

Wealthy Affiliate Review: 30 Must-Know Things Before Buying



What Do I Know About Affiliate Marketing Anyway?...

I'm Karl.

I've been a relatively successful online entrepreneur since I was 12. SEO, affiliate, agency owner, CMO for a big company, I've seen a lot of different sides of this industry.

I've flipped sites for \$100,000, gone broke, moved to London, got the hell out, moved back for some reason (?... dumb-dumb), started a marketing agency, sold that, started from scratch again, got hired as a CMO, built massive authority sites – it's been a lot of work.

So, when I first heard about Wealthy Affiliate, I was pretty put off. I'm self-made. I've put so much work into getting where I am that when I hear others telling people "it's so easy. All you need is passion and a [website](#)", I immediately label them as spam.

Now that I'm focusing on giving back to the community that helped make me, I felt obligated to set the record straight here. So I dove head on it and actually...

To tell the truth, I was kinda surprised. [Wealthy Affiliate](#) wasn't as bad as I thought it would be.

It's not good, but it's not the evil corporate ponzi scheme/pyramid scheme/MLM that everyone says. It's complicated. It has layers like an onion.

After spending all week researching WA. I've finally narrowed my list down to the 30 most important things I learned from these past 5 days.

Here are the basics.

What is Wealthy Affiliate?

Wealthy Affiliate is the world's most popular – and controversial – affiliate marketing training course, community, and ecosystem.

It's a 1.4-million strong community designed to take complete beginners from 0 to profitable affiliate marketers by offering training, tools, a functioning website, and coaching.

In theory, your membership offers everything you need to earn a good living via affiliate [marketing including:](#)

Training on niche selection

A website builder

Training on how to bring free traffic to that site

Training on how to master paid traffic

Subscriptions to necessary tools

An intro to affiliate programs so you can earn money from your traffic

Coaching and a helpful community so you get it right.

Here are some interesting specs on the community

1,800 coaches

10,000 + business started

1.4 million members

23,000 people helped daily

Kyle Loudon and Caron Lim founded Wealthy Affiliate with the goal of helping others achieve the same dreams they had all the way back in 2005 – live a life of freedom while earning money via [affiliate sales](#).

I always knew about them, but I was already earning a living from SEO and affiliate marketing by the time they were hitting it big. So I just “eh”, and moved along.

When all the controversy started picking up steam, I didn’t even bother thinking about it.

I’m not a beginner marketer and I don’t need another training course. But now that I’m actually reviewing other courses and trying to help others, I joined up so I could speak my mind and set the record straight [on this course](#).

I don’t want to say anything too bad about them, but let’s just say I wasn’t too thrilled about what I found either.

[I Don’t Recommend Wealthy Affiliate for MOST People](#)

I’m self-made. Not saying I didn’t have help, but I learned all this affiliate marketing stuff all on my own.

So that means I’ve been anti-course since the beginning (though I love them now). I’m just saying that so you know my standards are super high before I let this out.

I dove deep into this ecosystem for a whole week.

I watched the videos, I read through the community, I stalked the founders for a bit (online – not physically obviously), I checked out the tools, I ate some donuts and chicken (not related to Wealthy Affiliate), and I came to this conclusion:

WA definitely has value for beginners. It’ll teach you the basics, give you an actionable direction, and even give you access [to valuable tools...](#)

BUT!

I can’t in good faith recommend this for anyone that’s serious about succeeding at affiliate marketing in 2020. Kyle definitely has succeeded at affiliate business in the past, but his training is outdated at best and detrimental at worst. On top of that, I don’t agree with the marketing tactics or the MLM feeling of the whole shabang.

But who am I to offer advice, anyway? Just an entrepreneur with 10+ years under my belt.

WA definitely has some value, I’ll cover all my gripes and likes in depth throughout this training so you can make that decision for yourself.

Wealthy Affiliate Has Both Pros and Cons

Crazy, isn't it?

In 2020, something is not either the devil or the greatest thing ever?

I float somewhere in this mysterious ether known as "the middleground".

It all comes down to your expectations for the service.

Do you need a beginner-friendly service that offers basic advice, access to basic tools, and a community to answer questions?

Then it's actually OK.

Are you looking for elite training that's going to help you actually make a lot of money online and be a [successful entrepreneur?](#)

Wealthy Affiliate has pros and cons

WA isn't that.

To be fair to critics, WA WAY OVERSELLS itself (much more on that below – it's an interesting read).

It definitely DID NOT live up to the expectations it set. Let me sum up the pros and cons first before listing them.

The good thing – Wealthy Affiliate is a convenient service that helps you understand the basics of making money online through affiliate marketing, and saves you from the hassle of buying different tools and paying for web hosting.

The bad thing – Wealthy Affiliate is very outdated and a lot of the advice could actually be harmful in 2020. And the whole thing feels like a gimmick to get you to make money by promoting WA to others.

Pros

You get a basic roadmap

Access to keyword [research tools](#)

Web hosting included

A helpful community (though I don't know how much I'd trust some people here)

Cons

Trainings from 2013

Google's algorithm is totally different now

The creators and trainers aren't even (seemingly) in the space anymore

Largely text-based

The dashboard is confusing and people can spam you with offers

The claims are outlandish and unethical in my opinion

How Much Does Wealthy Affiliate Cost?

Wealthy Affiliate costs either \$0 or \$49 per month (\$19 for the first month) OR \$359 per year if you decide to pay yearly.

The Free Plan comes with:

Access to BASIC training
Community access (7 days)
One basic website (more on this below)
Access to WA's affiliate program
30 free searches for the keyword tool
The Premium Plan offers:

All trainings
Community access
Direct messaging (I suspect so you can convert free users to paid ones for a commission)
50 websites
2x higher affiliate payout
Access to coaches and website feedback/support
A free membership lets you dip your toes into the training, getting familiar with affiliate marketing, and start learning keyword research. So what do you have to lose?

The trainings in the free portion are actually somewhat up-to-date, so at least you'll learn some decent stuff.

Why I don't like the Free Plan

The Free Plan is not enough to be successful at earning an income online.

That's fine. There's nothing wrong with a [“freemium”](#) model. But some of the stuff they advertise as a perk for the Free Plan is actually not even usable.

The “free and fully operational” site is actually a SiteRubix website. Ever heard of that? Me neither. That's because you can't use it to build a successful website.

SiteRubix makes Wix man's greatest achievement.

Kyle even admits this. Here's what he says on WA:

Kyle Loudon says on [Wealthy Affiliate](#) about SiteRubix

So here he says it's OK to start off with, but you're dead if you don't move to your own domain. That means your site is useless unless you upgrade to Premium.

Anyways, enough of my gripes. I'll save that for the grip section. But before you go, here's a good summary of why SiteRubix isn't worth your time from a thread on WA:

SiteRubix isn't worth your time

Is Wealthy Affiliate Legit? Is Wealthy Affiliate a Scam?

No, Wealthy Affiliate is not a scam. There's a lot not to like about them, but it's definitely not a scam.

They claim to be an [affiliate marketing](#) training program that offers training videos, tools, coaching, and a helpful community, and they do actually offer that.

To me, a scam is just something that takes your money and runs off.

The problem with WA aside from their spammy marketing is the quality of training that they offer, and that the whole operation seems designed to funnel you into their affiliate program.

The founders – Kyle and Carson – as well as the lead trainer – Jay – also have a bit of explaining to do about their claims. Again, more on that later.

How Much Money Can You Earn With Wealthy Affiliate?

Wealthy Affiliate claims to give you all the tools and guidance you need to start earning with affiliate marketing, but I guarantee you will make \$0 with the Free Plan unless you earn from signing others up.

How much you can earn with the rest of the training is up to interpretation. After watching all of the [training videos](#), there is enough information here to get you started in the right direction.

And with coaching the community, I bet you could earn some money if you really kick ass, hustle, build a brand, build a community, and master paid traffic.

I just don't think that's a reality for the vast majority of people. Chances are the best way for you to make money with WA is as an affiliate for WA itself.

How Much Money Can You Earn With Their Affiliate Program?
An Average Earning of WA Affiliate

[WA affiliates](#) earn an average of \$121 in lifetime sales for recommending another user to the site.

That's what makes it so appealing. You earn residual commissions, meaning as long as your referral is still paying a monthly subscription, you'll get paid.

Imagine you refer someone to WA, and they convert to a premium member (WA converts about 12% of free users). You get a percentage of that sales. Now imagine they pay for a full year – you get a percentage of that.

Now, imagine they pay again next year. You get a cut of that pie too! And so on and so on.

WA converts about 12% of free users

That's what makes it so enticing, actually. And it's the reason why there are so many people around the [web promoting it](#).

Who Owns Wealthy Affiliate?

Kyle Loudon

Kyle Loudon is the co-founder and face of Wealthy Affiliate, and the guy you'll see in the most of the training sessions. I get the feeling he's the real brains behind the operation. Kyle is an affiliate marketer turned instructor and marketing chief.

Carson Lim

Carson Lim is the designer and co-founder – Kyle's right hand man. Apparently, he's responsible for making ideas come to life...whatever that means.

And the last important person you need to know about is Jay Neil.

Jay Neil

Jay is the training chief at Wealthy Affiliate and a well-known affiliate "consultant".

[Wealthy Affiliate](#) Controversies and my Gripes

Where there's smoke, there's usually fire.

I'm not normally blunt like that, but it's true.

What I mean is that when there's a ton of controversy around the web about something, it's normally at least based in fact. For example, there's next to 0 controversy surrounding [affiliate training](#) like the Affiliate Lab by Matt Diggity or even Authority Hacker.

I want to cover all of the controversy and my personal gripes surrounding the community one-by-one and give some plausible explanations for at least some of them.

Is Wealthy Affiliate an MLM? Is it a Pyramid Scheme?

No, Wealthy Affiliate is not an MLM and Wealthy Affiliate is not a pyramid scheme. At least not in the strict sense of the term.

A pyramid scheme is one where new recruits pay upfront costs to members at the top of the pyramid under the promise of receiving payments when they recruit new members "below" them. Basically, that just means you pay to get in and then make money by enrolling new people – who then pay you.

[Wealthy Affiliate](#) IS NOT that...

But it does kind of "smell" like that a bit. You do pay to access legit training, and if you do get the Premium Plan, you get 2x the commission. Still, it's not a pyramid scheme.

MLM

Wealthy Affiliate is not pyramid scheme

Even though it has elements of a typical pyramid scheme, it isn't.

But what about being an MLM?

A multi-level-marketing scheme is similar to a pyramid scheme, but basically it's just when a company makes money by enticing their members to recruit new members. Typically, recruiting new members – including friends and family – is the only way to make money.

Technically, Wealthy Affiliate is not that either. You can make money by learning about affiliate marketing via its [training modules](#) and go make it yourself.

But then I started to dig a little deeper, and eventually I stumbled on some stuff that started ringing some alarm bells. You decide for yourself.

First, Kyle specifically defines an MLM like this in a blog post.

But actually, if you build a website solely dedicated to promoting Wealthy Affiliate, isn't that technically the same thing? Sure, it's a website, brand, and a following, but it's solely for the purpose of recruiting people.

Actually, there's a whole module on it.

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