How Do I Become an Affiliate Marketer? The Beginner's Guide to Getting Started - JS Kalungi



I remember September 15, 2014, like it was yesterday. It was a pivotal moment in my life, but at the time, I didn't realize that.

I had just sat through a webinar where a woman shared how she made over £2million/yr with affiliate marketing... She went from jobless, bankrupt sleeping on her friend's sofa to Living her dream, with her children and a new partner.

My thoughts were, she is talking about my life now (*minus the new partner TVM*), and If she can do It I can do it too!

This was the spark that made me want to sell other people's products with social media. And later create my own website and sell other people's products without the worry of carrying inventory.

On that date, I registered the domain name rccace.com. The investing niche was an obvious choice for monetizing through affiliate marketing.

I didn't have much experience with affiliate marketing but I was ready, able and willing to learn. Afterall I was already blogging on a free Wordpress website. I just needed to resell someone else's product. My first program was a Training platform that offered 100% commission thus pure profit for me.

It seemed like a no-brainer to me.

So I proceeded to build a blog into a real business. So much so that the income from my blog exceeded that from my last job, the one I had resigned from in 2010.

Long story short, I did pretty well with affiliate marketing and later, my site didn't sell a paid membership or anything like that. I didn't have any annoying ad banners, either, I simply recommended products...BUT Is it that simple Julie? I hear you asking. YES is the answer. Because Simple, is a DECISION.

All of the site's income came from affiliate marketing.

I'm here to tell you that affiliate marketing is a real strategy to support your business sustainability or even it becoming your real business. The journey MAY NOT be easy, and you certainly won't be an overnight success. But I can say it's possible to be very successful with affiliate marketing.

This beginner's guide will tell you how to get started with affiliate marketing. So let's get started!

Before we dive into the steps, let's start with the basics of affiliate marketing and define exactly what it is.

What Is Affiliate Marketing?

Affiliate marketing is an arrangement by which you earn a commission for promoting another company's products or services.

Affiliate marketing is sometimes also known as performance marketing or CPA marketing. The definition of affiliate marketing makes it different than other forms of digital marketing.

Although it's a form of online advertising, affiliate marketing is much different than just hosting ad banners.

Unlike ad banners, with affiliate marketing, you usually don't get paid unless a visitor "buys or converts."

Typically, a conversion is defined as a purchase made by the prospect (the visitor to your site). But some merchants define "conversion" differently. It can be as simple as a visitor subscribing or clicking on a link. Or as complex as a customer not only purchasing a product but also performing a specific action after that purchase is made.

Affiliate Marketing Glossary of Terms

Like any topic, affiliate marketing has its own lingo. The definition of affiliate marketing itself is a word-fest with a lot to digest. So let's break down the terminology you're likely to see.

Merchant — The business selling a product.

Product — The item sold by the merchant and promoted by the affiliate.

Affiliate — The third-party promoting the merchant's product. Also known as the publisher, associate, or partner.

Super Affiliates — The highest-performing affiliates. Typically, fewer than 20% of affiliates are super affiliates, yet they generate 80% of all conversions.

Affiliate Link — Also called the tracking link. This is a unique URL that tracks the clicks and conversions from the affiliate.

Conversion — An event defined by the merchant that is deemed payable to the affiliate. It can be anything defined by the merchant but is usually a lead or the purchase of the merchant's product.

Prospect — An individual who performs a conversion with the merchant. Also known as a lead, customer, or client.

Affiliate Network — An optional middle man between the merchant and the affiliate that helps facilitate commerce.

Affiliate Manager — A person who works with affiliates as a go-between with the merchant. Their goal is to maximize the performance of the affiliate program. **Affiliate Program** — An arrangement in which the merchant pays commissions to affiliates.

Offer — A specific promotion of a product.

Click-through Rate (CTR) — The percentage of affiliate-link clicks per number of web page impressions.

Conversion Rate (CR) — The percentage of clicks that converted.

Cost per Action (CPA) — A commission model in which merchants pay affiliates for conversions only.

Cost per Click (CPC) — A commission model in which merchants pay affiliates for clicks only. Typically used with ad banners, rather than affiliate marketing. **Postback URL** — A URL used for server-side conversion tracking; also called server to-server tracking.

Pixel — A hidden image that tracks when a web page view event occurs. In the context of affiliate marketing, a pixel tracks when conversions occur. Instead of images, today, pixels are typically pieces of JavaScript code embedded on a webpage. **SubID** — A string of text embedded as part of the affiliate link that is defined by the affiliate and used to track conversions by the affiliate.

Creative — An ad banner image or text that is used by the affiliate to promote the merchant's product.

Copy — Written text that helps promote the merchant's product.

Co-branding — An instance in which the affiliate's logo, copy, or branding appears on the merchant's landing page.

Landing Page — The merchant's webpage to which affiliates refer traffic via an affiliate link.

Ad Blocker — Web browser technology that can prevent the tracking of affiliate clicks and conversions. In addition, it can also prevent the display of ad banners. **Attribution** — The process of correctly identifying which affiliates are generating conversions.

Charge Back — An invalid conversion that results in the affiliate's commission being forfeited.

Commission — The income an affiliate earns for generating a conversion. It is also known as a referral fee, a finder's fee, or a bounty.
Cookies — Information stored on a prospect's web browser to identify that particular visit. With affiliate marketing, cookies are used to track affiliate link clicks and potential conversions.
Link Cloaking — Hides the affiliate link with a cleaner-looking URL than what the merchant has provided. Link cloaking can be used to better manage links and track clicks and conversions. For more info, see my article on link cloaking.

How Much Money Can I Make As an Affiliate Marketer?

As with any business, the upside potential is unlimited. See, I'm not so much different from you. I personally know website owners and marketers who make over 5-6 figures a month all from affiliate marketing with some blogging or video marketing. However, I will say that many marketers make a few thousand a year — a good side hustle.

In the end, affiliate marketing is what you make of it, how well you execute, and the effort you put into it. It is definitely not a get-rich scheme, nor will you be an overnight success.

How Does Affiliate Marketing Work?



A high-level overview of how affiliate marketing works (credit)

At the high level, this is how affiliate marketing works:

1. A visitor to your website, social media platform, video, podcast or Chatgroup sees a product recommendation you made, it is an affiliate link.
2. The visitor then clicks on that affiliate link, which redirects the visitor to the merchant's website.
3. On the merchant's site, the visitor then performs the desired action - buys
4. The affiliate is credited for the sale and agreed commission paid on greed terms.

The Tech Behind Affiliate Marketing

Behind the scenes, it's much more complicated than this.

Warning: Tech Alert!

The details of affiliate marketing can get pretty technical, and I won't hold back. If you're not interested in finding out the nitty-gritty of how the process really works, skip this section for now and read the first step in how to become an affiliate marketer.

The HTTPS protocol, which drives all websites, is stateless. With HTTP/S, the website has no memory of previous visits.

By default, when an individual visitor travels among pages on a website, the webserver doesn't know their identity. A web browser cookie is one method to get around this limitation.

When a visitor clicks on a unique affiliate link URL to enter a merchant site, they are tagged with a **cookie**. (*No sugar fancies here my friend*)

Cookies can have many uses, but in affiliate marketing, they're used to identify a visitor from one webpage visit to the next. This way, the affiliate gets credit when a conversion occurs.

Like the cookies you can eat, web browser cookies don't last forever.

A cookie's "time to live" (TTL) can vary from a few minutes to years. For affiliate marketing, the typical TTL is 30 days. Typically, the longer TTL, the better.

One of the disadvantages of affiliate marketing is its reliance on cookies to get proper affiliate credit.

Accurate Attribution

Attribution is a hot topic in affiliate marketing. Now, tracking is not always 100% accurate.

Tracking becomes difficult when a user visits a page using multiple devices (such as a phone, a laptop, etc.). It also doesn't work when a visitor uses an ad blocker.

Affiliate marketing technology is always improving, but there will be cases in which conversions are missed. Affiliate networks tend to do a better job at tracking conversions than, say, an in-house affiliate program managed by the merchant.

How to Get Affiliate Links

Affiliate links don't just fall out of the sky.

You need to acquire them by signing up for a merchant's affiliate program. That program can exist directly with the merchant or, in most cases, through an affiliate network.

Merchants can give you links via two methods – either an in-house affiliate program or a

network. Most affiliates work with a merchant through an affiliate network program.

To join my affiliate program KG Affiliate Zone visit: https://rccace.com/affiliate

Affiliate Networks

A network affiliate program involves working with a third party to manage your relationship with the merchant. Generally, an affiliate network manages communication, affiliate links, tracking, reporting, and payment.

Affiliate networks typically have thousands of merchants to choose from. You join the affiliate network and then apply to each individual merchant program. Some automatically approve applicants, and others will manually review and approve new affiliates.

Once approved, you will have access to special affiliate links that are unique to you. These unique links can be placed anywhere you want to promote that merchant's product. It could be on your blog, in an email, on your YouTube channel, etc.

NOTE: It is always important to read the terms of your affiliate agreement before you start promoting a merchant. Make sure you are clear on where you can or cannot place your affiliate links. For example, most merchants forbid you from bidding against their brand name with Google Ads or pretending to be the brand. Always check the restrictions before promoting; otherwise, you may get banned by the merchant.

Affiliate networks have many advantages over in-house affiliate programs:

- They act as a go-between you and the merchant.
- They ensure timely payouts of commissions.
- They allow you to work with thousands of merchants from one dashboard. They serve as auditors of the merchant's conversions to ensure things are on the up and up.
- They can guarantee more accurate tracking of affiliate clicks and conversions. They provide you with better reporting than in-house affiliate programs.

In-house Affiliate Programs

With an in-house affiliate program, you typically work much closer with the merchant and have a much tighter relationship.

Just as with affiliate networks, you get affiliate links from the merchant's affiliate program. The merchant is responsible for conversion tracking. Unfortunately, you have no way of knowing if a merchant is fudging conversions and depend on the merchant for

timely payments.

The advantages of an in-house relationship:

A closer relationship with the merchant. Typically higher payouts than what's available via public network affiliate programs. More flexible options to increase conversion rates

How Do Affiliate Marketers Get Paid?

As an affiliate, you get credit when a predetermined event occurs. Usually, the event is a sale or conversion. This is otherwise known as Cost Per Action, or CPA. In affiliate marketing, CPA is the most popular method to get paid. But it's not the only option.

You can get paid for other types of events as well. Other options are:

- By lead (Cost Per Lead, or CPL) — email address, phone number, address, etc.
- Per click or Per View (Cost Per Click, or CPC, Cost Per View or CPV) — this is no different than placing an ad banner.
- Impression (Cost Per Thousand, or CPM) — Some ads are also by this method.

The type of payout is determined by the merchant but can be negotiated as well.

How often you get paid and the method of payment depends on the affiliate program. The most common way is in a monthly payout. I get mine mostly via PayPal.

Affiliate networks are usually better with payments and on a well-kept schedule. Almost all networks require payments on a schedule (almost always monthly). Otherwise, their programs would get shut down until their back payments were made current.

This is an important difference from an in-house affiliate program. While the payout and relationship are typically better, the payments may not be. It's not uncommon in large company AR departments to make payments on a net 90-day schedule. This means you'll have to wait 90 days to get paid for conversions that occurred three months prior.

Consider this potential problem if your merchant is a slow payer or requires collections of old invoices.

Most affiliate networks offer an electronic method of payment – usually direct deposit or PayPal. On the other hand, direct relationships may support only direct deposit. Worse yet, I've worked with some companies (high-tech firms, no less) that still cut physical checks.

How to Get Started With Affiliate Marketing (6 Easy Steps)

Now that we've gotten some basic questions and terminology out of the way, let's discuss the steps to getting started as an affiliate marketer.

1. Pick Your Niche

The first – and most critical – step of affiliate marketing is picking your niche i.e. products or services you wish to promote.

Ideally, you should first consider topics/products/services that interest you. More importantly, your niche should be helpful. As an entrepreneur, **you want to be a problem solver**. If you have a problem, surely others do too!

You don't create a business to help yourself. You create a business to help others.

Here's a common mistake entrepreneurs make. They think, "I'm going to start a business to get rich." Yes, you can get rich, but that's only the side effect of helping others in the process. The more people you help, the bigger your reward.

Even I fell into this trap when I first started my online business hopping. Yes, I had an interest in making money online, and I knew that many struggle with this topic and needed help. But my first posts were anything but helpful. I wrote about topics that interested me. The result? No one cared.

My websites didn't take off until I wrote content to help others.

Another common mistake is picking a niche with no competition. I used to think this way too. I used to think that, in order to succeed in business, I had to create the most complicated business idea that no one else had thought of.

There's no such thing as a unique idea on the internet. If you've thought of it, someone else has already done it.

What matters isn't how unique your idea is, but how well you execute and promote it.

Pick a niche that's popular but one that you feel has an opportunity for growth. This is exactly what I did with the IPAS program.

If you think everything has been said about that niche, and that there's no unique angle about that topic or new functionality you can add to it, then perhaps that market is saturated. Maybe it isn't a good idea for a niche.

But I've come to realize that sometimes the simplest ideas are the best.

Another common mistake is making the niche too broad. This is especially true when you are

starting out.

Say you make kitchen utensils your niche. It's too wide a topic. Yes, the search volume is there, but it's too wide to rank for articles.

Instead, I would recommend registering a domain name that covers a broad topic, but that fits one or possibly two specific niches to start. You can always expand later.

If your topics are all over the map, they won't help you with your audience or Google.

To continue with the previous example of kitchen utensils, I would narrow my niche down to two topics — knives and cutting boards. Not only are they pretty narrow in scope, but they complement each other as well.

2. Start a Website Blog

After you've determined your niche, the next step is to get a website built for your new online business and affiliate income. While it's possible to make money in affiliate marketing without a blog, I don't recommend it.

You want your blog and organic search traffic to be the core strategy of affiliate marketing. K-Web Social Designs offers Start-Ups a simple 3 page SEO optimised website + Sitemap for £255* (*This offer can only be accessed by contacting us at admin@kalungigroup.com and you need both a domain + WebHosting) We strongly recommend you get your webhosting from **This provider**.

Yes, it's possible to make money with YouTube, Tik Tok, Facebook, Insta or Pinterest, but you don't own these channels. And often times they block marketers, for… well marketing without paying for ads! #thatspants :(

On the other hand, you own your website and blog content and have control over it. You can only rent other channels, such as social media. You can be the hottest Instagram star since the Kardashians, but if Meta/Facebook decides it no longer likes you, your business can disappear… overnight.

I've seen this happen too many times to other affiliate marketers. Don't build your business foundation on quicksand.

Think of a website and blog as a bicycle's hub. The hub is your blog. The spokes are channels such as email, paid traffic, Pinterest, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Tik Tok, push notifications, and the like. Those channels are the means to attract visitors to your blog.

I'm not going to cover every step to creating your blog here. Instead, I already have the details in another niche article aptly named "How to Start a Travel Blog." The essentials are the same.

3. Create Content

Since the core of your online business is a website with a blog, you want to create content on it. SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is the recommended method to attract visitors to your blog. While you want to create other ways to build out an audience, organic search is still the primary method.

According to GrowthBadger's research, most traffic to a website is from organic search. Since Google is the No. 1 search engine by a long shot, that means you need to be on Google to be found. Yes, you can focus on social media, podcasts, and paid traffic, but if you aren't focusing on SEO as a blogger, you are missing out on a huge audience.

For this step, I recommend creating at least 25 articles before you continue to the next step. These shouldn't be short 200-word posts, but long, in-depth articles pertaining to your niche. If you are in a niche about losing weight, don't write articles about your cat. Stay in your lane and write about the niche you set out to create.

You cannot skip this step. You need a completed website before you even think about applying for affiliate programs. If your blog has no content, not only will you have no audience, but you'll stand little chance of getting approved by an affiliate manager.

Therefore, plan on the 25 articles you want to write before you start writing them. Create keystone articles that are easy to rank for. If you can buy a keyword research tool like Ahrefs, I highly suggest doing so. A keyword research tool is invaluable.

And there are some free options available.

Google Ads, Google Trends, and Google's own search engine results are great free tools for discovering topics to write about. My White Hat SEO article for bloggers tells you how to use these services for free, and what types of content you should write and how to write content so you are found by search engines like Google.

4. Build Your Audience

The next step is to build your audience.

The most common method is via organic search — otherwise known as Search Engine Optimization, or SEO. And Social media traffic. Though you have more options than ever today:

The list goes on and on.

Ideally, you want to build up a fan base of repeat visitors to your website and blog. Statistics show it takes more than one touch point before a visitor converts. The data shows it takes 8 to 12 visits before a visitor trusts you enough.

Without question, SEO should be part of your audience-building strategy, because 50-80% of all traffic to a website comes via organic search. Again K-Web Social Designs can help you with the

initial push your website needs to start attracting the organic traffic... You are running a business, right? Then you must have a promo and marketing budget! Or you will wait and wait. possibly lose hope and even quit! #NotCool

5. Sign Up for Affiliate Programs

Only after you've completed the first four steps should you go on to this step. Applying for affiliate programs before starting your website and social media profiles is like building a house before the concrete foundation has solidified.

Effectively, when you sign up for an affiliate program, you become a "partner" with the merchant's sales funnel. But not all affiliate programs are created equal.

To avoid picking the wrong ones, I touch on the best affiliate marketing programs every beginner should sign up for.

With the affiliate programs I recommend, you can sell any product or service via your website, videos and social channels.

Depending on your niche, you should also consider signing up with merchants that aren't among the ones I recommend.

How do you know if a merchant has an affiliate program? Google "[brand-name] affiliate" or "[brand-name] partner program."

Many merchants don't advertise their affiliate programs. Rather than getting an influx of new affiliates, they'd rather keep it hush-hush. You have to contact these merchants directly and ask if they have an affiliate program.

I've also had great success by reaching out to merchants that don't have affiliate programs and asking if they'd like to start one. However, I don't recommend this option until you are an established player with some clout in your niche.

Below are some Affiliate programs you can check out:

Share-A-Sale - shareasale.com

Awin (Formerly Affiliate Window) www.awin.com

Amazon Associates. Learn more here

CJ Affiliate (Formerly Commission Junction) - www.cj.com

Rakuten Marketing (Formerly LinkShare) Learn more

Avangate Affiliate Network. Learn More

ClickBank - clickbank.com

Kolify is new and I dont have much info on it, so do some due diligence first - Google it

KG Affiliate Zone - Become an Affiliate

6. Profit!

I'm only half-joking with this next step. Your journey has only just begun. These are the basic steps to getting started with affiliate marketing. Yes, there are many other details not yet included, but this is a solid foundation on which you can build with more advanced topics in affiliate marketing.

And now if you are still here, it means a seed has taken root.

You might need more on Affiliate Programs, Blogging, Content Creation and marketing, right?

I can help you with the above.

All you need to do is reach out for help. Book a 25 min Free chat with me at https://kalungigroup.com/supportYou can also join my FREE affiliate platform at https://rccace.com/affiliate

We talk about social media marketing all day long in my Marketing Masterclub which you can learn more about at https://kalungigroup.com/dream

And until next time, It has been an absolute pleasure pouring into you.

Remember. "Nothing means Nothing, we assign meaning tko it" So take whatever you feel like and run with it, because the SKY is only the VIEW, dont let anyone tell you that its the limit.

You deserve more

Live. Lean. Love

Julie Syl Kalungi



I am a Business Transformational Strategist. The International Author of six books, 2 of hem Bestsellers, including The Art of Pinterest Profits and The Winning Planner. Each week, I send out a free newsletter with my best tips on Social media and Digital Marketing, Personal Branding, and a Winning/Leadership mindset to help your business or enterprise succeed.

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