

AFFILIATE MARKETING

WHERE THE MONEY IS!



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Introduction

Starting a business as an Internet marketer can be rather intimidating. Aside from the rather vexing technical questions that manifest for just about everyone at some point along the way, there is the question of where, exactly, does one start? It's easy enough to say that the longest journeys begin with a single step but figuring out which first step to take can be a very perplexing affair.

Affiliate marketing is one of the most profitable and least expensive types of marketing businesses in which one can work. It also provides a framework from which one can begin to understand the other aspects of marketing which are universal to any business.

Understanding how to make an affiliate marketing business successful involves understanding how to select a market, how to advertise, how to enhance one's search engine visibility and how to increase one's conversion rates. Each of these lessons will apply to any affiliate marketing business as much as they will apply to a business which sells its own products.

Chapter 1

Getting Started

Before one can be a successful Internet marketer, one must have a product which they intend to market! Selecting this product means selecting a market. Most marketers break large markets into smaller slices called niches. A niche market provides a way for a marketer to ensure that their marketing efforts are precisely-targeted and, therefore, that those efforts are more effective than the "spray and pray" types of marketing characteristic of inexperienced marketers. There are a few broad guidelines and techniques one can use to determine which market is the right one for them.

Going with One's Interests

The best markets will be those in which the marketer themselves has a driving interest. This will make the entire affair of marketing, from writing sales copy to building a site to interacting with the customers on one's list much easier and more effective.

One should consider in which products they themselves have an interest. For instance, if one happens to have an interest in golf, then that would be a good place to start when trying to determine a good choice in niche markets. If one has an interest in socializing, perhaps dating would be a good choice. There are huge benefits that flow from selecting one's market in this way.

For starters, it won't be a chore for the marketer to do research in a field in which they already have an interest. If one happens to be a cat lover, for instance, that individual likely does a lot of reading about cats and, in addition to the information they already possess, they will have no qualms about increasing what they know through a bit of research. This research, as we will see, will be very important to the building of one's site.

A good deal of customer service has to do with being those customers favorite "expert" on any given topic. This role will be important when dealing with customers via an email list and when selecting products in which one's subscribers may have an interest. It's much easier to choose such products if one shares their customer's interests and knows, instinctively, how to

separate a good product from a bad one. This will also help the marketer to speak with more credibility when addressing their customers.

The perils of choosing a market in which one hasn't an interest are myriad. From the get-go, one will be tasked with a great deal of research which may be very time-consuming. One will also find themselves building sites for subjects they may find tedious. When it comes time to find a product in which one's subscribers may have an interest, it will be that much more difficult to determine what products will make those customers want to buy. Going with one's interests is always the best move when getting started.

Choosing a Niche

Choosing one's niche market is among the most vital strategic decisions any Internet marketer will make. Not only will one have to choose a market, they'll have to choose keywords within that market to ensure that their page is as visible as possible. Choosing this niche will take time, consideration and some research into how competitive any given niche is already.

Scouting out the Competition

Every market niche will have a certain amount of competition for the members of the demographic. However, some niches will be over-saturated and others will be almost vacant of any marketers. It may seem instinctive to move into those least-marketed niches but one does so at their own peril. The most heavily-marketed niches, of course, entail their own risks.

The Very Popular Niches

The most popular niches will likely be dominated by very successful marketers and, in particular, by corporate sites which have almost unlimited resources to spend in their quest to stay on top. This makes these very expensive where advertising and just about everything else is concerned. This situation also makes these niches very unfriendly to anyone looking to break into them as a new marketer.

One can determine how saturated a niche may be by using one of the various tools designed for this purpose. Most of them are available on the Internet and there are several different versions. What they do, essentially, is to scour for information related to a keyword or a keyword phrase. For instance, if one were to type "golf+clubs" into one of these tools, it would return what the top ranking sites are for those keywords, how many pay-per-click advertisements there were for those keywords and a host of other vital marketing information.

This information is used to determine whether or not it's even worth one's effort to make an attempt at breaking in to a given market. The example given, "golf+clubs" would likely be dominated by corporate entities which can outspend just about any independent Internet marketer. However, using the technique of niche marketing, one may do a search such as "golf+clubs+women", for instance, to see how much competition they might find in the market for women who are looking for a new set of golf clubs.

In general, one should stick to keyword phrases rather than a single keyword. As an example, if one did a search for "golf" they would find a market that would be almost impossible to enter for anyone save for the largest corporate entities.

The Untapped Market

Some beginner niche marketers make a very understandable mistake when selecting the first demographic to which they desire to market. When researching niches, they oftentimes search and search until they find that one niche that is apparently undiscovered by any other marketer. Oftentimes, that market has been discovered and the absence of any serious marketing efforts is rather by design on the part of the marketers.

When selecting a niche, one must give some consideration to how likely that niche is to part with their money. A good example is college students. If one were to write a very good EBook that gave solid, useful and time-tested information to students on how to effectively take notes during a lecture, they would have reason to suspect that their product might net them a large amount of profit. However, this might not actually be the case.

The reasons for this may not be apparent on the surface. After all, this would seem like the perfect product. Every college student has lectures, most college students are interested in

getting decent grades—or so one would think—and most college students do struggle from time to time with the college experience. Add to that the fact that most college students enjoy a good deal of disposable income and it would seem that there's no reason that this EBook shouldn't be flying off the digital shelves. It would seem that way until one did their research, that is.

Most college students, while they do harbor an interest in their grades, harbor more of an interest in partying. Getting them to part with their money is not hard for the local tavern or the local nightclub but it is very difficult for those who want to sell them something related to school, especially when one considers that they're likely already putting themselves into tens of thousands of dollars in debt due to school expenses. One might find that this niche for products to help students get more out of their lectures is completely untapped without realizing that this is the case because students aren't willing to spend any money on such products and, thus, there's no reason for a marketer to invest their time and money in trying to win over those customers.

Identifying the Good Clients

Sometimes, identifying the good clients can be very counterintuitive. Another example gives some insight in to what separates successful marketers from the unsuccessful.

As an example, imagine two men that walk into a fashionable briefcase store. One of them is carrying a top-of-the-line briefcase which is in excellent condition and which represents the very latest fashion. His friend, who has clearly been dragged into the store by his comrade, possibly a bit against his will, is carrying a ratty briefcase that hasn't been in style since the 1980's. As he looks about the store, there is little spark in his eyes when he looks at the products and he has all the characteristics of a man who sincerely wishes he were somewhere else.

The men are approached by the salesperson. If the salesperson is skilled and successful, most people would reason that he would approach the man with the beat-up briefcase and see if he could help him find something new; something more like his friend's briefcase. A successful salesperson, however, would see beyond the obvious and approach the man with

the new briefcase. Understanding why this would be the case reveals a lot about choosing a market.

The man with the new briefcase is a better choice in customers because that man obviously enjoys spending money on briefcases! Though he may have a top-of-the-line model, there's likely something available in the store that he would find very tempting. While his friend would be a very hard sell, the briefcase fan would be an easy sell and, of course, the sales person could possibly interest his friend in getting in on the fun in more than a visceral fashion. This plays to the concept of upselling to some degree and will be explored in great detail later on.

Selecting a good niche market can be done in the same fashion as the briefcase salesperson selected which customer to target for his pitch. Look for those markets where people actually spend money. This will tend to move one's efforts toward upscale clientele, such as golfers, in many cases and, oftentimes, these individuals are actually looking to spend, rather than to save, money which makes them very desirable.

The Perfect Blend

The best possible niche will be one where the members of that niche desire to spend money and in which there is enough competition to reveal that there is money to be made in catering to their needs. There will not, however, be so much competition that one will have to make a huge investment to even break in to that niche. Where there is too much competition there is certainly a lot of money to be made but it will likely take resources far beyond those of any independent Internet marketer to even be seen.

In those markets where there is competition, one's goal will have to be to set themselves apart from what competition exists. This is a tricky affair and requires some creative thinking. Fortunately, there is at present a happy coming together of various forces on the Internet which makes this affair much easier than it has been in the past.

Search engine optimization is one of the most important—possibly the most important—aspect of becoming a successful Internet marketer. In the past, search engine optimization required a tricky use of coding, keywords and other very technical endeavors to achieve. Today, the axiom is "content is king" and creating good content for a webpage is something

well-within the abilities of most Internet marketers. This effort will benefit from following all of the advice already given in regard to selecting one's niche.

If one is going with their interests, it's likely that they're capable of generating their content, at least at first, all on their own which will make the cost of starting a website very inexpensive. It's also likely that the marketer will also enjoy creating this content and, just as one can tell if a salesperson is smiling on the phone, a reader can tell if content was created with enthusiasm or simply an ulterior capitalist motive.

At the same time that content has become the driving force in determining search engine visibility, there have come on the market a whole host of software packages designed to make the affair of managing one's content very easy. Where one used to be required to manually construct every Internet page by working from a template, there are now many content management systems that require only that the page designer input the content. The software does the rest. This makes it possible for the site owner to create hundreds of pages in the same amount of time that used to allow on to create only 10 or 20.

There are also numerous tools available that assist one in creating content with keyword density percentages that are favorable to search engine optimization efforts. Add to this that there are many sites where one can contract the generation of content for affordable prices and there has never been a better time to be a niche marketer.

Now that the niche has been selected, it's time to select the affiliate programs and to build the page.

Chapter 2

Making an Effective Site: Products and Design

One's Internet site will determine their success possibly more than any other aspect of their marketing effort. While much is made of one's marketing list and while that list is certainly among one's most vital assets, the site will largely be responsible for persuading visitors to join that list. Designing this site starts by choosing one's affiliate programs.

Selecting the Affiliate Programs

Before one selects an affiliate program, one must understand how this marketing works. To begin with, one should not expect to become rich overnight. There are literally millions of people signed up to affiliate programs and only a very small fraction of them are actually

making any real effort to market the products. Marketing these products takes time, effort and some savvy.

Make certain to select quality products. Many marketers rely too much on selecting a huge range of products without investigating them on their own. Any successful marketer will reveal that they do test the products they sell and that they have an interest—a vested interest, in fact—in making certain that their site is associated with quality offerings. This ensures that one's site does not become a junk-shop of cheap and useless items.

Selecting the affiliate programs also requires that the marketer understands the economics involved and that they're open-minded and knowledgeable enough about the product being marketed so that they can select more than one good program to which to sign up.

Understanding How One Makes Profit

Affiliate programs work on the basis of percentage commissions. The affiliate marketer makes money every time one of their site visitors signs up for the website or purchases the product being marketed. In order for this to be worth one's while, the affiliate program must pay fair percentages.

If one is selling website memberships and makes an affiliate commission on every signup, one must know how much the website charges for those memberships before they can determine if the program is worth one's time and money. For instance, if the website charges \$20 per month for a membership and pays a 10% commission, there's really no point in being one of their affiliates. A 40 or 50% commission, however, would certainly be worth the effort.

When the products or memberships being sold demand a higher price, of course, the commissions will generally be lower. One of the most important aspects of running an affiliate site is giving one's visitor's options. While the affiliate marketer may think that the biggest commission should have the most marketing effort directed toward it, this is actually not the case.

Taking Care of One's Clients

The best affiliate sites offer a range of options to visitors. These sites are often constructed as reviews of the various services offered which allow visitors to make side-by-side comparisons of the various products on the market. The marketer will present all of their related affiliate products on their pages and give honest insights into the pros and cons of each.

The truly successful affiliate marketers oftentimes do something quite counterintuitive: They list the least expensive option first. This seems like it would cut into profits but it has two important effects on the perception of visitors to the site.

- It shows that the marketer has the customer's interests in mind.
- It offers the customers real value.

This technique relies not on greed but on taking care of the visitors to the sites. Oftentimes, those customers will develop enough trust in the site due to this arrangement that they will have no qualms about visiting the site again. Because it is a known marketing fact that most items need to be presented to a customer seven or eight times before a sale is made, this has enormous potential for the marketer's profit margins!

Remember that, as a marketer, one is viewed by their visitors as an expert on the products being offered. Maintaining this image requires honesty and a real effort put toward treating one's customers with the respect they deserve.

Upsell Products

Upselling is one of the most important aspects of any affiliate site or, for that matter, any marketing site at all. Good marketers understand that it's very hard to get someone to open their wallet for the first time but much easier to get them to do it a second or third time. There is a definite pattern to upselling that can help one build their profits through customer loyalty and repeat visitors.

Start small. If one is marketing products which entail a wide range of prices, try to sell something inexpensive first. For instance, if one can persuade a customer to purchase a \$50 product, they stand a much better chance of selling them a \$200 product after that customer has already spent the \$50. This allows the marketer to engage in some truly creative practices to make their sales jump.

As an example, consider a site that offers a product and a service as a means to generate profit. For the sake of example, consider a site that offers an excellent EBook on how one can write a more effective resume. The site will be designed around pitching the book.

If a customer chooses to buy the book, they will be pitched the service. Using the above figures for the example, the customer in question has already purchased the \$50 EBook and now will be pitched the \$200 service.

A few days after having purchased the book, they will be emailed an offer. The offer will simply put forth the proposition that, instead of going through the hassle themselves, the author of the book will write their resume for them for \$200. One would be surprised how many customers will take up the author on this offer. As they've already been sold the book, they've already had established to them the author's expertise in this field. The \$200 service is justified by the quality of the book they've purchased and, since they have a relationship with the marketer already, they'll have far less hesitation to open up their wallet and purchase this convenient service.

This is the art of the upsell and the most successful internet marketers, whether they be affiliate marketers or otherwise, use this method to increase their profits. One's site should have potential upsells built into its design. Using this technique allows a customer to climb a ladder of small steps toward a more expensive product rather than being expected to make a very expensive initial purchase from an unknown marketer.

Any marketer will find that this process of upselling will be the source of some of their most profitable endeavors. Oftentimes, attaching a service to a product or vice-versa is a great way to implement upselling techniques on one's site.

Tie-ins are another excellent upselling technique. For instance, one might sell an EBook on Internet marketing as their initial product. Following that, they might sell a taped version of a seminar on marketing for \$100 or \$200 to many of the same customers who purchased the book. As a final offering, they might offer tickets to the seminar itself, affairs where the attendees often pay into the thousands of dollars for a series of presentations and a great deal of information on a subject such as Internet marketing or many others. This all operates on keeping a good relationship with the client and flows from offering consistently-good products, so the same rules that apply to integrity and ethics apply even more where being a successful upseller is concerned.

The Site Itself

One will find that developing a successful site will also address many of the concerns related to search engine optimization. As it stands at present, the major search engines tend to reward those sites which offer the most value to their visitors. This system of ranking exists in harmony with what constitutes a good marketing site. One must keep in mind that most surfers are not looking to necessarily spend money but are looking for good sources of information.

Content is King

Today's Internet sites are far different animals than those of the past. The Internet today is not dominated by sites that use tricky programming methods to ensure good search engine placement. Those sites at the top of the rankings are those sites that generally offer substantial information to their visitors about the subjects of their searches.

Developing an effective modern marketing site means developing a great deal of content. This content usually consists of articles, reviews and other materials which aren't outright pitches but which are designed to truly enhance the visitor's knowledge of the products being sold or the activities around which those products are centered.

Using a sports site is a good example. If one is selling golf clubs, for instance, their site should be packed with information about golfing; including information which has nothing to

do with selecting the right clubs. The more information the site contains, the better it will be ranked and the more visitors it will receive.

Rotating content is also imperative to maintaining a good site ranking. Stagnant sites that have the same content for months on end quickly plunge down the rankings. Those sites which are updated at frequent intervals with very useful information tend to be rewarded with a great deal of interest from the search engines.

Content Management

In the past, keeping one's site fresh was a very complex affair. Driven by the demands of search engines for constantly-updated content and made possible by advances in programming technology, content managers have become a key element in successful sites.

Content managers generally work from a simple interface wherein the webmaster simply enters the text of their articles and saves the page to the site. The content manager automatically builds the page and adds it to the directory. This has several advantages.

Search engines tend to look poorly upon sites with sloppy HTML code. Coding HTML is not particularly difficult in and of itself, but given that a successful marketer may be doing several pages in a given day there are many opportunities for mistakes to occur. The content managers provide a way to avoid making such coding mistakes.

The best content managers create clean, reliable code that is readily read by search engine spiders. This is an excellent way to make certain that a search engine properly indexes one's site and its content and that one gets credit within the rankings for all the hard work they put into their site.

Writing the Articles

While a great deal of being a successful marketer has to do with choosing topics in which one has an active interest, there will be occasions where a product is just too good to pass up even though it has no real appeal to the marketer. In these cases, and in cases where the

marketer is simply too overwhelmed to write their own content, one may engage the services of a professional.

There are several sites online where writers and writer agencies bid on jobs. These sites are a great resource for Internet marketers. Generally, one will have no difficulty finding a writer with expertise in any given field. These professionals can usually generate an enormous amount of quality content at reasonable prices and very quickly. This is an excellent way to make certain that one's content is of a high quality.

An Internet marketer puts themselves in peril when they attempt to write about a subject about which they have no particular knowledge. They will generally be called out on this very quickly and their site image will suffer dramatically in the eyes of their visitors.

Writing content one's self can be a fun way to learn more about a subject in which a marketer has an active interest. Remember to invest the time to research the subject to a great depth before writing about it. The readers of one's site will feel that their time spent at the site was well worth the investment of time and it will increase the marketer's image in the eyes of their potential customers.

Making Time to Write Content

Some marketers are not particularly fast writers. Making a bit of time to write a significant amount of content, however is one of the best way to generate income that keeps rolling in when the marketer is not actively at work. For many marketers, the idea of income that keeps coming in when they're not hard at work at their computer is the entire point of Internet marketing.

Set aside a day or two and do nothing but content production. When the content has been produced, there are some creative ways in which one can employ it to increase interest in their site.

Time-released Information

If one remembers the old Hollywood serials, they will quickly have in their mind the concept of a cliffhanger. One can generate a cliffhanger effect by releasing all that content they generated in parts. This also extends the useful life of the content which cuts down on the amount of writing that must be done by the marketer.

Consider releasing a number of articles at intervals as part of a series. For example, one may write a series of articles about how to improve one's golf swing if they happen to be marketing golf clubs. The first article could cover the basics of a drive and have an enticement at the end such as "Come back next week to learn the basics of putting."

This technique can be used very effectively on the site or in newsletter mailed to one's list. It provides a reason for the customers to keep reading and allows them an opportunity to ask questions of the marketer. Of course, this sort of interaction can make for many sales.

Pre-written Articles

If one finds themselves truly in a pinch and has no time to generate content on their own or to have content generated by a professional, they can always visit one of the many sites that sell prewritten articles for use on websites. Most often, these articles will require that the website making use of them include a link of some sort back to the author's site or to the article directory from which they were taken. There is usually a requirement to give credit to the author, as well. Though it might not be as good as custom-written content, it's a good option when time is of the essence.

Technology

A busy webmaster will need some basic pieces of technology to make the various tasks involved in running a website manageable. Some of this technology is available for free and some is available commercially. There are also pieces of technology purpose-built for marketing and these are definitely worth exploring.

Autoresponders

These are absolutely necessary for anyone who manages an email list. When a customer signs up for a newsletter or another offering off of one's website, they expect a speedy response. One should explore the various options available for this technology.

There are versions of this technology available that are very easy to use, even for beginners. There are also more complex versions available for those who are very experienced and need power more than anything else. This is a necessary item and should be one of any webmaster's first priorities.

Content Managers

This technology is necessary to successfully run a content-driven site. There are free versions available and commercial versions, just as there are where autoresponders are concerned.

There are some versions of this software that can produce hundreds of pages very quickly for a multitude of sites. Remember that the search engines will tend to look rather unkindly on duplicated content—they consider it a form of spam—so be sure one knows what they're getting into when they go for one of the huge scripts that crank out vast numbers of identical pages.

It may take some time to master this software but it is well-worth the effort.

Panels

Most websites are run from "panels" of various levels of complexity. When starting out, look for panels that are essentially of the "wizard" type which automate most of the functions of building and maintaining a site and require no more than selecting from pre-defined options. If one has a truly complex panel, it may be worth it to check a freelancing site for a programmer who is willing to take up the site maintenance work. This is usually very cost-effective.

Directory Submission Scripts and Services

There are several sites and scripts available that automate the process of submitting one's content to the various article directories on the Internet. One will need to make use of these sites to ensure that they get the maximum amount of visibility for the effort they put into building and maintaining their site. This is a part of SEO which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

SEO: The Art of Being Seen

In order to dominate the market, one must first dominate the search engines. One is going to be up against some stiff competition. There are corporations who have employees who have no other purpose than to increase their employer's search engine visibility. This is an ongoing effort for any successful webmaster and the results can sometimes take a while to manifest. This is, however, absolutely necessary to any sort of success.

Understanding the Concept

Search Engine Optimization—SEO, for short—is a multi-pronged effort to make certain that one's site receives the attention it deserves from the search engines. Provided that one has followed the advice given thus far, their site will be set up for good search engine visibility for several reasons.

- The content will be useful to the visitors.
- The content will be frequently rotated.
- The site will have clean HTML that conforms to standards.
- The niche chosen will not be overly-saturated with competition.

There are some basic elements that define any good search engine optimization effort. Among them are linking, content and the avoidance of the various practices which are regarded by search engines as forms of spamming.

Linking

One of the most powerful ways to increase one's search engine visibility is to have other sites link to one's own. There is no magic trick to this and, oftentimes, it involves social networking.

If one happens to stumble upon a very good site that is related to one's own but which is not, by its nature, a direct competitor, that site is a good candidate for a link exchange. This is usually arranged via email. One simply emails the webmaster of the site and asks if they would like to exchange links. Most often, because it is mutually-beneficial, one will receive a positive reply.

One's site should have a link directory among its pages. This page, like every other page on the site, should offer real value to one's visitors. Linking to sites which are simply garbage is pointless and counterproductive.

Link Farms

There are a number of sites online which are nothing more than link farms. One frequently sees these if they go to the very low-ranked search results for any given keywords. Generally, they contain links which lead to sites which are of little value and which are nothing more than sales pitches. The search engines remove these sites from their indexes on a regular basis.

The search engines also down-list those sites which appear on a great deal of these link farms and, most especially, those sites which link to link farms. This is a form of spamming, it wastes the surfer's time and effort and, in order to preserve their image as a useful resource, the search engines will enthusiastically remove them from their results. Make certain not to fall into the trap of using these sites.

Article Directories

There are many high-quality sites online that contain thousands of articles on various topics. One should make an effort to have their content reproduced on these sites.

The article directory submission tools described in the previous chapter are the most efficient way to get on these sites. There are services which will do this for a fee and they're generally well-worth the money spent.

Some directory sites specialize in a certain field—Internet marketing directories are actually very popular—and some are very general in their offerings. To make these submissions work, one follows a few simple steps.

The process starts with having a good article that is worth reading, even if one is not particularly interested in what's being sold at the site. At the bottom of this article, a link to one's site is included. The readers of the article will quite frequently click on this link to explore the author's site and to get more information. A visitor gained in this way has already been pre-sold on one's site and on one's legitimacy as an authority on whatever subject is in question and this is a very powerful starting point for any marketer.

Explore the various technologies and services which provide this powerful SEO tool to webmasters. It is one of the best ways to get more visitors.

Blogs

Blogs have taken off in the past few years. They are essentially nothing more than online journals where people share their thoughts and ideas but they provide an intimate forum which readers generally enjoy. They are also an enormously-powerful SEO tool.

Should one's blog become very popular, it's almost certain to receive a lot of links from other sites. It may also be "pinged" by users which is almost as good as word-of-mouth advertising.

Pinging is basically a way that users make search engines aware of the blog. Once the blog is pinged enough, that site will be checked out at least every few days by the search engine. If the content is frequently-updated and of a very high quality, the benefits to search engine visibility are obvious. Consider adding a blog as a way to increase one's visibility. The technology to do this only takes a few minutes to install on one's site and is very easy to use. Best of all, most blogging technology is not only very flexible, it is free.

Advertising

One may wish to make efforts toward paid advertising. There are several different ways in which one can go about this. Some cost more than others but, if one has the money to invest, it is generally worth the effort.

Pay-per-Click

This is one of the most popular forms of advertising for one simple reason: it works. With a pay-per-click advertisement, the advertiser bids on certain keywords related to their site and their advertisement appears either at the top or alongside any search results for those keywords. The highest bidder gets the top placement.

The advertiser is only billed when someone actually clicks on their ad and visits their site. This means that one doesn't pay for advertisements that don't work. There are a few things to keep in mind when using this advertising.

Just as one doesn't want to design their site around keywords which are dominated by large companies or too much competition, one does not want to have pay-per-click advertisements for very vague keywords. Bid on keyword phrases that are specific to one's sites. The very general keywords will generally come at a high premium and, though they may generate a great deal of traffic, that traffic won't necessarily be the type that actually buys. The more specific the keywords, the better.

One will also do well to avoid the pitfall of always trying to be on top. Some Internet marketers believe the best placement is not the first position alongside the results but a few places down. Oftentimes, the people that click on that first ad will click on anything and, even though they're not likely to buy anything from one's site, one will still be billed every time someone clicks on their ad. Go for targeted traffic. Remember, the niche is where the money lives.

Classified Advertisements

There are both paid and free classified advertisements available online. These are of value when one is promoting their site. One must make certain, however, that they are honoring the terms of use applicable to any one of these services.

Some of the free sites frown on advertisements for commercial sites and are geared toward individuals who are selling their own goods. While these sites are free, one's advertisements will generally be stricken from these directories rather quickly.

One may wish to use one of the paid classified sites. These can generate a good amount of traffic. Remember that one shouldn't put money into advertising if they're strapped for cash. That money is better put toward developing the site and the various free types of search engine optimization that require no investment except time.

Some Advertising Techniques

Some advertisers swear by the "story" type of advertisements and others tell a far different tale. Either way, one should keep a close eye on their advertising efforts so that they know which ones provide them with the best results over the long haul.

Sometimes, an advertisement which is short and sweet and which contains a strong enticement for the reader to visit the site will be all that's required. In these cases, there are usually a few recommendations from advertisers who have found success with this method.

First, make certain that one has a strong headline. Avoid clichés. For instance, how many times has the average Internet user seen a headline such as "Make Money Online!"? There are literally tens of thousands of advertisements with just this headline and one can easily see how ineffective this sort of writing will be in the end.

Some advertisers recommend putting a number in the headline. For instance, "Golf Advice from Experts for \$50" might be a good headline for an EBook. The price alone might be enough to spark the interest of readers.

Though it seems obvious, make certain that the link included in the advertisement actually leads to the information promised and not simply to a sales pitch. Most readers who find the latter to be the case will feel a bit ripped-off from the get-go and will be very unlikely to view the site as credible.

The A-List

When one is linked to from a site or featured from a site, one naturally wants that site to be among the best on the Internet. After all, the more traffic that site gets the more visitors will be directed to one's own. There are a few things that define the truly successful sites. These not only serve as information, but as a good set of goals toward which one can aspire for their own site.

To, not From

Sites that have a great many inbound links but few outbound links are generally favored by search engines. While link exchanges do have a great deal of value for search engine optimization, the best links are ones which are not reciprocated by the site owner. If one's site happens to be interesting enough that many people link to it for no other reason than to provide others with access to the information on the site, the search engines are certain to be impressed.

Page Rank

Page ranking techniques vary from search engine to search engine but, generally, the very highest-ranked sites will be the hardest on which to be featured, for obvious reasons.

Many of the same tools described in the first chapter will allow one to explore the rankings of various pages. When attempting to get ranked on a more popular page than one's own, consider making efforts to get on sites that, while not necessarily at the top, enjoy good rankings nonetheless. Oftentimes, these webmasters will be more amicable toward helping a new site out, provided it speaks well of their own site to feature it.

Forums

Meeting people on online forums is a great way to get visitors to one's site and to increase overall interest in what one has to offer. This, however, requires some work.

One should visit those forums which are applicable to the niche around which one's site is developed fairly regularly. This usually means stopping by every few days or so to read new postings and to continue the conversations in which one is already participating.

One can offer their expertise in answering the questions of posters and, of course, can refer them to their own site in their posting. One can also include a link to their site in their signature line.

Be certain that, whatever one does, that it is in accordance with the policies of the forum in question. Some have strict limitations on commercial use and will kick posters who violate those standards. If the site itself won't allow one to promote one's site, one can contact a poster via email off the site and promote themselves there. If one is lucky, they may gain a few subscribers to their list in this fashion.

Whatever one does, never go on a site and begin posting commercial messages immediately. This is usually considered to be a breach of netiquette.

Other Sites

Be sure to investigate other sites which are very successful to see what they may be doing to garner that type of success. While one doesn't want to directly rip-off another site—remember that the goal is to offer something different—there is great value in learning from the success of others!

Avoiding Scams

There will be several products and services offered to webmasters which are nothing but scams. The aforementioned link farms are an example of such scams. By using some simple techniques of investigation one can insulate themselves from becoming a victim of unscrupulous individuals. A webmaster must always be on the lookout for what is too good to

be true and make certain to take advantage of those things which are every bit as good as they seem.

Depending Upon the Kindness of Others

Many goods and services offered on the Internet contain testimonials. One can make certain that those testimonials are actually useful with some simple networking.

Email the authors of the review, if possible, and ask them for more information. One may also wish to look up the sites of those authors and see how their site fares on the rankings. If their site is very low-ranked and they're raving about a particular product or service, it may be for reasons other than their having enjoyed great results!

If one can foster a relationship with a successful webmaster in this regard, one may soon find that the individual they contact has a great deal of advice to offer. This is a very useful resource and can provide a good networking opportunity in addition to providing protection from scams.

Paying for Goods and Services

Many Internet marketers who are just starting out wonder what the best way to pay for the various goods and services happen to be. A credit card or a cash card that functions is the answer for several reasons.

Those scams which one may encounter can potentially cost hundreds of dollars. If one is scammed, one can usually contact their credit card company, inform them of the situation and have the charge erased from their account.

Most scammers will take the money and run, never to be seen again. When dealing with a credit card or an online payment company, one need not worry about being at such a high risk of being taken advantage of in this fashion. It provides a layer of security that ensures that one's funds are protected from the very worst elements on the Internet.

Conclusion

Internet marketing represents an effort that combines the intelligent use of technology with offering a great service to one's visitors. This service should set one's site apart from others working in the same market.

Choosing that market should be done with an eye toward finding a market with money to spend which has not been over-saturated with other offers. Remember that those markets in which other companies have expressed no interest may be full of people who never open their wallets.

Good content and good efforts toward SEO mean success for any online endeavor. Any marketing effort should offer something of value and, where constructing a successful page is concerned, that oftentimes means that the page itself should be of great value.

Between affiliate programs that pay a good commission, good products and excellent content, one's site is set up for good search engine visibility. By using the techniques described in this EBook, one can start on their way toward making a very successful, and profitable, site!