

Graham-Cox.com presents...

Super Affiliate Success Tips



with Allan Gardyne

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The following interview took place in May 2008

Graham Cox: How did you get started as an affiliate marketer?

Allan Gardyne: My first online business was selling recipe ebook I wrote for people who, like me, have celiac disease - an intolerance to gluten. I sold my first ebook in May, 1996, although at that time I'd never heard the word "ebook". I called it an "electronic book" - and then had to explain what that was!

To learn how to market my website, I bought a little book by Jim Daniels called "Insider Internet Marketing". Jim offered his customers the option of signing up as an affiliate and receiving commissions from sales. The book was very helpful, so I signed up.

I collected hundreds of Internet marketing tips from everywhere I could find them and put them on a new website. As one of the tips, I recommended that people buy Jim's book.

I earned about \$10 from each sale.

Graham Cox: You're probably best known for your affiliate directory AssociatePrograms.com. How did the idea for that site come about and why do you think it has been so successful?

Allan Gardyne: I liked those \$10 commissions. I wanted to join more affiliate programs like Jim Daniels' so I hunted in all the main search engines for a directory of them. I was surprised that no one appeared to have created one. I reckoned that many people like me would be searching for a directory of affiliate programs, so I started one. Apparently, one did exist, but I couldn't find it.

One reason I've been successful is that I was fortunate enough to get in early in a fast growing industry. AssociatePrograms.com has dozens - maybe hundreds - of competitors now, but I've continued to do well. I think one reason may be that I've been able to earn a

reputation for honesty and no-hype reviews.

Another reason is that AssociatePrograms.com is much more than just a directory of affiliate programs. It also has a friendly, helpful affiliate forum, archives of all my newsletters dating back to the first one in April 1998, dozens of articles on different aspects of affiliate marketing, and a "Knowledge Base", which is a sort of extended affiliate marketing FAQ. We're working on plans to extend and improve the site, too.

Graham Cox: When you started AssociatePrograms.com in January 1998 did you believe it would enable you to quit your regular job and make a full-time living from affiliate marketing? Or was it really just intended to be a nice sideline to your regular income?

Allan Gardyne: When I started online in 1996, I was working only part-time, as a newspaper sub-editor. I worked three days a week and my wife, Joanna, usually worked one or two days. We didn't earn much, but we had a nice lifestyle. All I was hoping for was to earn enough to be able to replace that part-time income. I pictured myself having my usual four-day weekends.

However, by 1998, when Joanna and I took a long weekend off and I did some brainstorming and mind-mapping and planned AssociatePrograms.com, I was aiming a LOT higher. By then, I'd grown much more ambitious. I set goals that were so high I was too embarrassed to tell anyone what they were - and I surprised myself by exceeding them.

Graham Cox: Why do you think you've been such a successful affiliate marketer?

Allan Gardyne: I worked like crazy and I never gave up. Whenever anything went wrong, I just kept on going. I vividly remember early disasters, such as a virus wrecking my computer, and hackers who posted "adult" stuff on my forum and then froze it so I couldn't access it. Two or three times, hackers broke into my web host and deleted the main page

of the site. But I never gave up.

Also, I have a simple, easy to understand writing style. That helps.

Graham Cox: What, in your opinion, are the 3 most important qualities required to become successful as an affiliate marketer?

Allan Gardyne: Dogged determination to succeed. This is much more important than anything else.

Persuasive writing skills.

A belief in yourself.

Graham Cox: Why do you think so many marketers struggle to make money online?

Allan Gardyne: Probably dozens of different reasons.

I suspect a really common reason is that many give up too soon. They're misled by authors of many marketing salesletters who say affiliate marketing is "easy". It's not. It's only after you've done the hard work and are banking the checks that it seems easy.

Many newcomers to affiliate marketing buy a book on affiliate marketing and try to make money by promoting that book. Unfortunately for them, the "How to make money on the Internet" niche is intensely crowded these days. If you decide to compete in that niche, you're competing with some of the smartest marketers on the planet - definitely not a good place for a beginner, unless you can come up with a really original angle that makes you stand out from the crowd.

Another reason is probably lack of focus. I've been guilty of this - starting one project for a

month or so, getting bored or frustrated with it and moving on without really giving the project a proper chance to succeed.

I think when you're starting out you should choose ONE method and stick with it for at least six months to give it a fair chance of success.

Graham Cox: What would you say is the best business model for affiliate marketing (PPC, niche blogging, viral marketing etc?)

Allan Gardyne: The best business model is the one that best suits your skills and interests. I like writing, so newsletter publishing and creating niche websites filled with useful, keyword-rich content suits me. My business partner, Jay Stockwell, likes tracking and testing and analyzing data, so PPC suits him.

The wonderful thing about the Internet is that you can create a business that matches your skills.

Graham Cox: What tools do you use to find out if a niche is likely to be profitable or not?

Allan Gardyne: I'm not sure that I should own up to this, I've mainly used my own instincts, and - in recent years - used [Wordtracker](#) to confirm my instincts. Jay, who created [KeywordWorkshop.com](#) to review all the main keyword research tools, would be a much better person to ask.

Graham Cox: How important are recurring and long term residual affiliate programs to your success?

Allan Gardyne: Very important. I've been very keen on them ever since I first learned about them. Do the work once, get paid over and over again. Makes sense to me. That's

why I created the LifetimeCommissions.com site, which specializes in reviewing lifetime and residual income affiliate programs.

Graham Cox: You're also a business partner in SpeedPPC.com. How did your involvement come about?

Allan Gardyne: I've known Jay for about 25 years - since he was a young boy. He's done some very interesting stuff online, such as writing an innovative SEO book and creating a site to fight click fraud, ClickSentinel.com. He has very valuable skills that I don't have, such as a degree in multi media. In 2005, I asked him to join our team to help us grow faster.

Jay was doing some experiments in PPC marketing for us and finding it frustratingly time consuming. He developed a script to help us do things faster, more efficiently and more profitably. That was the first version of [SpeedPPC](http://SpeedPPC.com). We went public with Version 2. We're now on Version 3.

Graham Cox: How does SpeedPPC help affiliate marketers using PPC?

Allan Gardyne: The [SpeedPPC](http://SpeedPPC.com) Campaign Builder helps you build your PPC campaigns correctly. For example, for a small campaign we can use it to create an ad group around every keyword. This means that your ad will PERFECTLY match your keyword. It helps you create perfectly structured campaigns without much effort.

It allows you to create a landing page that is customized for every keyword. This is important because it lowers your per-click costs while improving your conversion rate.

It enables you to do all this at incredible speed. Once you've created a landing page template, a campaign that might have taken a month to create can be created in minutes. It's probably won't surprise you to learn that we're getting a lot of rave reviews.

It's an incredibly flexible system that can be used in many different ways. We go into more detail at <http://www.SpeedPPC.com>.

Graham Cox: Apart from [Google Adwords](#), which other PPC Search Engines have you found good results with?

Allan Gardyne: Yahoo! Search Marketing and MSN are the best of the rest.

Graham Cox: You live an apparently idyllic lifestyle on the Queensland coast of Australia. Do you work fewer hours now than you used to so you can enjoy the beach and family life more?

Allan Gardyne: I certainly do! I've learned my lesson. For several years, I worked like crazy, just about every hour I possibly could, from about dawn to about midnight, seven days a week. You could say I was obsessed with marketing. I even used to work on Christmas Day.

I was mad. I used to try to answer every email that arrived before going to bed. And of course when you do that, you're encouraging people to send you MORE questions, which you then feel you have to answer. In 1998 and 1999 was working like a free help desk. I was so busy I hardly had any time to do marketing to promote [AssociatePrograms.com](#).

I hired Wally in 1998 to help moderate the forum, and then in 1999 I hired my first full-time employee, Nathan. But I made a huge mistake. Instead of delegating stuff to him, I created NEW tasks for him to do and a new website for him to manage - [PayPerClickSearchEngines.com](#) - and I was still working just as hard as ever.

Then I partly came to my senses and hired Glennys to process submissions to the affiliate directory and over the years I've gradually taught her how to answer emails for me. She's

been an enormous help.

However, I still just about killed myself, and I mean that literally.

I ended up getting an autoimmune disorder, aplastic anemia. My bone marrow, which, I was surprised to learn, is supposed to create new blood cells, was slowly shutting down and refusing to grow enough new red and white blood cells to keep me alive. Every time I had a new blood test, the counts would be worse. It was quite scary.

I ended up in hospital in 2003 having a bone marrow transplant. For a while, I ran the business from a laptop in hospital. It was long, slow recovery but I'm fine now.

These days, I have a much more leisurely lifestyle. Joanna and I go for a beach walk every morning and for another one at sunset. We live in a fabulous part of the world and we make sure we take time off to enjoy it. We spend winters in New Zealand, where we have family and friends.

It took me a long time, but I eventually learned how to delegate. We have an office at Burleigh Heads, about a 20-minute drive from where I live at Rainbow Bay, but running the office is Jay's responsibility, not mine. I stay away from the office.

Graham Cox: Finally, if you had one tip for an aspiring affiliate marketer what would it be?

Allan Gardyne: Apart from signing up to get my [free newsletter](#)? :)

There isn't just ONE tip that will make a difference, unless it's this one, which I learned from multi-millionaire John Audette at a conference in Hawaii...

Do something EVERY day to improve your business. John says that before going to bed he used to ask himself, "Have I done something today to improve my business?" If he hadn't, he'd go back downstairs to his computer and do something useful, not matter how

small, to improve his business.

Like John, Jay and I are huge believers in the power of incremental improvement. If you keep plugging away, ALWAYS improving your business in small ways, such as getting a new link to your site, or writing a new article... if you KEEP doing those things, success is inevitable.

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