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# The 7 Most Common Mistakes Made in Affiliate Marketing

## Affiliate Marketing – The Best Place to Start

Everyone has to start somewhere. And, for neophyte Internet marketers, the best place to start may be with affiliate products. Rather than going through the laborious and expensive process of creating your own product (of dubious quality) and then trying to market it to the masses, why not start by finding a product that is well put-together and comes from someone who already has a high degree of credibility? You could save a lot of time, money, frustration, and will power; and you could make money in the process, too—in fact, really, really good money. Many top Internet marketers today still sell affiliate products, even though they make a killing off of their own. Why? Because it's still fantastic money and little effort is required.

Now, with that said, it's important to mention that affiliate marketing is no walk in the park, either. It's certainly easier than pulling off a Jeff Walker-style massive product launch, but, like anything else, there are plenty of pitfalls just waiting to consume you and your money. Do yourself a favor: heed what I say and avoid those pitfalls. In this section, I will go over the top 7:

### Pitfall #1: Choosing a Bad Product to Promote

Not all products are created equal. In fact, that is probably the driving motivation behind your decision to sell affiliate products: for the most part, you have accepted that there are plenty of high-quality products already on the market; and, if you create your own, it might not compare favorably.

buying them often, they must be better than other products for sale within that niche.

In addition to picking good products within niches, you will also want to look for good niches. Here's a stupid tip that will illustrate my point nonetheless: don't sell garden hoses in the winter. No one will buy. Focus on products that a lot of people want; and if their popularity just surged, now is the best time to get in the market.

### Pitfall #2: Picking a Low Converter

As an affiliate marketer, your goal is to profit from the hard worker others have done; and from the money they have spent on copywriters, product developers, and software. If you select a product that underutilizes these advantages, you are likely to benefit less.

Take, for instance, conversion rates. Not all product creators hire a top-notch copywriter. In fact, many of them just write their own copy. Many also don't hire someone to do graphs for the sales page. Instead, they try to do their own. The end result? The page looks hideous, the copy contains major errors, and the product converts poorly.

Before you start promoting any particular product, read the sales page carefully and compare it with others. Do you feel compelled to buy? Did the graphics throw you off? Did the copy fail to reel you in for the catch? These can all amount to fatal errors for both the seller and you. You cannot help the seller at this point, but you can avoid his product and find a better one. Do yourself a favor: choose your products carefully.

### Pitfall #3: Selling Snake Oil for a Snake Oil Salesman

This pitfall is especially important to avoid if you have a list. All it takes is one erroneous product promotion and you could end up with a mass exodus from your list. Again, don't make this error.

Even though you may be tempted to promote the next “biggest launch,” make sure you don’t buy into just anything. Several marketers have lamented their choices to promote the Rich Jerk’s latest offering after list members complained that his sales page was loaded profanity and sexist comments. Don’t be one of these guys. Make sure you carefully inspect anything before you promote it to your list. Unless you happen to be the Rich Jerk, you probably don’t want people to think you’re just that—a rich jerk.

Additionally, avoid jumping on the affiliate product bandwagon for major promotions. Instead, wait until the buzz dies down slightly; and then release a comprehensive review (something most affiliate marketers do not provide) of the product. This has a much better chance of getting sales for you; and it will also help you to maintain credibility.

Last, avoid promoting products that make outrageous and fallacious claims. As Carl Sagan once said “Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.” In most cases, these snake oil peddlers cannot provide you with any extraordinary evidence, but they do make the claims. Avoid promoting them and becoming associated with them.

#### Pitfall #4: Picking Products that Offer Meager Commissions

If you’re marketing to a list of people, they’re only going to consider so many product offers in a given period of time, so select the ones you promote wisely. If you promote something that only generates a 25% commission for you, then you’re leaving a lot on the table. In reality, you could probably find a similar product that offers a 50% or 75% commission.

In terms of the actual dollar value of the commission – don’t sweat that as much. While many top name Internet marketers now say that they concentrate on promoting high-ticket items (since only a few sales will generate a lot of money), you can still make a killing selling relatively cheap reports. The rising popularity of the \$7 report is testament to this fact.

So avoid the cheapo sellers, but don’t worry as much about the price.

## Pitfall #5: Failing to Collect Leads

Always, always, always capture leads. Rather than generating traffic through pay per click, search engine optimization, and other methods and then sending that traffic to your affiliate link, you should make an effort to convert them into list members first. Why? Two reasons: simple mathematical reasoning and the collective experience of many marketers.

The simple mathematical reasoning goes something like this: virtually everyone who would have purchased the product will opt in to your mailing list. And many who definitely would not have purchased the product will opt in to your mailing list. Instead of converting at a rate of around 1-3% (in affiliate sales), you will convert between 15 and 40% of visitors (to your mailing list). From there, you will get the chance to contact the willing buyers and the more reluctant. Additionally, once they're on a list, this is no longer a one-off effort. You get the chance to market to them again and again for months or even years.

As a marketer, one of the best tools you have available is your list. Always, always, always use your list over the one-off sale.

## Pitfall #6: Ignoring the Importance of Timeliness

In business in general, the quick often outcompete those endowed with greater resources. Today, Google is no longer a small company with meager revenues, but in the past, it emerged from nowhere to outcompete massively well-endowed rivals; and it did so with cunning.

How does this apply to you? Successful affiliate product promotion requires you to do more than simply slap an affiliate link in an email and send it out to a couple thousand people. If you expect them to actually buy, your email should be newsworthy – not promotional.

If you can genuinely write your email as if it were a news announcement, you are far more likely to draw interest than if you send a link to an Internet marketing ebook that was written in 1998 and wasn't particularly popular then.

You need to find product launches that qualify as an "event." Find something so big that people follow the event and comment on it. If you can find such a product (say, the iPhone of Internet marketing products), it is critical that you engineer your own build-up and release, centered on the build-up and release of the product. You will want to make sure that your list members purchase from you, rather than from another list owner.

To make it short and sweet: pay attention to the clock and the calendar. If there's a big launch coming up, you need to capitalize on it quickly. There may not be a second window for opportunity. So take it when you have it.

#### Pitfall #7: Ignore Important Numbers

Many affiliate marketers fail to make many of the small—yet important—calculations needed in order to run a business and ensure you are in profit. For instance, many affiliate marketers will completely ignore the portion Clickbank extracts from each sale. Instead, they'll simply look at the price and the commission.

Additionally, many will ignore conversion rates, pay per click bids, and the amount of time they put into projects. They'll also fail to make realistic estimates of how much promotional efforts will cost; and how much of a risk they'll be. They'll glaze over all of these minor details and devote the majority of their time to daydreaming about the riches they will rake in.

Unfortunately, affiliate marketing doesn't work like that. If you're paying too much for traffic; if your conversion rates are too low; if you put too much time into projects that don't have high yields – the outcome is bad. Your numbers won't add up. At the end of the day, month, or year, you may end up in debt, rather than profit. And since you're a sole proprietor, not a CEO of a corporation, that

means you don't get paid at all. Even worse, you might lose some of your own money that you worked hard to get.

## Conclusion

So how does all of this come together? As you read, there are seven common pitfalls in affiliate marketing. If you fall into them, your affiliate marketing will put you in debt, rather than making you wealthy.

So how can you avoid these traps, make better decisions, and ultimately become wealthy via affiliate marketing? First, start by selecting products that are actually good. As I mentioned previously, a low demand product will make few sales, no matter how hard you try to promote it. If the demand isn't there, you can't create it. Don't try.

Next, within the niches that are in high demand, look for a product that is actually a winner. Find something that converts very well. You can do this by looking for high-popularity, high-gravity products on Clickbank. You can also do this by scanning salespages to find ones with extraordinarily compelling copy, good bonuses, and reasonable prices.

In addition to choosing a product that is likely to convert well, you will also want to make sure that the claims are reasonable and that the seller is credible. One bad product could seriously knock you down a few pegs with your list members. Making a single sale and losing an otherwise repeat-buyer is rarely worth it.

Once you start generating traffic for your affiliate marketing campaigns, remember to drive it to an opt-in form – NOT to your affiliate link. If you send the person directly to an affiliate link, you are likely to never hear from that person again, whether or not it results in sale. Collecting leads is critically important. If you fail to do so—as many affiliate marketers do—you are leaving a lot of money on the table relative to the amount you are spending.

Last, do yourself a favor and keep track of conversion rates, bid prices, commission rates, product broker fees, and all the other little numbers that



affiliate marketers prefer to ignore. Knowing, understanding, and tweaking these numbers could be the difference between profit and debt. You can ignore them if you want, but doing so will not improve your business.

With all of that said, you're now ready to take a crack at affiliate marketing. There are a lot of risks involved, but you already know the big seven; avoid these, and you'll sail through into profit, following the trail of past super affiliates.

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