

Affiliate Marketing for Beginners: The Ultimate Guide

Affiliate marketing has become a popular way of making money for solo entrepreneurs, bloggers, and content creators. The idea of it might sound like an appealing way to [make money online](#). However, you shouldn't just jump into it without any plan whatsoever.

In this article, we'll give you a crash course on the basics of affiliate marketing and a quick "get-started" guideline. Here's what we'll cover in this guide. So, let's dive in!

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What is Affiliate Marketing?

In simple terms, affiliate marketing involves promoting products, services, websites, or businesses online and getting paid commissions for every successful sale.



Referral links are the most common example of this, wherein you, as a publisher, put a link on your blog/website that takes users to another website. The commission is then paid after the purchase is made.

This may be followed by other variations, such as asking users to sign up, complete forms, or provide email addresses. As a general rule, you can expect that an affiliate service will have a unique link for an affiliate product or service.

It depends on the [affiliate program](#) as to how much commission is paid. Some companies give you a percentage of the sale, while others might give you a fixed amount per conversion.

Tracking conversions can be done in a variety of ways. To track conversions, some sites use a link with a unique code that you can only use for sales. Others might give you a unique “coupon code” that users can use which lets them track conversions when they make a purchase.

Examples of Affiliate Marketing

So now you have a basic understanding of what affiliate marketing is. But how exactly does it work?

Well, here are two examples of how affiliate marketing is done:

Using Ads and Banners to Promote

This is the easiest and most straightforward example of promoting affiliate products. Whether you have a blog or a personal website, you can promote affiliate products by using and placing banner ads.



GrooveFunnels

NEW POWERFUL FUNNEL BUILDER FOR MARKETERS

NOW ~~\$99/MO~~ FREE

NO CREDIT CARD REQUIRED

- ✓ CREATE PRODUCT FUNNELS
- ✓ CONNECT CUSTOM DOMAINS
- ✓ UNLIMITED HOSTING AND BANDWIDTH

Click Here To Own It For Life!

Visitors who are interested in the product/service will then click on the ad, which then redirects them to the merchant's page where they can then purchase it. If the sale is successful, you'll then get a commission from it.

Including or Adding Links to Your Content



Acana Cat Food

Made from America's freshest ingredients, the award-winning **Acana dry cat food** is formulated by biologically appropriate standards.

Another method for promoting affiliate products or services is to include the link inside of your content. This works well, especially if you're a blogger or a content creator.

One of the more common ways is to include a link to a relevant product in an article. Similarly, you can create content on a particular topic and include an affiliate link to products that are useful to the reader or user.

Knowing the Affiliate Lingo

Before we get into how you can begin with affiliate marketing, there are a few terms that you should be familiar with.

If you're considering doing affiliate marketing, knowing the key terms will help avoid any confusion. Some of the more essential terms are:

Affiliate

An affiliate comes in all shapes or sizes, but generally, they tend to be bloggers, content sites, or creators that are related to the merchant's industry.

Affiliates are the ones that introduce the merchant's products, services, or brand to the visitors.

As we've mentioned, they can do this either by writing or creating content related to the merchant's product or service, use banner ads on their site, or give coupon codes.

Payments

Compared to other channels, affiliate marketing gives merchants a higher ROI as it's performance-based. Meaning, they only pay for actual customers instead of just visits.

Because of this, when multiple affiliates are invoiced in a single transaction, it can get pretty messy. You might even have cases where other affiliates claim a commission for customers brought by other affiliates in the last minute.

A good affiliate program will offer a multi-channel attribution to ensure that affiliates that create the most value will receive the most payment.

Some of the more common types of payment method used by merchants are:

CPS (Cost Per Sale) – You'll receive a flat fee per sale or a percentage of the product or service value.

CPL (Cost Per Lead) – You'll receive payment for every validated, completed lead.

CPC (Cost Per Click) – You'll receive payment for driving traffic to the merchant's site via ad clicks.

CPA (Cost Per Action) – You'll receive payment when users complete actions you advertise (filling forms or surveys)

Networks



Most affiliate programs are administered and organized through an affiliate network. They are quite useful as it provides a central database with available merchants, which makes it easier for an affiliate to find opportunities.

It also gives merchants access to a large pool of publishers (affiliates), and they will usually have access to tools such as payment processing, refund processing, tracking, reporting, and affiliate management.

Some of the most popular affiliate networks that you can join are, [ShareASales](#), [Clickbank](#), [CJ](#), and even [Amazon](#). Of course, if you prefer an individual affiliate program, companies such as Hostinger offers an [affiliate program](#) that you can join.

The Pros and Cons of Affiliate Marketing

Just like with any other marketing programs, there are various advantages and disadvantages to using them.

While affiliate programs might seem lucrative, especially for a blogger or a solo entrepreneur, it's a good idea to be aware of what the pros and cons are before joining an affiliate program.

Pros of Affiliate Marketing

Let's start with the pros. If you're considering doing affiliate marketing, here are some of the perks:

Inexpensive/low start-up costs. In general, you won't have to pay to join an affiliate program. The majority of affiliate companies will handle the service and product, which means you won't have to worry about inventory or supplies.

Easy to join. The barrier of entry for an affiliate program is very low. You just have to fill up a form, and then you can start promoting the products immediately though some programs might be harder to join than others.

No need to deal with shipping or product returns. As an affiliate, all you have to focus on is promoting the merchant's brand, product, or services. The actual product or service itself is handled entirely by the merchant.

No need to create products or services. Again, your focus as an affiliate is to deliver the clients and customers. The merchant will take care of the rest, as [starting your own online store](#) can take quite a bit of effort.

There are no special requirements. As long as you can promote affiliate products or services effectively, you don't need any other training or licenses. (Though it helps to [set up a website!](#))

It makes money 24/7. Just like any other online business, you can do affiliate marketing at any time, even when you're asleep!

Cons of Affiliate Marketing

Of course, as great as affiliate marketing seems, it's not entirely perfect. There are a couple of downsides to it. Some of them are:

Building up referrals takes time. For an affiliate to make any significant amount of money, it's going to take some time to generate enough referrals

You need to be good at internet marketing. Yes, there's no specialized training required to be an affiliate. If you want to be successful, you need to be good at (or at least know) Internet Marketing.

There are advertising restrictions. Certain affiliate programs will enforce advertising restrictions, such as not allowing email marketing or using PPC ads with certain keywords.

There are payout requirements. Some affiliate programs will only give you your payment once you've achieved a certain amount of sales or money.

The First Steps as an Affiliate Marketer

By now, you should have a good idea of what affiliate marketing is and what the pros and cons are. But how do you [make money as an affiliate marketer](#)?

To start your affiliate marketing journey, you need to:

1. Settle on a niche market. You have a better chance of being successful if you focus on a specific topic.
2. Look up affiliate products and services that are related to your niche — research the program's reputation and whether they take care of their customers and affiliates.
3. Figure out how you are going to promote affiliate products or services. The easiest way is definitely through a blog or a website. However, you can use other methods such as email lists and promoting affiliate products to your subscribers.

Another way would be to use social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, [TikTok](#) or Instagram.

Research and learn some internet marketing strategies for effective ways to share your website, blog, or affiliate links.

Since you'll be making money from home, it might be a good idea to look into business licenses and business laws in your area to ensure that your business is legal.

A Few Examples of Great Affiliate Marketing Websites

Affiliate marketing has been around for quite some time, and there are many successful affiliate websites. Here are three that we think are great examples:

Legendary Marketer:



Dave Sharpe is a leader in the [affiliate marketing](#) arena. He uses his popular Facebook morning show, Wake Up Legendary to teach and inspire those in affiliate marketing, and those who are just beginning. His step-by-step program is top notch, easy to understand and follow.

The reason why Sharpe is so successful in his own affiliate marketing business is that he only recommends products that he's passionate about and familiar with. He believes that affiliate networks should: provide significant value, understand what users want and need, lead and teach by example, and have earned considerable trust.

Web Hosting Secret Revealed

[Web Hosting Secret Revealed \(WHSR\)](#) is an example of a niche affiliate website that focuses primarily on web hosting content. It conducts reviews, case studies, interviews, and in-depth articles on anything and everything to do with web hosting.

The website has established a reputation for providing in-depth and detailed reviews on web hosting companies. So users will trust its product or service recommendations.

WHSR Today

WHSR grew into something much bigger than Jerry anticipated in 2008. The one-man-operation has grown into a small team of developers and writers from six different countries. The site now covers more than 100 hosting brands – in form of reviews and interviews; and has become one of the most popular info source for hosting shoppers.

The WHSR website, now resides at [WebHostingSecreRevealed.net](#), consists of three different sections:

- "Find A Host" focuses on serving shoppers who are looking for [trustworthy hosting reviews](#) and [best web hosting guide](#);
- "Tools" offers free and easy-to-use tools to gather information on [web hosting services](#); and
- "Resources" offers helpful [web hosting](#), [website development](#), and [marketing guide](#).



Exabytes HQ visit, June 2018.



WordCamp Kuala Lumpur, December 2017



Interserver HQ visit, August 2016.

Pinch of Yum

pinch of yum

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make this for DINNER

[or skip straight to the blog →](#)



[Pinch of Yum](#) is a [blog about food](#) and run by a husband-and-wife team Lindsay and Bjorne Ostrom. Through their food blog, they managed to earn as much as **\$802,144.55 in 12 months**.

They managed to achieve such success by ads, sponsored content, and affiliate partnerships with Amazon. Of course, the key ingredient (no pun intended) to their success is high-quality blog content.

Conclusion

Jumping into the world of affiliate marketing can be overwhelming if you're a complete newbie. But, just like any other business, you'll need to put in the work if you want to be successful in affiliate marketing.

Remember that it's important to be passionate and well-rounded in the niche that you dive in. If reading has been your life-long hobby, [setting up a book blog](#) can be your path. Or perhaps you're into computer games, then [making a gaming website \(or even a server\)](#) can be a solid starting point.

Recap:

Affiliate marketing involves promoting other people's products and earning a commission for each sale made through your referral link. It can be a profitable business model for anyone who has an audience, whether it's a blog, social media account, or email list. Here is a beginner's guide to help you understand the key concepts and strategies involved in affiliate marketing:

Step 1: Choose a niche

The first step in affiliate marketing is to choose a niche. This is the topic or industry you will focus on, and it should be something you are passionate about and have knowledge of. Some popular niches include health, fitness, personal finance, and beauty.

Step 2: Choose affiliate programs and networks

Once you have chosen your niche, the next step is to choose affiliate programs and networks to promote products. Affiliate programs are created by companies that sell products or services, and they pay affiliates a commission for each sale made through their referral link.

Some popular affiliate networks include Amazon Associates, ClickBank, and ShareASale. These networks offer a variety of products to promote and have easy-to-use dashboards for tracking commissions.

Step 3: Build an audience

To make money with affiliate marketing, you need to have an audience that trusts you and values your opinion. You can build an audience through a blog, social media account, email list, or any combination of these channels. The key is to provide value and build relationships with your audience.

Step 4: Promote affiliate products

Once you have an audience, you can start promoting affiliate products. There are several ways to do this, including:

- Writing product reviews
- Creating tutorials or how-to guides
- Mentioning products in relevant blog posts or social media updates
- Offering discounts or promotions to your audience

When promoting affiliate products, it's important to disclose that you are earning a commission. This can be done by including a disclaimer on your website or social media profile.

Step 5: Track your results

As with any business, it's important to track your results and make adjustments as necessary. Most affiliate networks have dashboards that allow you to track your clicks, sales, and commissions. Use this information to optimize your promotions and focus on the products and channels that are generating the most income.

