

Affiliate Classroom

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The journal of affiliate marketing and management best practices



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Top 5 Affiliate Programs



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Featured Program – PsPrint

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Top 5 Programs: September 2007

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NeverblueAds

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NeverblueAds brings together choice affiliates and quality advertisers as partners through high-performing, custom advertising. They offer personalized customer service, a user-friendly tracking system, and high payouts. For advertisers, they drive consumers to action. NeverblueAds distributes sustainable traffic to their advertising partners. For affiliates, they dependably provide high payouts for directing traffic to quality advertisers. Since they are able to successfully accommodate both advertisers and affiliates, they make sure everyone wins.

MedStore

<http://www.medstore.biz/affiliates/?fid=6589>

MedStore is a quick growing and well-known online pharmacy with a great reputation. They provide one of the largest selections of generic medications. They have no holding period and have payouts twice a month. They also have an extremely high conversation rate because you earn on all orders from returning customers, even if they delete a cookie. This allows for unlimited earning potential and a program that demands attention.

DirectROI

http://directroi.com/index.html?super_affiliate_code=CD2716

DirectROI is an Internet marketing network created to connect merchants with qualified Internet marketers, maximizing the ROI for both parties. As a network, they continually work to optimize performance, deliver creative campaigns and exclusive offers, and generate higher margins and sales volume. Their network works only when both the merchant and affiliate consider the campaign to be successful. At DirectROI, they make sure to work closely with both parties to assure their mutual success.

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Top Niche Partners is an online performance agency with a difference. They combine experience, integrity, and innovation to get you the best results. Top Niche provides both advertisers and publishers with online marketing expertise. They have a simple mission: to provide you the most comprehensive marketing services tailored to meet your specific needs. Whether it's direct marketing campaigns, lead generation initiatives, or simply getting the offer ready to take to the big dance, Top Niche can provide the right solutions for you.

Until next time...

Check us out in our [Industry Watch Newsletter](#)

(http://www.affiliateprograms.com/industry_newsletter/10-17.htm)

In our newsletter you can find all the latest industry news, tips, and tools. Communicate with our team of experts through in-depth articles and free online resources. These resources will help you to dramatically, increase your knowledge of affiliate marketing. Here is a place where you can receive the guidance and support you need to reach your full potential.

How To Promote High Ticket Backend Offers

by Kathy Jackson



You work hard to get your customers, and everybody knows that it is easier to retain a customer than it is to get a new one. Obviously, selling a product to a customer one time does not help you to retain that customer. You need additional products to sell to each of your customers, and that is where a backend offer comes into play.

You may have a \$20 ebook that is selling really well, and you may think that you are successful because of this. But if you don't have something else to offer your customers, you may eventually tap that market dry. You need a backend product – in fact, you may need several backend products.

A backend product typically costs more than the entry-level or front-end product. For example, your entry-level product may be that \$20 ebook. Your backend product may be an extensive membership site that costs around \$30 to \$40 per month, which is related in some way to that first \$20 ebook.

A backend product may also cost a great deal less than the entry-level product. For example, when vacuum cleaners required bags, the more expensive vacuum cleaner was the front-end product, but the belts and bags that had to be replaced on a regular basis were the backend product.

A high-ticket backend product is typically anything that costs over \$500. A low-ticket product typically costs less than \$200, and products that are priced between \$200 and \$500 are considered as mid-level products. Five hundred dollars is a lot of money to a lot of people, and you may think that your market would never pay such an outrageous amount of money.

However, you will be pleasantly surprised at how much people will pay for products that relate to their interests and passions. The way that the product is promoted is the key to success with high-ticket backend offers. The product must also be worth the price that you are asking, and it is a good idea to have a mid-level product that is promoted before the backend product as well.

Approaches to Promoting Backend Products

Let's take a look at some of the most successful ways to promote a backend product:

Teleseminars

Teleseminars are very popular today. If you've sold an entry-level product, you can invite those customers to a free teleseminar that you are hosting. You can interview the creator of the mid-level product, and make sales of this product through the teleseminar.

Later, you could host a teleseminar series for the backend product, inviting those who purchased the mid-level product. Note the difference between a teleseminar and a teleseminar series. A teleseminar is one call; a series is a series of calls, spread out over time – typically one call per week, for a certain number of weeks.

Promote from Within – You can promote your mid-level product with the entry-level product, and promote the high-ticket product with the mid-level product. For example, if the entry-level product is an ebook, that ebook won't usually give all of the detailed information concerning the topic or subject.

The customer is instead prompted to purchase the mid-level product to learn more on the topic. The mid-level product gets deeper into the topic, but the high-ticket product is promoted in this product. The idea is to use the entry-level and mid-level products as promotional tools for the next level product.

Offer Bonuses

You should offer bonuses that nobody else is offering, whether the product is your own or an affiliate product. This significantly increases the value of your product, and works especially well for high-ticket items.

Offering bonuses that nobody else is offering, whether the product is your own or an affiliate product, significantly increases the value of your product and works especially well for high-ticket items.

People simply want more value for their money. For example, if you are selling expensive software, you could create an instructional video that teaches people how to use and get the most out of that software, and give it away as a bonus to those customers who purchase the product.

One-Time Offers

You've probably seen one-time offers when you've purchased products. You purchase a product, and are taken to a page to purchase a related product for a one-time special price. If you leave that page, that special price offer – or special bonuses associated with that product purchase – will be gone forever.

This works better after the purchase of a mid-level product than after the purchase of an entry-level product. Immediately after the purchase of an entry-level product, the customer has not had a chance to review the quality of your product and, in many cases, has not yet built up enough trust in you to spend more money.

By the time he/she buys a mid-level product, however, the customer has had the opportunity to view the quality of the products that you sell and will have more trust in you. This is the perfect time for a one-time offer, and there are many scripts now available that make this easy for you. An example of this is One Time Offer Magic, at <http://www.onetimeoffermagic.com/>.

Joint Ventures

Let those who have more experience, or those who can reach further into the market, help you to sell your high-ticket backend product. Bring joint venture partners into your plan. Let them start with the front-end product, and you will be amazed at what they can do for your sales.

Of course, this is really possible only if you are the owner of the product, as opposed to being an affiliate, as you will need to pay commissions to your joint venture partners.

Diversify

One front-end or mid-level product may not be enough. Instead, try creating numerous different front-end and mid-level products that all lead to the high-ticket backend product. You will most likely make more sales this way.

For example, someone may not purchase your entry-level ebook on organic gardening, but they may be highly interested in an ebook on herb gardening. It could be that they prefer an ebook on using herbs for medicinal purposes. All of these products could lead to an Organic Herbal Gardening membership website.

Once a customer has spent money with you, they are likely to spend money again and again with you, as long as you keep directing them to quality products.

Developing a Sales System

Just as there are many types of backend products, there are many different ways to get your customer base to buy those products. The important thing to remember is that once a customer has spent money with you, they are likely to spend money again and again with you, as long as you keep directing them to quality products.

You will most likely have more difficulty coming up with a high-ticket backend product than you will have in selling that product. Some ideas for high-ticket backend products include:

- Selling Master Resell Rights to your front-end or mid-level product
- Specialized Membership Websites
- Printed Manuals and Workbooks
- Consulting Services
- Extensive Teleseminar Series
- Video and DVD Courses

These days, just about anybody can make a little money on the Internet – but if you want the big bucks, you've got to learn to create a sales system. This includes entry-level products, mid-level products, and backend products. Once you've taken a customer all the way through your sales system, where do you take them?

You start all over again with another related entry-level product, or you take them on to yet another high-ticket backend product. The key is that if you are meeting your customers' needs, they will purchase from you over and over again – even buying those expensive high-ticket products. Obviously, this requires more than quality products. It also requires establishing a relationship with your customer with constant communication, and keeping abreast of what your customers want and need.

Think for just a moment about your pharmacist. Your pharmacist probably knows as much about what is going on with your health as your doctor does – because he is the one filling the

prescriptions. Pharmacists also know what medicines you need for certain conditions.

Let's say that you burn yourself. You obviously don't want to go to the doctor over a simple burn, but you need to treat it. You go to your friendly pharmacist – the one who recommended and sold you a wonderful cream for your arthritis when he saw that the doctor was prescribing medication for arthritis.

You've been going back month after month to get your medicine refilled, and to purchase that cream, and now, you need something for this burn. You go to your pharmacist, who is happy to look at your burn and make a recommendation for treating it.

This is the same pharmacist whom you can call at home in the middle of the night to fill a prescription that you got from the emergency room for your sick baby – or the pharmacist who will meet you at the store on Sunday morning so that you can purchase a humidifier for your sick baby.

Why does this pharmacist go out of his way to meet your needs? He does this because he knows the value of your business. Without you even realizing it, he has made you a lifelong customer, and he knows that you will continue to get your prescriptions filled and purchase medical supplies and over-the-counter medicines from him – even if you could purchase the same things cheaper elsewhere – for as long as you live, or for as long as he is in business.

He knows how to look at what you are buying, and to make recommendations for other products that are related to what you are buying. *You need to become just like this pharmacist.* When you do that, you will become an expert at selling high-ticket backend products.

Selling a high-ticket backend product isn't as hard as most people may think it is. Again, it is a question of leading your customer to it through your sales system, making sure that you are offering top-quality products, establishing a relationship with your customers, and of course, paying attention to the needs and desires of those customers.

If you are meeting your customers' needs, they will purchase from you over and over again – even buying those expensive high-ticket products. Obviously, this requires more than quality products. It also requires establishing a relationship with your customer with constant communication, and keeping abreast of what your customers want and need.

About the Author

Kathy Jackson is a Texas Rancher and freelance writer. She is also a contributing author for several farm and ranch publications. Internet marketing is one of Kathy's burning interests and she is just "tickled pink" to write for AC Magazine and Anik Singal, her marketing hero. On the Affiliate Classroom Blog (<http://blog.affiliateclassroom.com/>), you will find several articles by Kathy on various aspects of affiliate marketing.

Why Aren't You Promoting One Time Offers?

by Mark Thompson

<http://www.income-academy.com>



A lot has been made recently of the effectiveness of a “profit funnel.” To people not familiar with the term, a profit funnel is the process of taking a customer and extracting payment from them for various products over a period of time. It also relates to a specific location in your virtual real estate where income can be generated. One part of the funnel that can very often be overlooked is the **one-time offer**, or OTO.

One-time offers have been around for a very long time, but really only came to prominence with the advent of the Butterfly Marketing Script. Since then there is hardly a successful marketer that doesn't use them to some extent. If you look at the additional income that can be made from one-time offers, it makes perfect sense to incorporate them as part of your marketing arsenal.

A well-written one-time offer page will have a much higher conversion rate than a normal sales page, which is one of the reasons that more and more marketers are using them.

For psychological reasons, one-time offers usually convert very well – a 70% conversion rate for such offers is conceivable. If you have a main product selling for \$37, and a one-time offer that adds another \$20 to your income and converts at 50%, it's like earning another \$10 per sale.

What Exactly Is an OTO?

An OTO is a page that is shown immediately after an action is performed at a website. That action could be anything from registering, subscribing to a newsletter, or purchasing a product. The customer will then be forwarded to the OTO, where the sales page will attempt to sell another product, a series of products, or a deluxe version of the product you are about to buy.

One of the key parts of the process is that a customer will see the OTO page only once. It is vitally important that the customers know this. The fact that it is a one-time offer should be highlighted so that there can be no mistake – *this is the only time you will get this offer*. They must be left with no choice but to purchase the offer at the reduced price, or lose the opportunity and have to buy it at a later date at a much higher price, if it is even available.

It's very easy to set up a one-time offer page if you have the correct software. The hard part is writing sales copy that conveys a sense of urgency and persuades the prospective customer that he needs to purchase the product NOW! A well-written OTO page will have a much higher conversion rate than a normal sales page. For this and other reasons, more and more marketers are using OTO pages.

Converting with OTOs

Let's look at a couple of scenarios in which you could make good use of an OTO. In this first scenario, let's imagine that we have a niche site related to overcoming procrastination. One of the easiest ways to use the one-time offer would be to set up our website with an opt-in form offering a free ebook or series of tips delivered by email relating to overcoming procrastination.

Once the customer signs up, take them to an OTO page offering a series of videos and a step-by-step guide to overcoming procrastination. The sales letter will make it clear that, although the program retails at \$97, as a subscriber they can purchase it now for only \$37; however, they won't have the opportunity to buy at this price ever again.

The scenario above is the hardest type of customer to convert – they are signing up for a free ebook or weekly tips, and what's worse is that they don't have a credit card in their hand. However even if you only sell to 1% of the customers, it will still bring you an income that you wouldn't have had without the OTO.

In the next scenario, we are selling an ebook on an Internet marketing–related subject. We know that any purchasers will have an interest in IM, so we can tailor the OTO to suit them. We could offer them a selection of IM-related software programs to which we purchased resale rights. Alternatively, we could even offer them the resale rights to our ebook or a related product.

When selling non-IM-related products, it is important to spend time choosing the right OTO to offer to your customers. They won't have any interest in resale rights or marketing software. Ideally, you should find related products or deluxe versions of the original product they bought.

One benefit of having an OTO following a purchase is that the customer already has his/her credit card out and is already predisposed to purchasing from you. This is why one-time offers will convert so well compared to the conversion rate of traditional sales pages.

One benefit of having a one time offer following a purchase is that the customer already has his/her credit card out and is already predisposed to purchasing from you. This is why one-time offers will convert so well compared to the conversion rate of traditional sales pages.

Make Sure It All Ties Together

Whether you choose to offer a one-time offer after a free product or service, or to use an OTO to increase your profit from a sale, you need to make sure that the OTO is related to the original product. Trying to sell an ebook on glamorous makeup techniques to someone who has just bought a book on bodybuilding is not going to convert as well as a video series of bodybuilding techniques or a nutritional guide to building muscle.

As well as the standard type of one-time offer, several methods that work well without applying undue pressure to the customer. Providing the customer with the option of a deluxe version of the product that they have already committed to buying can be very profitable. Although this is not strictly a one-time offer (the customer could go back and buy again), it is a method that has a very good conversion rate.

A very good example of this can be seen on the order page for the Burn the Fat ebook (<http://burnthefat.com/order.html>). Here the customer who already has committed to buying the book is offered the option of another book that is closely related for an extra \$20. The offer is included on the same page as the product they have committed to buy, and it uses a soft-sell technique that relies on the customer's desire for the best available product.

The above uses the same methods that salesmen have been using for generations. When you shop for a car, you are quoted a price; then when you agree to purchase, the salesman offers you various upgrades such as electric seats or a seat-back Playstation. Like all good salesmen, he knows that you want the best available package.

Creating one-time offers requires that you have a good knowledge of programming in PHP or that you purchase a script. There are several scripts available that use an OTO page as a standard feature. Jonathan Ledger's \$7 Secrets script is about the cheapest available, while at the other end of the scale, Mike Filsaime's Butterfly Marketing comes in at almost \$1,500.

If you decide you don't want to purchase any scripts, and you go to the trouble of finding offers, then one alternative is OTOGoldMine (<http://www.otogoldmine.com>). OTOGoldMine is a free site that provides you with an OTO sales letter complete with a selection of products. You choose which package you want to offer, and you receive 75% of the income. The program is operated through ClickBank, so you know your payments are secure. The prices of the one-time offers range from \$19 to \$67. This is a great way to test the waters and see if OTOs are right for you.

Whether you choose to offer a one-time offer after a free product or service, or to use an OTO to increase your profit from a sale, you need to make sure that the OTO is related to the original product.

The Versatility of OTOs

Here we have talked about OTOs mostly as an upsell to a product, but they can be used in many more places. You could use a one-time offer when customers sign up for your newsletter, after a membership site signup, when people unsubscribe from your newsletter, and as an exit URL from your website.

We've looked at just a few of the places where you can attempt to increase your income from one-time offers. Some marketers have even been known to use OTO pages as the destination pages for 404 error redirects. So if someone gets a page that doesn't exist, they see the offer. When it comes to using one-time offers, you are limited only by your imagination.

About the Author

Mark Thompson spent many years working in 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.

See: <http://www.income-academy.com>

Offline Retail Marketing Techniques for Online Affiliate Websites

by Katalin Torok

<http://mktg.idared.net>



You might have never visualized your affiliate business as an online version of your favorite neighborhood store. In this article we will show you how to apply some marketing ideas and techniques from the repertoire of in-store marketing, and apply them to your online affiliate venture.

True, the online equivalent to retail commerce is classic e-commerce, in which almost all aspects of selling and shopping have an online analogue – from a "storefront" right down to a virtual "cart" and "checkout." However, since affiliates effectively build virtual stores that pre-sell the merchandise of one or several online merchants, the affiliate website is analogous to a storefront as well.

Just like any marketing discipline, in-store marketing and merchandising have volumes of literature and thousands of techniques and ideas. Here we will look at some of the key points of retail marketing and offer ideas on how you, as an affiliate, can apply these on your own website and in your promotions.

Store Layout and Design

Have you ever considered why the bread aisle is often in the back of a supermarket, or why you are more likely to encounter sweets and snacks on your way to the cashier? The layout of a retail store strives to guide the shopper through the entire store in a way to maximize sales across the whole store: make sure the customer encounters, or is at least made aware of, as much merchandise as possible, while in the meantime providing the customer with a seamless and shopper-friendly store experience.

Translating that to the online world, when a visitor – a potential shopper – lands on your affiliate website, your layout and design should work together to achieve two goals:

1. Let the visitor complete his/her mission, whether it is to buy a certain product or to browse and shop the entire store; and
2. Maximize your earnings by, for example, making the shopper aware of your entire selection, upselling other products, or capturing the visitor as a newsletter subscriber or member.

Every Entry Point Is a Shop Entrance

While a brick-and-mortar store will have just one or a few entrances, every single page of your website is an open door into your online storefront. Search engines and links from other sites

will deliver searchers to pages deep within your site, while other traffic sources, like directories, will point to your home page. Keep this in mind when designing your layout, and don't make the mistake of concentrating only on your home page layout and making all other pages a simple stripped-down version of that home page.

Your navigation should be clearly visible on all pages, and it should be well thought out so that it provides information about your entire product selection at a glance. (If you stand in the central corridor of a supermarket, with well-designed signage, you will be able to scan all the product aisles at a glance to find your way.)

Customer Flow Across Your "Store"

An important difference between online and offline shopping experiences underlines why a consistent and well-designed layout and navigation is essential for an affiliate site. In a real-world store, if a customer is lost or confused, they won't have other options than to continue walking (even if they are frustrated enough to abandon their cart and leave the store). This offers the store another chance to sell their wares at the aisles or shelves that the customer encounters. However, in the online world, a frustrated visitor has a much more powerful escape route: the "Close" or "Back" button of the browser window. (And, to quote an old online cliché, your competition is only a click away.)

Merchandising is the art and science of choosing the right products and displaying them in the right position to maximize revenue. Instead of throwing a handful of products randomly on a sales page, think of your page as a store shelf.

Don't create dead ends on your site and provide a chance for the frustrated visitor to end their browsing there. Your layout should work to guide the visitor to the next step, creating a continuous flow in browsing up to the point when they click through to the merchant. Besides a consistent site header and navigation bar, place links to related content strategically across the page, in sidebars, and at the bottom of the page.

Even if you have a high-converting layout for your single-product sales pages, providing a few links to related categories and products will allow you to upsell other merchandise and invite the visitor to stick to your site, and regard it as a valuable resource in

the given topic.

Merchandising an Affiliate Site

As an affiliate, the minute you start choosing your virtual inventory, finding products to promote and putting them on a web page, you become your own virtual store's merchandiser. Merchandising is the art and science of choosing the right products and displaying them in the right position to maximize revenue. How does this translate into the affiliate business? Instead of throwing a handful of products randomly on a sales page, think of your page as a store shelf.

1. The most valuable places – both figuratively speaking and literally – on a store shelf are the shelves in the eye level of the customer. This translates into the "above the fold" portion of a web page – the portion of the page that is visible without having to scroll down. Which product – or what product information – will you choose to put in this most important position? On a single product page, the product name, a short and meaningful description,

and its picture would be best suited to grab attention in this valuable piece of screen real estate.

2. Think of the products you display in a group, and their relation to each other. Create a meaningful order, for example, by starting with the main product and listing its accessories in order of necessity below, or by listing books by the same author sorted by publication date or by title.
3. In addition to creating meaningful order in your product lists, create themed collections, just like store displays. A creative collection, especially if you spice it up with some unique wording and images, will create instant unique content for your site, and help maximize sales by upselling similar products. Some ideas for creating unique collections: celebrate each season, holidays and general events (e.g., Back to School), the latest trends ("green" products in your niche), sales (Top 10 deals of the month), etc.

Experiment with these techniques to see what works for your particular niche and product category. For example, themed product collections can work well for children's clothing and accessories because moms are eager to buy products or even entire product families with the same motifs or color scheme for their children. Upselling related products works great for electronics because of the many possibilities to promote accessories such as batteries, headphones, cables, manuals, and so on for the main product.

In-store Happenings

In-store education and events are important tools for attracting new customers and building loyalty, especially in niche retail storefronts that fight hard to compete with larger merchants and chain stores. These in-store happenings create a sense of community between the store and its customers, and brand the store as the go-to source in its niche. In addition to that, events also provide great opportunities for highlighting products (and hopefully selling them to many participants).

Similarly, even if building a community-based site is not part of your current business strategy, creating useful content and resources, running contests, and opening your site for user-generated content (even if its just a user-submitted photo gallery related to your niche) can work towards building your authority in your niche.

Go on a Research Trip

These are just a few of the ideas online marketers can borrow from the offline marketing world. Go on a field trip to gather more: grab a notebook and visit niche retail stores in your neighborhood. Visiting stores in your own niche can be especially inspirational.

Look at the shop windows and in-store displays for unique product groupings. Look at how products are organized on the shelves and note the most prominently featured products. Repeat the trip every few months to acquire seasonal ideas to apply to your virtual affiliate shop.

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> .

Starting an Affiliate Program for Your Own Product

by Gracie Browning



Creating and marketing your own product is extremely profitable. In fact, many people who start off with affiliate marketing often advance into the world of product creation, having already learned the marketing ropes. Creating and selling a product is one thing, but starting an affiliate program for that product is something else.

There was a time, long ago, when starting an affiliate program could literally cost hundreds, if not thousands of dollars. It also often required a great deal of technical skill – or the ability to pay someone who had the required technical skills – to get it all set up properly.

Today, that is no longer the case. In fact, an affiliate program can be started up in less than an hour, with all of the options out there. There are indeed numerous options, and you can pay a great deal of money to start your affiliate program – or pay a very small amount, if you know where to look.

The Numbers Add Up

Let's begin by taking a look at why you would want to set up your own affiliate program. If you have an affiliate program for your product, you essentially have a huge sales force, and that sales force will reach markets that you could not have possibly reached by yourself.

You will not have to pay advertising costs, unless you are advertising for affiliates. You can opt to continue making your own product sales, but you can just as easily stop all of your own marketing efforts and concentrate on helping your affiliates with their marketing efforts, which in turn reaches more markets in less time – for less money out of your pocket.

Obviously, you will split the money from each sale with the affiliate who made the sale. Some people view this as a loss in income – but is it really? Let's say that you are paying a 50% commission on each sale, and your product sells for \$20. You make \$10 per sale, and the affiliate makes \$10 per sale.

Alone, you could make 10 sales a week, for a total income of \$200, minus expenses. Now, if you had 10 affiliates, each making 10 sales a week, the grand total of sales would be \$2,000, of which \$1,000 would belong to you – the merchant. You've gained \$800 in profits, without having to do any of the work yourself!

Building Your Own Affiliate Program

Now that you see how much there is to be gained from having your own affiliate program, let's take a look at what you need to do in order to have a successful affiliate program. There is a great deal more to it than just setting it up. Remember those 10 affiliates who are going to

make 10 sales a week? They need help and motivation – and this comes from you, the merchant, who is also the affiliate manager.

Motivation starts in the dollars. Money has always been, and will always be, the greatest motivator. Start by offering a nice commission. These days, a commission of 50% on each sale is desired by most affiliates, unless the product is a high-ticket item that will net them a nice commission even with a lower commission percentage. You may opt to offer a smaller commission, but ideally, you should not go below 40%.

Many hard-working affiliates out there underperform, simply because they don't know enough about Internet marketing to do well. Help to educate them, as this will not only benefit them, but it will also benefit you. Their success is your success!

Next, create sales materials for your affiliates. They will definitely appreciate it. Sales materials may include ebooks or reports that they can give away, articles that they can use, pre-sales letters that they can adapt for their own use, and of course, graphics such as buttons and banners for use on their websites.

Follow this with some basic marketing instructions. Many hard-working affiliates out there underperform, simply because they don't know enough about Internet marketing to do well. Help to educate them, as this will not only benefit them, but it will also benefit you. Their success is your success!

You might consider working with someone who has a marketing course available. They may be willing to offer a deep discount to your affiliates, or you may be able to purchase a license that would allow you to share the marketing course with your entire affiliate team.

Keep in Touch with Your Affiliates

Communication with your affiliates is vital. Make sure that you build an opt-in list for those affiliates. In most cases, they will automatically be added to a mailing list as soon as they sign up for your affiliate program. Send them motivational emails and marketing tips on a regular basis. All this costs you is your time, and you will be rewarded for it. You might also recognize top performers each month, and possibly hold contests for your affiliates, with the top-earning affiliate being awarded with a cash bonus.

Finally, make sure that your affiliates are paid on time. The easiest way to pay affiliates is through an online service such as PayPal. Most people who do business online have a PayPal account, at <http://www.paypal.com>. You can offer other options as well – such as StormPay, at <http://www.stormpay.com>, or one of the many other online payment options.

You could also opt to send out checks on a monthly basis; however, this usually takes more time and involves more expense. The important thing is to make sure that they are paid on time, and that they are paid the correct amount. If you fail to pay your affiliates as agreed, your online reputation as a merchant – and as a marketer – could be ruined overnight!

Single Tier or Multi Tier?

You also need to decide whether your affiliate program will be single-tiered or multi-tiered. A

single tier is very easy to understand – your affiliate makes a sale, and you pay them their commission. A multi-tiered affiliate program is a little more complicated.

With a multi-tiered program, your affiliates can recruit other affiliates. They then earn a smaller commission on sales made by those affiliates. For example, the affiliate may earn 50% of all sales that he makes, and then earn 5% of all sales made by the affiliates that he brings into your affiliate program.

It sounds complicated, but it really isn't. The software and services that are available today will keep track of everything for you, so you don't have to try to figure out what is owed to whom.

A multi-tiered affiliate program is often more attractive to affiliates, because they have the ability to make money in two ways – from their own efforts, and from the efforts of others. They will be motivated, in this way, to build your affiliate sales force for you.

Other Considerations

There are a couple of other issues to consider. First, if your customers will be paying recurring fees, then ideally, your affiliates will earn recurring commissions on those fees. As long as your customer continues to pay fees, your affiliates continue to earn revenue. This is called passive income, and it is another great affiliate motivator.

Finally, you need legal agreements in place for your affiliates. Your affiliates need to know what to expect, what is acceptable, and what is not acceptable. They need to know under what circumstances they will be banished from the program or be forced to forfeit the commissions that have been earned but not yet paid.

For example, you don't want an affiliate who sends spam, as this has a direct affect on your business and your reputation. You may have rules regarding the use of pay-per-click programs, such as Google AdWords, as well. You can find sample affiliate agreements all over the Internet, and most of the affiliate networks already have agreements in place, allowing you to add additional terms to the agreement.

Affiliate Program Solutions

Now, you just need to set it all up. Again, this can be done in as little as an hour, and there are numerous choices. Let's take a look at the four easiest choices:

ClickBank – <http://www.clickbank.com> – ClickBank handles digital products. There is a one-time \$49 fee to get your affiliate program set up. One of the nice things about ClickBank is that they already have an affiliate force in place, and they will handle all payments to affiliates and process payments for you.

Commission Junction – <http://www.cj.com> – Commission Junction is another affiliate network, with an affiliate force in place. Commission Junction has different advertiser programs, with different costs. Commission Junction will handle affiliate payouts.

PayDotCom.com – <http://www.paydotcom.com> – PayDotCom.com has a one-time fee of \$29, which allows you to promote unlimited products. If you just have one product, you can open a

free vendor account. PayDotCom works with PayPal, and it is up to you to get your affiliates paid. There is an affiliate sales force in place.

The Ultimate Marketing Center
www.ultimatemarketingcenter.com If you want to set things up yourself and not use an affiliate network, this is the service to use. The cost is very low, and paid monthly. You are given special code to put into your pages so that affiliates are credited properly. You must find your own affiliate sales force, however, and you will be responsible for processing payments and paying affiliates.

These are just four of the easiest affiliate program solutions. There are literally tons of them out there, with everything from affiliate networks to affiliate software to web-based solutions. Of course, they all range in cost and in ease of setup and use.

So, if you've considered starting your own affiliate program for your product, but weren't sure how to do it, or thought it was too hard or too expensive, you now know that it isn't hard or expensive at all – and you have everything to gain, and nothing to lose with your own affiliate program.

The \$1.4 Million Affiliate Reveals His Pay Per Click Secrets!

Look over his shoulder...

Learn his business model...

Sell like the big guns in markets worth billions, not just millions!

[Click here now!](#)

About the Author

Gracie Browning is an Affiliate Classroom staff writer and student who lives in Texas, like her close friend and fellow AC Magazine contributor, Texas rancher Kathy Jackson. But Gracie is a dedicated city girl. She is also a working affiliate marketer, a children's librarian, and a freelance education writer. You'll find some of Gracie's articles on the Affiliate Classroom blog.

Thanks for Reading! In the October issue, we'll focus on the professionalization of the affiliate marketing industry, and how it will impact you. Get it here. [Get Affiliate Classroom magazine here.](#)