EVERGREEN AFFILIATE MARKETING

Master the Mindset, Learn the Strategies and Apply the Systems Used by the World's Wealthiest Affiliate Marketers

By Nathaniel McCallister





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Free Chapters Are Highighted in Yellow

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INTRODUCTION

What Is and Isn't in This Book

Let's start by setting your expectations for what this book is and what it is not. If this isn't exactly what you're looking for, I want you to discover that right away so you don't waste time and energy.

- ✔ Strategies and Principles That Last
- ✖ Gimmicks and Black Hat Tactics
- ✖ Filler Content that Wastes your Time
- ✖ Sales Pitch to a Course or Coaching

1. Evergreen Affiliate Marketing *Will Teach You Only the Strategies That Will Last the Test of Time*


evergreen adjective

Save Word

ev·er·green | \ ˈe-vər-ˌgrēn \

Definition of *evergreen* (Entry 1 of 2)

1 : having foliage that remains green and functional through more than one growing season
— compare DECIDUOUS sense 1

2 a : retaining freshness or interest : PERENNIAL

b : universally and continually relevant : not limited in applicability to a particular event or date

I've read almost every book on affiliate marketing, and there weren't other books I felt would be relevant ten years from now. I wanted to write something that will last and will read just as well in print in 2021 when it was first published as it will in 2041 and beyond.

Yes, I could show you tips that are working at the time of this writing. Things that could increase the chances of a novice making $1,000/month quickly using TikTok. (If you're reading this in the future, that may sound wildly outdated and TikTok may very well no longer exist). I'm not opposed to this sort of content. I spend most of my time writing that sort of thing, but I save it for my blog, EntreResource.com.

I believe blogs should be timely but most books should be timeless. I can't come to your house years from now and take your copy of this book and scratch out the tactics that no longer work, and I don't want to ask you to buy countless revisions in the future.

My fear is that a printed copy of this book could eventually contain misleading tactics that no longer work. Tactics that could cause you to waste money and time (again, emphasis on time; this is a common theme in this book). Nothing kills the potential of an aspiring affiliate marketer quite like experts confidently showing them ways to lose money.

Almost all quick hacks and tips become played out by the time you hear about them unless you're extremely good at finding them early. I'm giving you the principles that will help you make consistent sales forever.

These principles will work regardless of the current climate at the time you're reading it. Regardless of what is trending, which social media channels are popular, or what new regulations are in place.

You'll notice that I've avoided mentioning social media plat-

forms or search engines by name with rare exceptions. Most of the time, I'll be using phrases like "social media channels" instead of "Instagram." However, you will see references to Google and YouTube because I believe they are both here to stay.

This was painful. I know how great it is to find timely and specific things that can generate quick results. It was difficult to resist the urge to include many of the things that are working in 2021 as I'm writing. However, I know it's in the best interest of future readers and won't dampen the impact of the content. The underlying concepts remain the same, regardless of the name of the platform or how the interface looks.

I am also making exceptions regarding email marketing and search engine optimization. Both are constantly changing, but the foundational concepts will be here for good. Although year after year open rates and engagement are declining, I believe that email marketing is not going anywhere soon. There will always be some method of direct marketing with our followers. At most, email marketing will develop into a marginally different but similar enough mechanism that everything mentioned here will still apply.

For search engine optimization, algorithms change daily, but people will always need a way to find answers to their questions and discover new information. Although how that works could change dramatically (for example, voice search on smart devices is becoming increasingly common) getting our content in front of people organically with search engines isn't going away.

To better convey points, I've cited various third-party sources and will mention various statistics throughout the content. These numbers will fluctuate over time, and you should avoid interpreting them as perfectly current depending on when you're reading this. As much of a cop-out as it may sound, to find the most up-to-date data on anything mentioned here, simply perform a basic web search.

The first draft of this book didn't include any screenshots. I didn't want to have images of older interfaces that might in the future make the content seem like it was no longer relevant. However, I have added some because I feel many of the concepts are much easier to understand when I include screenshots of things such as Google search results and examples of proper web page design. So keep in mind, the underlying concepts of every image will remain evergreen, but the interfaces shown will inevitably change over time.

2. No Gimmicks, Exaggerations, or Over-Promising

I was at war with my editors as I finalized the cover and title for *Evergreen Affiliate Marketing*. Here's some of the feedback that I got on the title and cover.

"It needs more of a hook, it's a little dry . . ."

"You should tell people what they're going to get, like tips to earn $1,000/week passively."

"This looks like the type of book that I know I should read but it might be boring . . ."

These suggestions have merit. In terms of copywriting, they're absolutely correct. Adding more flare would absolutely help me sell more books more quickly. However, that's not my goal with *Evergreen Affiliate Marketing*. I've shared everything that I know is critical to affiliate marketing, and I want to "wow" you with the content so that the clickbait headlines won't be necessary to the long-term success of this book.

A quick stroll through Amazon will show you hundreds of books on affiliate marketing with catchy hooks and attractive promises. That isn't this book. This book promises one thing: to make you a better affiliate marketer. I won't make false guarantees like "earn $5,000/month passively from the beach" or "become a seven-figure marketer in thirty days." However, anyone who

achieves these sorts of desirable outcomes absolutely leverages at least some tactics that you're going to learn in this book. You'll have the skills needed to do amazing things, but how you apply them and what the results are is entirely up to you.

3. This Book (Like All Affiliate Marketing Books) Is "Incomplete" and You Don't Need All of It Right Away (or Maybe Ever)

We're going to cover the heart of affiliate marketing, but it's not an "everything you need to succeed" type of guide. Because of the fluid nature of affiliate marketing, that sort of book isn't possible.

For example, at the time of this writing, Instagram stories with swipe up animations are working really well for my friends in the fitness industry. If you're reading this ten years after its original publication, Instagram may not even be around. The influencers who used that method will have pivoted to something else or left the industry entirely.

Most skills worth learning in the twenty-first century require ongoing learning. But don't worry, I cover how to ensure you stay up-to-date on the current state of affiliate marketing. I have an entire chapter titled " How to Learn What's Not in This Book," that is dedicated to ensuring you will be the most "in the know" affiliate marketer in every room you walk into.

As I mentioned already, part of what makes me uniquely qualified to write this book is the broad depth of experiences and extensive amount of different strategies I've used to reach my affiliate marketing goals. I adopt an "omni-channel" and "omni-tactic" approach to making sales. While many affiliate marketers focus on one aspect, such as SEO or influencer type audience building, I have experimented and had success with most of the strategies out there.

Part of why I've done this is so I can document my experiences

on my blog and YouTube channel. This has given me a unique advantage in discussing all the strategies at your disposal.

However, I don't recommend you follow in my footsteps in that regard. At least not right away. Some tactics, for example, will be more relevant to people who want to build big brands and followings. If this doesn't describe you, don't spend time on it. For this reason, you may find that reading this book a second or third time down the road is beneficial since your business will inevitably change and old content may become relevant.

4. You Won't Get a Sales Pitch

Last but not least, I promise that this isn't a cheap attempt at getting you into my sales funnel. A disturbing trend has started in recent years. As it became easier and more affordable to self-publish books, a lot of junk started popping up. No offense to self-publishers (this is a self-published book after all), but most of them would go into a shredder if the authors handed them to a major publisher.

Even worse, some of the most knowledgeable people in their fields attract readers off of their clout but then create books that hold back all of the useful substance. If an expert writes a book and withholds the best advice, they can't make a truly timeless and influential book. Instead, they turn their books into glorified sales letters that aim to sell you on an expensive upsell coaching program or course. This book is not that. I have no course on affiliate marketing, and I don't offer coaching. All I want to do is create the go-to resource for affiliate marketers and turn you into a lifelong follower of my free content on affiliate marketing and internet entrepreneurship.

You should be skeptical of every person in the "make money" online space (myself included). All I ask is that you read this book

and decide for yourself if I'm just another marketer who makes money talking about marketing or if I'm the real deal and you can trust that I've given you the right strategies, tips, and tactics to make an impact in your life and business.

CORE CONCEPTS AND MINDSET

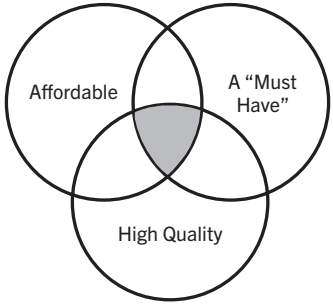
Your Cornerstone Product

In a later chapter, we're going to go over choosing the best affiliate programs, but first I want to explain an important concept. The most successful affiliate marketers I know make most of their commissions from a single affiliate offer. I call these offers "cornerstone products."

No matter what niche you're in, you should be able to find one of these types of products. These products will be the bedrock of your business. Anyone who follows you should see this product at least once.

On a website, they will see it on the banners and relevantly placed throughout your content. In a video they will see a link in the description. In your email newsletter they will get at least one dedicated email promoting the product. It will be the lifeblood of your business.

Great cornerstone products should meet the following criteria:



Cornerstone Criteria #1. Be a "Must Have" or Obvious First Purchase for Your Reader

The term "cornerstone" applies not just to you but also to the reader. A perfect cornerstone offer will be something that everyone in your space needs.

Many of the things that affiliate marketers promote are just "nice to have." Things that are great if you have money to spend and can use them, but not mandatory to remain in the space.

If your audience is internet entrepreneurs who build websites, they all need hosting. Hosting is the cornerstone for them, and it's not optional if they want a true online presence. If someone doesn't have hosting, they won't be in your target audience for long. They will be window shoppers as opposed to serious buyers and action takers. You're doing them a tremendous favor by helping them make a wise decision right out of the gate.

This doesn't mean that your audience is now limited to newbies in your space since you will make a majority of your sales from an introductory offer. Many people who find your content will already have the product you're offering or an alternative. That is to be expected.

If a "must have" product doesn't seem to exist, your cornerstone product should be something that a majority of your audience would want to have as soon as possible. For example, in the gaming space you could promote your favorite headset. These aren't absolutely mandatory, but they are pretty close to it, and they might become more appealing over time to all of your followers.

Cornerstone Criteria #2. Be Reasonably Priced

"Reasonably priced" is a relative term. Going back to the hosting example, there are different price points ranging from a few bucks a month to thousands of dollars per year or more.

The difference between the lowest priced hosting services and the highest priced hosting services is noticeable only at scale. People new to the space who are just trying to get their first website online don't need many of the higher-end features like extended storage space. Therefore, the best cornerstone hosting would be the lower-cost plans. If the product has tiers that go into the higher end, that is perfectly fine, but your core offer should be the entry-level price points.

Cornerstone Criteria #3. Be an Amazing Product

Great affiliate marketers know they can make a lot more money by selling repeatedly to the same people. They don't promote off-quality products just to get quick and easy sales because they understand that trust is extremely valuable. If the first product you promote is a total waste of money, don't expect the buyer to ever trust you again. If it wows them, you could have a loyal follower for life. (We cover what makes a great affiliate product and affiliate program in more detail in a later chapter.)

Cornerstone Criteria #4. Recurring Commission (Bonus)

This isn't mandatory, but the cornerstone product is very often something that can drive recurring revenue. Since it's a cornerstone product (something the buyer has to have) you can continue getting paid for it as long as they are an active member of the space.

If possible, look for a software to promote. Those are more often than not recurring subscriptions and have always performed best for me. Don't force this if there isn't a viable recurring product option in your space, but keep this in mind as you're looking into all the options.

Here are some examples of perfect cornerstone products.

- You teach people how to make their gyms more profitable, so you promote a subscription gym management software.
- You teach people how to save money on their taxes, so you recommend your favorite bookkeeping software.

Here are some examples of pretty good cornerstone products if you can't find a perfect one.

- You're an influencer in the homeschooling space, so you promote a line of textbooks you love.
- You're an influencer in the fitness space, so you promote a supplement membership.
- You have a vlog about food allergies and recommend an at-home food allergy testing kit. As an added benefit, there's a membership option that gives them a discount on new kits each month.

Ask yourself this question: If I had to promote a product at the beginning or end of every piece of content I produce, what would it be? That should be your cornerstone product.

Chapter Summary

- All affiliate marketers should have one cornerstone product.
- A great cornerstone product should be something that most of your audience has to have, is reasonably priced, and is high quality.
- Recurring commission products are ideal for cornerstone products since they are things the buyer will use as long as they're in the niche, but this isn't mandatory.

CONTENT CREATION

Low-Hanging Fruit on Search Engines

If you are selling something with a piece of content (blog post or video), there are certain keywords that you want your piece to show up for in order to make sales. I call these "buyer intent keywords."

There are three different keywords that people look for in search engines (Google and YouTube are the two powerhouses we focus on primarily as affiliates) that signal what we call "high buyer intent."

1. **Solution Seeking Terms.** The searcher doesn't yet know what products solve their problem. If they are searching from a phrase like "how to get more email opt-ins," we would attract these people with a post like "Using Thrive Leads to Get More Opt-Ins."
2. **Shopping Around Keywords.** The searcher knows the solution they need but wants to learn more about the specific products that can solve it. They also will want to compare solutions that promise the same thing to decide which is best for them.
3. **"At the Register" Keywords.** The searcher has decided they want the product and are looking for a discount or special offer.

The best way to find your buyer intent keywords is to start with your product in mind. Let's say that your product is a program that teaches people how to become better singers called the "Superior Singing Method" (it's a real program at the time of this writing but I know nothing about it). Solution comparison keywords we'd like to rank for could include:

- "How to improve singing voice"
- "Increase vocal range"
- "How to sing better fast"
- "Sing better"

These are very basic phrases and aren't extremely "hot," but if you show up for these sorts of search terms organically, you will be able to pitch your affiliate solution (no pun intended) to people who possibly are in the market for your product.

To create a long list of these solution comparison keyword phrases, start with your product and think of all the different benefits it has and then identify the corresponding search terms that could showcase it.

Next, we have shopping around and comparison research. These keywords are searched by people who know what the solution looks like but they have multiple choices and want to narrow them down.

Keyword phrases for this type include.

- [Affiliate keyword] + "Review"
- [Affiliate keyword] + "Pricing"
- [Affiliate keyword] + "Features" [Competitor] + "Alternative"
- "Product X vs. Product Y"

Finally, we have "at the checkout" keywords. There are four core keywords that when paired with your affiliate product title get traffic that is ready to buy. You should try to incorporate these into your content and consider running traffic to the long tail keywords you make with them.

- [Affiliate keyword] + "Offer"
- [Affiliate keyword] + "Coupon"
- [Affiliate keyword] + "Discount"
- [Affiliate keyword] + "Promo"

These words are powerful because they target only buyers who are extremely close to buying. Getting exposure to these types of search terms will dramatically increase conversions, even without changing anything else about how you're selling your affiliate offers.

This might get me kicked out of some of my favorite copywriting groups, but I need to tell you something very important that is often misunderstood. We're going to cover copywriting in great detail later in this book, but it's not actually the most important thing you do as affiliate marketers. Getting someone to go from a "no" to a "yes" when it comes to buying your affiliate products is great, but it's not the primary means of making sales. Many marketers over-romanticize the power of copywriting and miss a massive shortcut that makes copywriting far less important.

Copywriting isn't king; targeting is king. Finding the people who are already saying "yes" and getting your affiliate links in front of them before your competitors can is the ultimate affiliate growth hack. These low-hanging fruit keywords are a perfect example of finding customers who are already sold and getting in front of them before your competitors. This is far easier than convincing people that they need or want it. Find the people who are "no-brainers" for your product.

Chapter Summary

- Not all search terms are created equal. Some are much more likely to lead to sales.
- The three types of high-buyer-intent keywords are solution seeking, shopping around, and at the checkout.
- Rank in search engines for as many of these low-hanging fruit, high-buyer-intent terms as possible.

TACTICS AND STRATEGY

Create Free Tools

The word "free" has a different meaning to affiliate marketers. We can give things for free but still drive thousands of dollars' worth of sales from them. One way we can do this is by monetizing our free software with sidebar display ads that pay for clicks or impressions or direct links to other relevant affiliates.

This method requires some creativity, so the best way to help you here is by showing you some real-world examples. One site that does this extremely well is LeanDomainSearch.com. The magic of this site is that it provides a tremendous service and drives BlueHost affiliate commissions whenever someone chooses a domain they like.

The flow is brilliant. People come to the site to find domain name inspiration. Visitors simply type in some core terms like "birds" in the example above and they will be shown a ton of variations of available domain names that include that term. There are some simple filters that can be added to filter and sort the results, but it's nothing crazy.

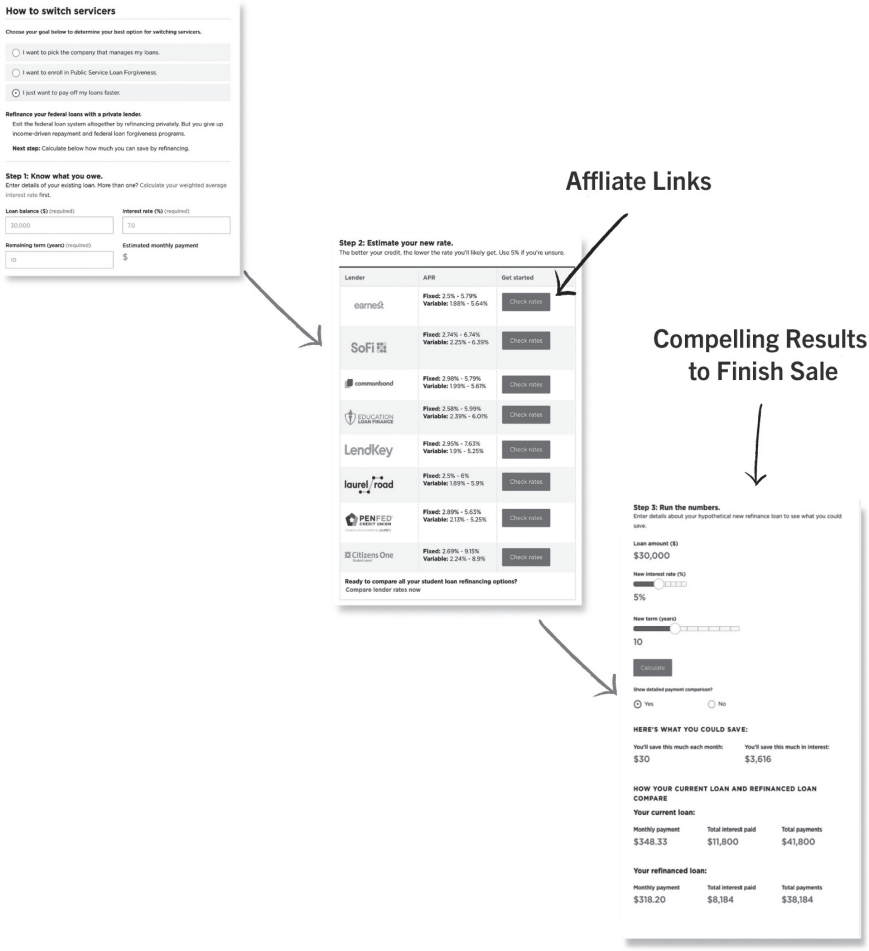
When someone sees a domain name they like, they click on it to verify that it is in fact available. If it is, they are promoted to purchase the domain on BlueHost. At the time of this writing, BlueHost was paying $65 per sale generated.

The program is free and doesn't even require an email opt-in or show any banner ads on the sidebars. That's a fantastic sign that the affiliate sales are coming in strong.

Free Software for Sales



Next, let's examine a tool created by one of the most successful affiliate marketing companies of all time, NerdWallet.com. They created a calculator that allows visitors to see how much they could save by refinancing. The flow looks like this.



Users share their current loan amounts, interest rates, and remaining loan term. Next, they are shown a list of services that they could use to refinance and have calls to action encouraging them to click to learn more. These are the affiliate links for the tool. Finally, the greatest copywriting of all time: data proving you'll save money. They don't need to do very much more to make a sale here. They can show exactly how much money someone will save by using one of their partner programs.

Let's do one more example. When I'm running Google ad cam-

paigns, I use a free tool called Keywords Toaster to generate different match variations. The only cost to me is that I'm exposed to relevant ads. That is a win in my book all around.



Take note of the fact that the affiliate products being promoted in the tools are highly relevant to what the tool does. At the bottom of the window you see SEMRush, which is a tool that, among other things, allows marketers to spy on the Google ad campaigns of their competitors. Someone who uses Keywords Toaster is probably someone who would be in the market to buy SEMRush.

What's especially powerful about these types of programs is that people will likely use them multiple times. More exposure to the affiliate products is always a good thing. If possible, create a tool that is used frequently by the visitor.

Keep in mind, there is a difference between creating a free tool that organically sells an affiliate product and cookie stuffing. Never engage in cookie stuffing. This is the process of creating

programs that force your affiliate cookies into user's browsers and credit you for sales that you didn't actually make. This is highly unethical and will almost always result in being permanently banned from the affiliate program if caught.

Chapter Summary

- Free is surprisingly lucrative. Create free tools that attract your potential buyers and organically sell them while they are using the product.
- Tools that are used more than once will increase impressions to your affiliate products and increase conversions. Try to create tools that become part of the user's daily life or workflow.
- Never engage in cookie stuffing. This is unethical and is always against the affiliate program's terms of service.

COPYWRITING

Know More, Sell More

We discussed how it's impossible to promote a massive amount of products with great success. One of the reasons is because if you promote a lot, you need to know a lot.

The more you understand a product that you're promoting, the easier it will be for you to sell it. Your sales copy will flow more smoothly. You'll be able to answer customer questions promptly and accurately (making you look like a rock star), and things are just easier!

Also, if you know what you're promoting inside and out, it makes it extremely easy to create content around it. You can showcase how something works or demonstrate the results you achieved by using it.

This is not to say that you can only promote products that you're currently using. I know this sounds sketchy, but hear me out . . .

If you only promote the tools you're currently using, you could be leading your customers in the wrong direction. For example, my business is at scale. The tools I use such as internet hosting and keyword research software are expensive but very much worth it to me. Many of my readers are brand new to affiliate marketing, and if I were to recommend just the high end products I use, I'd be causing them to waste money and bring a gun to a knife fight, so to speak.

So I go out of my way to master the alternatives if I need to recommend them. If it's a product, I buy it, even if I already have a different higher-end solution. If it's a service, I test it. Dive deep into all the features and benefits. Explore all of the possible uses.

You get the idea. Whether you use it or not, get to know it before you promote it. It will benefit not only your customers but your sales as well.

Chapter Summary

- Know the products you promote inside and out.
- Dive deep into all of the features, benefits, and potential uses of the products you promote so you can answer questions effectively and create more compelling sales copy.

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

The Truth about Running Paid Ads

If you're a new affiliate marketer, you have surely considered running paid ads directly to your affiliate products. Ranking on page 1 of Google or going viral on social media organically is hard, so it's extremely tempting to buy your way out of the work.

You're not alone. I did this too several years ago when I got started in the business. My results were . . . underwhelming.

We were under the impression that we didn't need a brand to sell affiliate products. We assumed that we could sell ANY product simply by running paid traffic to the landing pages of our affiliates, optimizing the ads, scaling them, and pretty much printing our own money.

This was a total failure. It was extremely disappointing because the numbers had added up perfectly on paper.

For example, let's say that you have a product that has a $2.18 EPC according to the affiliate network or vendor. EPC means that for each click, you should be earning $2.18. Based on this, you'd expect that you could easily profit as long as your costs per click are below that $2.18.

For example.

- spend $.75 on a click, net $1.43
- spend $.18 on a click, net $2
- spend $2 on a click, net $.18

Seems to make sense, but here is why it doesn't work.

1. Affiliate Vendors Aren't Consistent in What "EPC" Means

Some affiliate networks measure their EPC differently. A few of the large platforms measure their EPC as "Earnings per 100 Clicks." Unfortunately, they don't label it as earnings per 100 clicks (EPHC)—they like to keep it confusing. They do this because it makes their available affiliate products look more enticing to potential promoters.

So if you've been running ads to an affiliate that has EPC measured as EPHC (earnings per hundred clicks), your ad costs per click need to be measured accordingly.

If you're paying $.30/click and the EPHC is $20.00, you're losing money. You'd need to convert your EPC to EPHC or vice versa. You need to measure them with the same unit. So if you decided to convert your ad costs into EPHC, you'd need to multiply by 100. This means you're actually paying $30 EPHC.

$30 for 100 clicks will mean you're losing $10 because the average EPHC is only $20.

$20 earned – $30 spent = –$10

Instead of a money printing press, you've created a money shredder. This is, of course, assuming that the EPHC is an accurate reflection of potential earnings (it sometimes is not). Always verify what EPC actually means for each site.

If you don't check, you may not even know this until it's way too late.

2. EPC Represents All Traffic Sources, Not Cold Traffic

The EPC is calculated based on all clicks and sales and it doesn't break down the costs in terms of traffic. For example, if the EPC is $5, cold traffic will not get an EPC of $5. This is because cold traffic will always convert at lower rates, which means it costs more. The $5 EPC weighs the hot traffic and the cold traffic

together. Some traffic will earn far more than $5 EPC and some will earn far less.

Here are the six big problems you'll run into when running paid traffic to affiliate offers.

Problem 1. Conversion Tracking Limitations

Although it's becoming more common with software like ThriveCart adding the ability to let affiliates add their conversion codes to third-party websites, it's still very rare. Successful campaigns need great metrics and deep analysis.

As Peter Drucker wisely said, "What gets measured gets managed."

Since we can't directly track all conversions, we can't be 100% positive how well our ads are performing. We don't own the sites for the products we promote, so we can't just add our code to confirmation pages, abandoned carts, etc.

Since we can't directly track all conversions, we can't be 100% positive how well our ads are performing.

Problem 2. Social Media Platform Limitations

Not every social media platform is affiliate friendly. Research the terms and conditions of any platform that you're considering using and ensure that running direct ads to affiliate offers is allowed. The last thing that you want is to have an ad account banned for an easily avoidable mistake.

Problem 3. Clicks Can Be Hard to Scale

This isn't the biggest hold up here, but it is a hold up. The more clicks you want, the higher the costs will be and the broader you'll have to make the audience in order to get them. So if the product is very niche-specific and the audience is small, clicks can be difficult to come by on a long-term basis.

There are plenty of tricks to get more clicks on your ads, but it can still be difficult to scale these sorts of campaigns.

Problem 4. Traffic Needs to Be Warmed Up

If you take one thing from this chapter, it should be that warming your traffic always leads to more sales. If you don't provide some sort of value up front, you shouldn't be surprised that you aren't making sales.

Paid ads to affiliate products shown to cold traffic fail in large part because there is no trust built or value previously given. The folks at digitalmarketer.com put it well and compare selling to cold traffic to proposing to someone on your first date. She might say yes, but that would be very unlikely and you're going to look weird.

The affiliate product I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter that had a $2.18 EPC is the average of all traffic. Most of that traffic is warm and sent by affiliates who have already built trust with their followers. The EPC provided by major affiliate platforms is an average of cold, warm, and hot traffic. If you're sending cold traffic to an affiliate page, you will almost always get a lower EPC than the average that is provided by the affiliate network.

Problem 5. Succeeding with Paid Traffic Takes Practice

The "direct to affiliate link" paid ad approach is a common attraction to new marketers who haven't created very many ads for anything prior. Although it's always difficult to pull off these direct-to-affiliate offer promotions, it's extremely difficult if you don't understand how to make a quality, targeted ad with compelling sales copy.

Problem 6. Good Ads Aren't "Hands Off"

The dream of creating one ad for an affiliate product and "setting

it and forgetting it" while you rake in commissions is just that, a dream. In reality, most ads need tweaking periodically to maintain high CTRs (click through rates). If you keep targeting the same users, they will develop "banner blindness" and will stop engaging with your ad.

Okay, we've gone through the problems, here are the solutions to make paid traffic work for you.

1. Send to Your Own Content First

This is where the sexiness disappears but the effectiveness shows up. You should send your traffic to a blog post, YouTube video, webinar, or anything else that can provide some sort of value and more than just pitch a product. The affiliate product should tie seamlessly into the sale of the product.

Providing value before the sale is extremely important. Dr. Robert Cialdini, author of the best seller *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, performed many studies around the concept of reciprocity and why giving something away often leads to getting more in return later.

Caildini performed a case study in which a waiter's tips increased by 3% when diners are given a mint, and 14% when they're given two mints. When the waiter left one mint with the bill but quickly returned to offer a second mint, the tips increased to 23%.[21]

It's not guesswork. Providing value FIRST will make you more money as an affiliate in the long run. This is part of why the anonymous approach rarely outperforms creating a brand and providing value for "free" to the masses.

This is part of why I have spent so much time writing this book. Although I make money on the book sales, the real earning potential for me comes through the fact that by giving you value, you're more likely to support me later if I promote something.

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21 Robert Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007) 32.

Sorry if that makes you feel like you're being played. You're of course perfectly welcome to scour my blog and YouTube channel and absorb every bit of free information without ever giving me a dollar.

There are additional positive byproducts of running paid traffic to your own content as well. If you have a blog or video channel, you can start to rank organically if users are viewing the content, liking, commenting, and sharing. This means more free traffic over time, which will lead to more sales even if you stop running the ads.

Another positive byproduct of sending traffic to your own content is you can capture email addresses if you include an enticing lead magnet somewhere on your page or channel.

2. Pixel Traffic and Retarget It

The purpose of sending traffic to content that isn't just a sales page is because it warms the traffic. Warm traffic buys.

Pixeling traffic allows you to retarget past visitors to your page and show additional ads to them as they navigate across the internet. This is absolutely the best traffic you can target.

- They know you and are more likely to trust your future recommendations.
- They are more likely to be interested in what you're selling.
- It takes out a lot of the guesswork of creating an audience from scratch.
- People rarely purchase anything the first time they are exposed to it.
- If someone has received value from you in the past, they are much more likely to click on an ad you show them later, and they are more likely to buy as well.

3. Continually Optimize

The higher your frequency gets, the more money you're going to pay per click. This means that we need to make sure we don't fall victim to "setting and forgetting" our ads.

Now a slight exception is when you are running ads to just pixeled traffic. If you are targeting recent visitors to your site, you won't need to change the ad quite as often since new visitors will be pixeled each day, and they will be seeing your ads for the first time.

4. Collect Emails When Possible

If you're spending money on ads, you may as well grab some emails as a byproduct. When you gather email addresses, you can contact your subscribers again later with offers to your affiliate products.

5. Sell in Email Follow-Up Sequences

New email subscribers are giving you the chance to expose them to your offer multiple times. Create a great follow-up campaign that builds trust and gives incentive to buy and you'll see your sales go much, much higher.

6. Test Multiple Ad Platforms

Some products sell better on certain mediums. Test as many as you can and double down on what works for you.

Chapter Summary

- Paid ads absolutely work for affiliate marketing, but they aren't for everyone.
- You need to be prepared to spend a good deal of money up front just to gather information to optimize your ads.

- Try to collect emails with your ads whenever possible and sell in automated follow ups.
- Test like crazy. Test different platforms, media types, audiences, and budgets.
- Pixel everything when possible for retargeting. Retargeting ads will almost always see lower costs and higher conversion rates.

Don't Go Revenue Blind

"We're losing money on every sale, but we'll make up for it in volume."

—Old Business Joke

My first exposure to affiliate marketing was from Russian YouTuber. I've tried to find his channel again just to see how crazy what he teaches looks in hindsight, but it appears he's completely disappeared. The average career lifetime of affiliate marketing gurus is shorter than Chinese leftovers by the way. This was probably for the best.

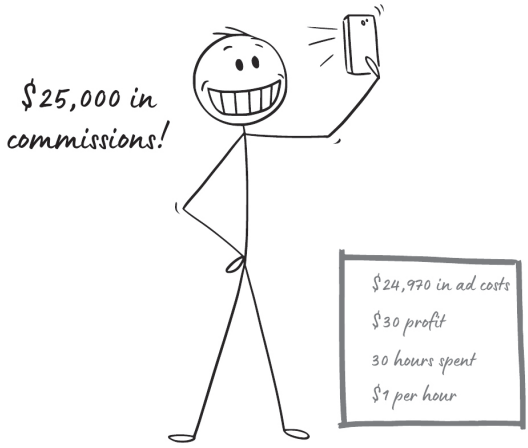
I remember how he drove to the bank, withdrew a bunch of money, dumped it all on his bed, and proceeded to roll around in it. In a niche that is notoriously cheesy, this took the (cheese) cake. If I wasn't young and inexperienced, I would have just watched it as the comedy that it was rather than an actual educational piece.

Strangely, I do owe him a debt of gratitude since his videos were an eye-opening moment for me. His method was simple. Buy ads for affiliate products that looked promising and earn more on each click than it cost. Unbelievably simple on paper, and extremely exciting for me. I tried it out and managed to squeak out a few sales for a few products that I didn't vet.

My total sales was $900. I told everyone about it. This was a game-changing amount of money for me at the time. I felt so

excited to share my results with everyone. That is, until the inevitable question came: "How much of it was profit?" Whoops . . . my profits were actually –$100. I was losing money, but the rush of sales had me excited.

Revenue Blindness



This is the same logic that you experience if you've ever played a slot machine at a casino. You pull the lever and all hell breaks loose. Dings, rings, and flashing lights go crazy and you feel like you're about to leave with a huge payout.

$4!!!! Yes! But wait . . . it was a $5 pull . . .

This concept seems so obvious and almost insulting to mention, but time and time again I've seen affiliate marketers "revenue" their way straight into debt and failure. I've seen many marketers spend small fortunes on paid ads to win contests like cars and trips to the Bahamas only to later find out that the ad cost greatly exceeded the affiliate earnings and the value of the prizes.

Focus on one thing: profits. The only thing to take out of gross sales is data. If it costs you $20 to make a $15 sale, you don't cel-

ebrate the $15. You celebrate that you now know that if you can get your ad costs down below $15, you can be profitable. You have a base to build toward success, but you're not there yet. Focus on profits, and everything else is just data for decision fuel.

Chapter Summary

- Although high revenue can be exciting, it means nothing if there isn't true net profit behind it.
- Always be aware of your costs and time. Don't allow yourself to give too much weight to revenue. It is an incomplete metric that can cause you to lose money if you aren't careful.



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