’s an area where the affiliate has some passion, the hobby should have no trouble converting to a career.

“But not so fast — maybe in a year with lots of time and energy invested. Now this isn’t for everybody, but I haven’t taken a weeklong vacation since the ‘90s. When I do take long week-

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ends, I’ve got a computer and wireless broadband to keep on top of stuff.”

Anik relates his take:

“I think at least two hours a day. Being CONSISTENT is the key. You should plan on it taking at least 5–6 months, building up your business consistently, to get to super affiliate status — and that’s if you’re REALLY dedicated. It’s not that it can’t happen sooner, but you need enough time to take your initial profits and then REINVEST them in your business. Plus you need time to test to see what products work best for your traffic and sites.”

Of course, a large number of affiliates fortunate enough to have learned from Rosalind Gardner’s book and consulting services will already know her story. In 1998,

“Despite my lack of design skills however, and with no training, by the end of month 10, I was banking \$5,000 US per month.”

Then, by April 2003:

“Net earnings for the year totaled \$436,797!!”

How much you earn, and how fast, is very much dependent on your efforts, personal circumstances, and — yes, let’s admit it — a certain amount of luck, of course. But as my old wrestling coach used to say: “Luck is when preparation and opportunity meet.” You couldn’t do better to prepare for those opportunities than to emulate the super affiliates who have blazed the trail ahead.

About the Author

David Long is a freelance writer and editor with over 20 years of experience. His PLR articles and eBooks have appeared on hundreds of websites. They cover topics that include Wine & Beer, Travel, Gardening, Health & Fitness, Pets, Stocks & Bonds, and dozens more subjects. He can be contacted for hire at JDavidLong@gmail.com.

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