

AFFILIATE MARKETING GAINS



**A BLUEPRINT TO MAKING MONEY
SELLING OTHER PEOPLES PRODUCTS**

Affiliate Marketing Gains

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Introduction

Make no mistake, turning a profit online is different from earning an active income. Your active income is your 9 to 5 job. You engage in earning an active income when you trade your time for money.

If you don't show up for your job every day you won't get paid. If you don't show up on time repeatedly, the chances of keeping your job dip to the "slim to none" level. That's how active income works.

Making an active income is like being a chicken; if you've ever seen a chicken eat, you probably notice that it scratches the ground, looks for a morsel, and then pecks. It scratches then eats. If it stops scratching it doesn't eat. The logic and the events are straightforward and simple.

This same straightforward and simple concept applies to the typical 9 to 5 workweek job – no work equals no pay. This is the repeated concept of trading time for money.

Time is the biggest factor here. Within any block of time you produce work. You produce some sort of outcome. This is a totally different dynamic when compares to earning a passive income.

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When it comes to making money online active income is completely different. Fundamentally, you simply don't trade your time for money. If you earn money online, you earn it wherever you are.

What if I told you there are many people earning six figures incomes year after year, jumping from city to city and country to country? If you need proof of this, look up Brian Dean. Brian used to live in Asia, now he's living in Europe, and he's lived all points in between.

And the best part to all of this is that as you earn your income you also begin to broaden your horizons and grow personally by discovering the soul-uplifting value that travel affords. You're able to travel if you make money online. You can't do that with an active income because you need to be physically present at your job site.

It's Not As Easy As It Looks

Additionally, you can't make money on autopilot if you are choosing to make a "traditional", active income. That's just not going to happen. You have to show up. If you don't show up, you don't earn money for that day. This isn't so when you begin making money online.

Online passive income systems can be set up so that they are always generating money. For example, when people show up at your website, they have the option of purchasing merchandise which earns you money without the hassle or fuss of paying a cashier or the time it would take you to ring up a purchase yourself. In this way, simply **saving** money is equivalent to earning money.

Making money online enables you to scale your income higher over a shorter period. One way in which you can easily scale up both your income and your business is by engaging in **automation**. This passive income technique is not available to people who earn an active income.

What is the Solution?

How do you escape the strategic disadvantage of earning active income? The answer is simple! Make money online through **affiliate marketing**.

Affiliate marketing refers to the practice of selling others' products or services through your own websites, online properties and domains, or your online traffic generation. Affiliate marketing is no more and no less than that!

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When you design your affiliate marketing strategy you can then automate it and scale it. This means that you can set up thousands of websites, each making a dollar a day, and you can still make a decent income at the end of the month, or you can build one website making tens of thousands of dollars every single month. The beauty is that it is your choice.

You can automate so that you don't have to be physically present while your website closes deals to make money. You can also scale up the number of websites you own or scale up your websites' offerings so that you make more money with each online property.

A Quick Recap of How Affiliate Marketing Works

Here's a quick recap of affiliate marketing and its basic concepts. It is important to understand affiliate marketing so that you may become successful when using it as a practical part of your online business or service.

You don't have to be a technical expert in the field of affiliate marketing to reap the benefits of it. However, it is essential that you understand of the basic concepts so that you know **what to do, when to do it, and why to do it** so that you produce the expected outcome. Your aim should be to understand how affiliate marketing works just as you would aim to understand how a hammer works when you are hanging a picture.

So, how exactly does affiliate marketing work? First, it begins with a product seller. A product seller is person who has a product but doesn't know how to drive traffic to their product or how to convert traffic into actual profit. This person integrates (hyperlinks or banner ads) an affiliate program using a special software. This person's website has a link to an affiliate program that is set up using specialized tracking software.

Alternatively, this person could sign up with an **affiliate network**. An affiliate network is a special platform where the network owners recruit both product sellers and affiliate publishers.

Affiliate publishers are individuals who sign up with affiliate programs to obtain affiliate links. Then, the affiliate publishers **publish** varying types of webpages with varying content to drive traffic to those pages. When driven traffic clicks on affiliate links, the affiliate network pays the affiliate publisher a commission.

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Similarly, this process can work with an affiliate program set up directly by the product seller. The affiliate either advertises a link that drives traffic to its content or uses its own website as a “through-way” to make money via earned commissions.

When a product seller begins using an affiliate network it is important that the network drive traffic to the product seller’s product.

Both the affiliate as well as the product seller should benefit from the partnership. Without an affiliate program, a product seller becomes limited in their ability to drive traffic. Conversely, without product sellers, affiliates have nothing to promote and therefore nothing from which to gain a commission.

The Problem with Affiliate Marketing

Although affiliate marketing does offer many benefits it is not an effective strategy when used alone.

Also, there are four problems with affiliate marketing that you should both be aware of and address when developing your own business or personal marketing strategy.

To begin, many products or courses claim to have a proven formula for making YOU money. Many of these do address affiliate marketing by claiming that the course will coach you as you learn the details of affiliate marketing.

Most of these courses are written by individuals who are paid only to write, but not to research or understand the content about which they are writing. Many of these authors use the copy and paste method to repackage old, outdated, or even incorrect data then resell this same material time and time again.

It is important that the reader of these types of repackaged information and gimmicks be savvy to the ways in which to avoid them! First, the reader should find whether or not the author has a proven sales record, good and unbiased reviews of products or courses, and a thorough personal understanding of any topic about which the author is writing.

A second problem that the affiliate marketing sector faces are “unactionable ideas”. It is common for an affiliate marketer to propose a marketing idea that seems clever, user-friendly, and lucrative but is nothing more than raves and banter about “creating hype” or “pursuing unlimited possibilities”.

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To combat this affiliate marketing problem, the product seller should ensure on his or her own that the idea presented by the affiliate network is both actionable and profitable. For example, if an affiliate network advertises that it will increase your visibility and traffic if you sign up for a premium package or spend money by paying higher commissions to the network, it is imperative that you analyze the return on investment as well as the risk to benefit ratio.

It might make sense for a multimillion dollar company to spend an extra \$100,000 to reap benefits in excess of that amount while it would be simply foolish for an unknown niche market private company to spend this same amount with the only realistic expectation for improved sales to be around a \$25,000 increase in profit. It is ultimately the responsibility of the product seller, not the affiliate, to analyze and decide whether a particular idea is worth the initial money and time investment.

A third challenge to the credibility of many affiliate marketing books, seminars, or courses is the presentation of outdated, obsolete, or antiquated methods for increasing profitability. In fact, some affiliate marketing seminars and membership sites continue to tout the value of article marketing.

Believe it or not, there are still affiliate marketing video guru seminars and membership sites out that tout the financial benefits of article marketing. Those who haven't been living under a rock or did not suffer from suspended animation for several years would know that article marketing, at least as practiced in the year 2000, no longer works.

However, if you do decide to continue article marketing it is imperative that you use a Google adapted/adopted technology in order to ensure that you are profitable. This is one example of outdated or obsolete advice and it is sadly only one example of the many outdated forms of advice.

Finally, and most importantly, one of the main reasons why people who buy the typical affiliate marketing blueprint or coaching system fail to make any money is that these products or services underplay the importance of **traffic**.

Traffic is crucial. In fact, if you do not know how to drive traffic to your online business you won't have an online business for long at all. In the current online world, traffic is no luxury, it is an important and crucial need that must be met in order to effectively grow an online business in the current technological period.

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Although the importance of traffic one of utmost necessity, many of the heavily acclaimed and hyped affiliate marketing guides immensely underserve the reader by not addressing the solution to the problem. In fact, many times the problem is simply repeated many times without any attempt providing a solution.

Well, this is not a guru book. Instead, this book will provide a detailed method about how to effectively use affiliate marketing.

The Better Way

This book is the better way! In this book I will provide step by step instructions and clearly outlined directions that will guide you through the actual processes. Follow my directions and you will learn this better way. Each step is an actionable step, not mere theory. Here, I don't sell you speculation or hop you up on hype. It is a method that has worked for me and will work for you as well. Also, each step is directed and user friendly, either by follow-through or by using software programs.

Whatever the case may be, you can **act** based on my advice. This is a far cry from the typical affiliate marketing book that gives excitement and a sense of hope but not much else.

In fact, not only is each step actionable; each step's success is measurable. When you take action using the steps that taught in this book you can actually measure the success of your own action. Measurable success often creates a motivational cascade providing another benefit to you the reader.

I don't hide the ball and there is no guesswork involved: you are either profiting and successful or you aren't using the outlined method effectively. You won't build a system, wait for months to find out if you've hit your mark. You will immediately know whether your efforts have solved a problem and increased your traffic or if they have not.

Additionally, the blueprint I'm giving you can be easily modified to fit your particular circumstances. Every online seller is different. Everyone has access to a differing amount of resources just as everyone's exposure is to differing circumstances.

The blueprint that I'm giving you will be flexible so that you can mix and match, slice and dice, and move things around to boost your results.

Finally, this book lays heavy focus on traffic generation and **conversion**. Conversion is often written about in terms of the conversion platform a seller uses but these conversion

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platforms differ and many times the writer does not specify which platform he or she is referring to and writing about.

Sometimes the author does specify that he or she is writing about blogging or a specific search platform but either way most authors only teach the platform itself if they teach specific it at all. What is necessary is to know how to drive traffic to YOU using a blogging technique or a specific search platform.

Lastly, there are some useful guides that do cover both conversion as well as traffic generation but do not address the keys to successful traffic generation to ensure actual conversion. If you are able to drive one million visitors to your webpage each day, every day, it still won't matter if you cannot use that generated traffic to ensure conversion.

You must turn visitors into buyers, clickers, submitters, or subscribers. In essence, you must drive the traffic, then harness that traffic through conversion.

Conversion should be a top priority regardless of the method by which you are paid by your affiliate. Now that you know the basics let's really dive in!

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Chapter 1 - How to Pick the Right Niche

Understanding this chapter is crucial if you want to make money as an affiliate marketer on the internet. If you blow off this chapter don't be surprised if your business goes belly up!

That's how crucial it is. Things often go seriously wrong when sellers pick the wrong niche.

Unfortunately, you will only become aware of your mistake when it's too late to rectify it. You will know you picked the wrong niche when you have spent a tremendous amount of time, effort, emotional energy, and money only to find that you have very little, if anything, to show for it. Remember, never trade your time for money!

One of the most common mistakes that new sellers make is to sink money, effort, and time into a resource that simply does not provide a real service or, if it does provide a service, provides it at too high a cost to justify it's use.

I simply can't emphasize enough that niche choice is crucial to your affiliate marketing success.

A Quick Rundown of What Can Go Wrong?

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First, there may be low or no demand for your product or service. When you pick the wrong niche, the demand may not be there. You might think that it's the hottest thing since sliced bread, but people really could care less about it - what they care about is whether you produce the kind of results that they would pay dollars for.

Another problem with picking the wrong niche is that you may pick trendy niches. This may seem really hot right now, but they may be "here today, gone tomorrow."

A good example is fidget spinners. These spinners created a rage in 2016. Now, nobody wants to have anything to do with them. A lot of people made money selling these fidget spinners but a lot of people also lost money because they entered into the niche too late.

Trendy niches can mean the end of your affiliate marketing investment. Avoid trendy niches and instead pick niches with tried and true long-standing sales histories.

Another problem that you can avoid by picking the right niche involves low **return on effort**. A lot of people confuse this with return on investment. These are two totally different concepts.

Return on effort is the amount of time you personally invest something. The iron rule of return on effort is to put in as little effort and time as possible, while getting as many dollars as possible.

If you don't stick by the iron rule and pick the wrong niche, you could end up making some money but only at the expense of your time, mental energy, and emotional resources. Pouring your life into that activity is simply not going to be worth the return on effort.

Of course, there is always the possibility that you would pick a niche that has really no return on investment. This speaks more to the amount of dollars that you're going to be putting into your affiliate marketing business. Maybe you put in this money up front or at a later stage in the development process.

Whatever the case may be, whatever profit your business produces does not in any way, shape, or form come close to justifying the amount of dollars needed to put up the business in the first place. Sadly, people commit this mistake all the time.

Another danger with picking the wrong niche involves competition. People routinely pick niches that are too competitive. As a result, there are just so many of these niche

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websites out there that the competition becomes a washout altogether. In other words, the competition is so great that essentially no one wins.

This is a serious problem because if the typical consumer interested in that niche gets the impression that your website is just like everyone else's website, there's really no compelling reason for them to go to your site instead of the thousands of other websites that share your niche. It simply is too saturated.

Another danger that you need to avoid involves your mindset. You may be making money off your business. Things may be looking great on the surface, but somehow, some way, you lost interest. You just don't have the heart for it anymore.

This pitfall is often the true reason that your business is unsuccessful. If you truly lose interest in your niche or your business you will not have the level of passion you need to solve problems as they present themselves.

That is the essence of successful business. Successful business people solve problems. That's their job. That's their calling.

Unfortunately, if you lose interest in whatever it is you're doing for money, you're not going to be excited to solve issues. You're probably not going to be in a hurry to put out fires as they appear. As a result, your business starts to die slowly.

In other words, you find yourself in the pitiful situation of putting in all this time, effort and money creating a website that pulls in a nice chunk of traffic, only to end up completely empty handed because you have nothing to sell or promote. Sounds ridiculous, right?

Unfortunately, you can suffer any one or even a combination of all of the problems listed above if you do not pay close attention to the niche selection process.

You have to know how to select your affiliate marketing niche in a systematic and methodical way. Otherwise, you may end up creating the wrong business.

How to Pick Your Niche the Expert Way

By following the steps I lay out below, you increase your chances of affiliate marketing success tremendously.

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Instead of coming up with a "hot" idea and wasting a tremendous amount of time, effort and money on it, if you follow the steps that I lay out below, you go through a tried and proven niche selection process that dramatically increases your likelihood of success.

Now, this is not a guarantee that if you **just** follow these steps riches await you in your bank account. Still, it will give you enough of a competitive advantage that your chances of success are much higher than if you were to fly by the seat of your pants.

You need to go through these steps. Don't skip any of them if you want to make sure that you are targeting the right niche.

Step #1: List out all your interests

List your personal interests and hobbies. Really think about what you personally like to learn about, see, do, collect, or spend time on.

Apply the following test: Ask yourself, as you go through each of the interests line by line, if you would talk about those topics even if you were not getting paid. This should narrow your list substantially.

Once you have cleaned up your list, go on to the next step.

Step #2: Filter by commercial interests on Google Keyword Planner tool

If you haven't already done so, create an account at Google Adwords. Using its Google Keyword Planner tool, enter some keywords related to the topics on your list.

If you don't know how this works, just type in the interest and you would be able to find keywords related to it. Group these keywords based on the topics they're related to.

When you look at each keyword, Google Keyword Planner tool will show the estimated cost per click for that keyword term. This should give you a rough dollar value of the overall demand for each niche.

Now, simply eliminate any listed niches that have very low commercial value.

Step #3: Filter by consumer demand on Google Keyword Planner tool

Now that you're entering keywords related to your niches on Google Keyword Planner tool, the next step is to pay attention to the average monthly search volume projected for those keyword clusters.

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A certain pattern should emerge from topic to topic. It should be fairly clear which topics have more searches.

Now, delete listed niches that do not have enough demand in terms of projected search volume, **as well as those that have too much demand**. Again, think of this concept as the previously mentioned competition for competition. If a topic generates too many searches, the competition is too great to allow any one or two particular websites to flourish at all. The pool is too full!

Now you will see a list of niches that are considered “middle of the road” as far as monthly average search volume is concerned.

Step #4: Filter by competition level

Take the keywords related to each of the niches remaining on your list and search these keywords on Google's main search engine.

Take note of how many websites are returned by Google. Usually, Google will show a number figure of how many websites are related to the keyword you entered. Write these numbers down.

After you've done this with all the keywords related to all your remaining niches, compare them with each other. You should wipe out niches on your list that have too many websites targeting them. You should focus on a fairly manageable level of competition.

Step #5: Filter by consumer trend

At this stage, your list of niches should be growing shorter and shorter.

Now, apply two more filters to your search so that you can zero in on the niche you should target.

This is the expert way of picking niches. If you follow this process, there is a high chance you will be more successful with your affiliate marketing business.

For this step, you're going to type in the keywords related to each of the niches on your list into Google Trends. Pay attention to the chart. Is it flat or does it show a decline over time?

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If it shows any of these two patterns, delete that niche from your list. Chances are, the demand level for that niche is dying over time. If you need a good example of this, look at the search pattern for the keyword phrase "fidget spinner."

There were many previously hot products and hot niches, that have dropped like a rock. You don't want to be stuck with those. Filter from your list any niche with a declining or flat lining trend line.

Step #6: Filter by social media demand

For this step, I need you to go to Twitter or Facebook.

I need you to enter keywords related to your niche on those platforms and see if there are hashtags on Twitter or really big accounts that target those keywords. On Facebook, see if there are any big pages or Facebook groups that tend to talk about those topics.

If a niche isn't already being talked about on these two platforms, you might want to take it off your list. If you pick a niche that already has some sort of demand on social media, you're making your job much easier.

You know that there are already platforms and groups as well as promotional spaces on social media. You only need to go to those existing places to promote whatever it is you're promoting. Do you see how this works?

You don't want to have to create social media demand. You don't want to put yourself in a position where you're going to have to reinvent the wheel, as far as your niche is concerned.

You have to ask yourself, "Are there enough people already talking about the niche that I'm thinking of promoting?" Similarly, "Are there areas on social media dedicated to this niche already?"

Step #7: Filter by content ease

This is an optional step. You don't have to delete items from your niche list if it doesn't fit this criteria. However, if you are operating on a tight budget, you might want to do just that.

The question you need to ask yourself is, "How easy is it to come up with content for this niche?"

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For example, among the three remaining niches on your list, one involves really complicated robotics technology, this might be an issue. You better have the time to properly research content for that niche and do things yourself, or you better get ready to hire somebody.

If you're going to be outsourcing content creation, it may be very expensive because the niche is so specialized or involves some sort of cutting edge technology. Since you're going to be spending money for this content, it may prove to be too costly or, in the case of you writing stuff yourself, too time intensive. You may be better off sticking with a niche that is easier or cheaper to produce content for.



Chapter 2 - Become a Niche Affiliate First

A lot of people think that affiliate marketing really boils down to owning the network. In other words, their first instinct is to create an affiliate program and they start recruiting other affiliates. The idea, of course, is for them to set up some sort of platform and they become a middle man for advertisers and publishers.

While I understand the dollars and cents analysis behind this thinking, you might be biting off more than you can chew. If you are not yet an expert at affiliate marketing, you might want to become a niche affiliate first. Don't put the cart before the horse.

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Similarly, you may be thinking that since you have figured out the right niche to target after using the expert step by step process I described above, you should just start creating your own product. Again, you don't want to put the cart before the horse.

Become a niche affiliate first because you may not know how to properly address the existing demand for your niche. If you are to come up with your product right off the gate, you might speak to people's problems in all the wrong ways and fail to make a sale.

By becoming a niche affiliate first, you build a business around products that already exist. These products, at least on the surface level, are supposed to address the needs people have in your niche.

Another reason why you should become a niche affiliate first and promote other people's products first is that the more you've focused on your niche, the more you become an expert.

You're able to see patterns, you're able to see what kind of sales approaches work and which ones don't work. You're also able to understand the needs of your target audience and craft custom solutions to better address those needs.

You can then use these skills to come up with your own products later on. But right now, you're learning. You're trying to build up expertise as well as authority and credibility.

Use Offer Vault to Find All Affiliate Programs in Your Target Niche

After you've gone through the expert niche filtering step by step plan I described in Chapter 1, go to offervault.com to find all affiliate programs in your target niche.

This means that you should have reduced your shortlist of affiliate targets to just one. Find all the programs you can find that target that specific niche.

How to Filter Affiliate Programs

At this point, you probably will quickly realize that there are actually quite a number of programs targeting your niche. In fact, in some cases, there are too many affiliate programs. You can't tell them apart.

They talk about the same things. You look at their recruitment, and they look fairly similar to each other. You check out their offers, and they basically offer similar solutions that address the same set of problems.

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How do you tell them apart? Well, there are four objective standards that you should use to quickly filter affiliate programs.

Now, this doesn't necessarily mean that after you apply these filters you will pick a winner. Nobody can really guarantee that. However, when you apply these filters, you increase the likelihood that you will pick an affiliate program that can produce results for you.

Filter #1: Ease of conversion

Now that you have listed down the URLs of all the affiliate programs in your target niches, visit all of them. Check out what kind of action they will pay for.

Are they going to be paying you a commission when the visitor you send to their page buys something? That is a per sale conversion.

On the other hand, are they paying if the person that you sent fills out an email form or inputs their zip code? That is a CPA conversion.

Finally, will the affiliate program pay if the visitor just clicks on an ad? That is a pay per click conversion.

Filter the list of affiliate programs based on what kind of conversion they're looking for. Your first priority should be the easiest conversion point, which is pay per click.

If that's not available, select the affiliate programs who would pay you per email or zip code collected. If there are none of these available or too few, switch over to affiliate programs that will pay you per sale.

Now, it's important that you rank these based on the total percentage that you would get. Obviously, the higher the percentage, the more you should prioritize that particular affiliate program.

If you find that all the affiliate programs in your niche pay only per sale, then the ones that pay the biggest commission or the biggest percentage should be at the top of your list.

Filter by EPC

EPC is a metric for earnings per click. With everything else being equal, when you send traffic to an affiliate program, what is their average EPC? This gives you a fairly good idea of just how well this program converts.

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Don't be misled. There are lots of programs that would pay you a huge commission, let's \$200 or \$300 per conversion. But the problem is, you have to send them a huge amount of clicks to get that one conversion. So, accordingly, their EPC is actually very low.

On the other hand, there are affiliate programs that will only pay you maybe a couple of bucks or fifty cents or less per conversion. However, their conversion ratio is so high that their EPC is actually very good. In other words, for every hundred visitors you send them, they end up converting a large percentage of those visitors.

Pay attention to EPC because it presents a more accurate picture of the affiliate program's ability to convert your hard-earned traffic.

Filter by Promo Material Availability

The next filter you should apply to the affiliate programs you found in your niche involves ads. Does the affiliate program already feature ads or promotional materials you can use?

For example, if you are promoting by email, do they already have email swipes or pre-written messages you can use? If you are promoting through ads on your blog, do they have ad graphics?

Of course, the more materials they have made available, the better.

Filter by Promo Material's Flexibility

Finally, you should pay attention to how much freedom the affiliate program gives you to come up with your own promotional materials.

Are you stuck using the exact materials that they give you? Can you make modifications? Or can you come up with your own completely original promotional materials?

Keep in mind that a lot of affiliate programs tend to keep their affiliates on a tight leash. They don't want them to come up with all sorts of wild ads that may end up misrepresenting their product or somehow misleading their visitors.

Still, if you come across an affiliate program that gives you a tremendous amount of freedom to craft your original ads or modify their existing advertising materials, you might want to take a close look at the program.

With everything else being equal, sign up for affiliate programs that have all of the qualities above. They must have offers that are easy to convert, they convert a significant

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chunk of the traffic sent to them, they have ready promotional materials available, and they give you a measure of freedom in using their materials or allow you to come up with your own ads.

Sign Up for as Many Qualified Programs as You Can

Now that you have a good understanding of all the filters that you're going to use to qualify affiliate programs, sign up for all the programs that survived that four-stage filtering process listed above.

Please note that not all affiliate programs will be available to you. Some have country restrictions. This is a big one. These programs only take traffic from certain countries.

This doesn't mean that if you're an affiliate marketer living outside of the preferred range of countries that you're disqualified. For example, if you are a marketer who lives in the Philippines, but you can get American traffic to send to an affiliate program that only accepts American traffic, you should be okay.

Check their list of accepted countries just to make sure. Sometimes affiliates have restrictions on the countries marketers can come from.

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Chapter 3 - Find Your Niche Competitors and Reverse Engineer Their Model

Now that you have selected your target niche and you have signed up for relatively high-converting, high-value affiliate programs catering to that niche, the next step is to get down and dirty and reverse engineer your competitors.

Why reverse engineering? When you look at what other people are already doing and look to learn from them, you are essentially letting them do your homework. You benefit from what they're doing right and you learn from them to avoid making costly mistakes.

In this case, just because they've started earlier than you, that doesn't put you at a competitive disadvantage. In fact, it gives you a tremendous advantage. You don't have to make the mistakes that they had to make as they built up their websites.

Look at how they set up their website and you can rest assured that they are doing business a certain way because, at some level or another, it works. Here's how you do it.

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Find All Your Competitors

Your first step is to get a massive list of all the keywords related to your niche. Go through each keyword. Make sure that it is directly related to your niche.

Input these keywords one by one into Google and find all the site listings for your niche. There are going to be a lot of false positives, so you have to filter those out.

But at the end of this process, you should have a very long list of websites. These are websites that directly target your niche.

Profile All Your Competitors

Now that you have a list of URLs, the next step is to visit each and every one of those websites. Now, this might seem like a pain if you are clicking on one link after another.

Here's a shortcut.

If you use Google Chrome browser, there is a plug-in called "sticky." Basically, you just need to copy and paste the list of URLs to your clipboard and click the "sticky" icon on your browser.

This will trigger Google Chrome to open many tabs. You then use the Chrome keyword command to switch from tab to tab to quickly check out these different websites.

What should you look for? When you're going through each tab and checking out your competitors, you're looking for some sort of "industry standard." In other words, do you see a pattern? Do they have a lot of things in common or are the websites really completely unique from each other?

Here's a spoiler. They won't be completely unique from each other. They will always have a set of common features.

However, as you go through the vast majority of the websites, these common features are actually quite long. These are your "industry standard" features.

Pay attention to the following:

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How do they convert traffic?

How does the website make money? Is it a blog and it makes money through the ads? Is it some sort of search engine and when you do a search, it shows an article and then there are ads with the article?

Or does it produce a list of products that are direct affiliate links and you click the product? Is it some sort of directory?

On the other hand, when you look at the site, is it really just a list of direct links that take you to the affiliate product?

How do they look?

How is the content laid out? Do they use ads? Are there very little ads? Do they usually use text links? How is the content presented for ultimate conversion?

What kind of content do they use?

Another thing you should be on the lookout for is the type of content being used. Do they use text, pictures, diagrams, slide shows or videos? Or a combination of any of these? How much content do they show?

Do they collect email?

This is a big one. Pay close attention to this one. Does the website collect email? Is there some sort of newsletter or a mailing list that they want you to join?

How exactly do they get you to join their mailing list? Do they offer some sort of free booklet or book or some sort of free software?

If they do offer an email list, try joining it. What kind of emails do you receive? Is it a simple newsletter or do they try to get you to join the list by giving you some sort of free book?

Pay attention to the updates that they send you. Are these just giant ads or do they actually give you useful content in your email?

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Identify the Industry Standard and Build from There

At this point, you probably have reviewed over 100, if not hundreds, of your competitors' websites. Congratulations. That's a lot work. That's definitely a lot of material to filter through.

I hope that through each website, you were taking notes. In particular, you were paying attention to their traffic conversion model, their content layout, what kind of content they were using, and whether they collect emails. And if they do, how they collect their emails.

At this point, you should have a huge number of notes. The key here is to focus on the most common elements that you keep seeing over and over again, regardless of your competitor. This is your baseline. These are the narrow set of features that you're going to use.

Your first affiliate website will have these narrow range of features. How come? The fact that these features appear over and over again indicates that at least, at some level or another, they are successful enough. Otherwise, your competitors would not use these features.

I hope you get the logic in that. It may not be an astounding level of success, but it's successful enough to at least assure some level of survival. This is the "industry standard."

Now, please note that just because you are picking the most common denominator, it doesn't mean that you're going to start and stop there. This is just a starting point. Later on, you're going to fine tune and enhance your website so as to maximize its ability to convert your traffic.

At this stage of the game, however, you just want to learn from your competitors through reverse engineering, so you can have a baseline that will work at an affiliate predictable level. It may not be a very high level, but at least it's a predictable level of success.

Compare this to coming up with some weird layout or content strategy for your website that may completely miss the mark as far as your audience is concerned. At that point, your chances of success is basically zero.

By using an industry standard, your chances of success may be 5%, 10% or a little bit higher, but at least there is some baseline that you can work with, and then scale up from.

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Come Up with a Competitive Advantage

Now that you have understood the basics of what your competitors are offering and you have come up with a master collated list of industry standard features you're going to be using for your website, the next step is to come up with a reason for your visitors to visit you.

Make no mistake about it, if you were just to take the industry standard, chances are, your website is going to fall between the cracks. Your website is basically going to be indistinguishable from everything else that is out there.

Remember, you're taking everybody's most common features and building from there. This is your baseline. But you have to do something more. You're starting there, but you're going to have to build something that will answer two questions.

First, why should your visitors pick you? In other words, you would have to come up with some sort of competitive advantage. You would have to come up with some sort of compelling reason why your visitors should check out your website and benefit from your content.

The next question you need to ask is why should niche fans go to you? In other words, the idea here is that when do a search, they probably will see your competitors first.

When they visit your competitors, they would gain some sort of familiarity with your niche. They're not completely wet behind the ears. They're not complete and total newbies.

So when these niche fans make their way to your neck of the woods, why should they stay?

The Answer

Come Up with a Good Answer

The series of questions I asked above should be enough to stump you. That's precisely the point. I want you to get your mind's gears going because this is heavy mental work.

You have to understand that if you offer the exact same stuff that most of your competitors are offering, there's really no compelling reason for people interested in your niche to stick around.

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After all, any search on Google will basically return the same kind of stuff. Why go with you when they can easily find that material elsewhere?

This is where your answer comes in. You have to articulate a key value proposition.

Basically, you will ask yourself, what will make them come back? What makes my website special? What kind of specific value does my website bring to the table?

This is not the kind of stuff that jumps out at you. I mean, it's not obvious. You have to ask yourself, how you can position your website based on the "industry standard" so your visitors will keep coming back for the following:

Your Content

Is your content interesting enough? Is your content compelling enough? Does your content present the same information that your competitors are presenting, but in a unique way or a personality-driven way? Are you offering basically the same content, but in a value-added kind of way?

In other words, when somebody has a choice of seeing the same content presented in the exact same way as everybody else, but they see yours, what makes yours stand out? What makes yours demand to be read or to be processed? Does your conversion platform stand out?

Now that you have a clear understanding of how your competitors convert their traffic, how does your conversion platform compare? What should you be doing that would maximize your chances of success?

Again, you are taking the industry standard, which is you're using the same conversion platform.

For example, in your niche, most of the conversion platforms take the form of blogs. This means that you're going to build a blog. Simple enough.

But this begs the question, "Now what?" After you've set up your blog, what is going to make people pick your blog instead of other people's blogs?

More to the point, once you get traffic, how does your blog process your visitors so that your conversion platform performs better than theirs?

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Your Traffic Choices

Another question that you need to focus on in terms of value proposition is your source of traffic. By this point, after you have studied dozens, if not hundreds, of your competitors, you should have a rough idea of where they get their traffic from.

How are you going to attract that traffic? How are you going to speak to that traffic's needs?

Again, this comes back to your key value proposition. It's all about positioning your content or the benefit people get from your website in light of the traffic source that you are appealing to.

Your Paid Traffic Channel Strategy

Finally, you also have to analyze how you will position your particular brand for traffic that you pay for.

If you're going to be taking out Facebook ad buys, how are you going to position your brand? What elements of your site would you focus on? How would you present your content?

Again, you will only know the answers to these after you've done a thorough analysis and review of all your niche competitors.

This is why it is crucial that your initial list of competitors must be very, very long. The longer the list, the more sites you process, the more information you can get to thoroughly answer the concerns raised by the value proposition positioning steps above.

Only after you have answered these questions should you even think of putting together a site. Prior to that point, you have no business getting a domain name, getting hosting, installing WordPress, getting design, putting up content. Forget it. Don't even think about it.

You have to wrestle with the key foundational questions above first. Because by this point, you still have not established a reason why people looking for your niche should bother with your website instead of your competitors'.

You have to answer that question and the set of questions that is related to it in a very convincing way. All these must be clear before you even start thinking of putting up your site

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Chapter 4 - Reverse Engineer Your Competitors' Content Strategy

The great thing about social media is that it's fairly easy to find your competitors' content. It's actually a breeze.

Take the case of Twitter. In Chapter 3, you have a massive list of all your competitors. Type in their brand names into Twitter. I will bet you that at least a few of them would show up. They would have their own social media accounts.

When you go to their accounts, there's a good chance that they are sharing their content. Check out their content. Track down as many competitors as you can on social media and check out the kind of content that they are sharing.

Also, if your competitors are mostly blogs, check out their posts. Often times, there are social engagement signals right on the content itself. They have indicators for how many retweets they have, how many Google +1s, and how many Facebook likes.

Keep track of these social media signals. Understand what they need.

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Study Your Competitors' Content Patterns Thoroughly

Now that you have fairly familiarized yourself with your competitors' content, the next step is to drill down. Go to all your competitors' website again and look for content they have posted on their site and look for social media signals. Alternatively, find their social media accounts and look for their content that way.

What are you looking for? When processing as much of your competitors' materials, try to find a short list of the most common topics they keep talking about. Again, the essence of reverse engineering is to let your competitors do your homework for you.

There's a reason why your competitors tend to talk about a fairly narrow range of topics. Believe me, it has nothing to do with them not having anything else better to do. Instead, they keep talking about the same fairly narrow range of topics because their audience members are interested in those topics. These are hot topics.

Your job at this point is to look through all their content and come up with the most common topics that they talk about. After you've done that, check your work by looking through their content to see if the social media signals confirm your suspicion.

For example, if you are in the painted war game figurine niche and you notice that a lot of your competitors are talking about Roman legionnaire figures, this might be a fluke. This might be a statistical accident.

To make sure, look at the social media signals. If it turns out that a post on Roman legionnaire military figurines get a lot of Google +1s, or retweets or Facebook likes, that's an indicator that that's actually a hot topic. This must be the case regardless of the website.

So if you notice that among your competitors, as long as they talk about Roman legionnaires, their retweet levels go up. That is a slam dunk. That is a red flag. You should write down that hot topic.

If you're in that niche, then you must talk about Roman legionnaires because your niche audience is truly interested in that topic.

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What Makes Your Content So Special?

By this point, you should have done a thorough analysis of all the content of your competitors and have pretty much boiled them down into a fairly narrow range of common hot topics. These are cross referenced or verified by all sorts of social media signals.

They get a lot of retweets; videos about them have a lot of thumbs up and comments on YouTube; the picture pins made out them get a lot of re-pins on Pinterest; they get a lot of retweets on Twitter.

Whatever the case may be, these common hot topics that you have discovered from your competitors get a lot of social media signals.

Make sure that this is the case. You don't want to find yourself barking up the wrong tree.

The Hard Question: What Makes Your Content So Special?

In Chapter 3, you've already done some mental heavy lifting regarding this question. In this Chapter, we're going to go beyond brainstorming and look for tried and proven examples of how you can make your content at least appear more special than your competitors' materials.

How do you make your content at least look special enough? Here are just a few ideas. These are not, by all means, the complete list of ideas. Feel free to come up with your own, but I've given you these just to get you started. I just want you to jog your mental muscles so you can come up with your own version.

Up to Date

One way you can distinguish your content from your competitors is to make sure that your stuff is fully updated.

Now that you have looked through your competitors' content, you probably would notice that some of that stuff is simply too old, no longer applies, or is completely bunk because times have changed.

For example, in the SEO niche, information goes bad quickly because Google's algorithms keep changing. The tips and tricks that may have worked in the past probably no longer work now.

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Accordingly, if you offer SEO tips that work in the current year, then people would probably want to pay attention to you instead of reading SEO tips from ten years ago.

Longer Content

Another way you can beat the competition is to offer longer content. As the old saying goes, the more the better.

Well, for the longest time, people just had a hunch that if you offered longer content that somehow, some way, this performs better. Well, according to statistical analysis by major marketing bloggers as well as marketing firms, it turns out that blog posts that are longer than 1,500 words tend to get a lot more love from search engines.

But this solution actually creates a problem. People have short attention spans. You probably suffer from it yourself.

How can you get more love from search engines by offering longer content without losing your audience? This is where formatting comes in. You format the long form text in such a way that it doesn't look like a chore to read.

Maybe you bold font of certain keywords so it's easier for people to scan. Maybe you add enough spacing so it doesn't strain the eyes and it doesn't feel like work reading your stuff. Whatever the case may be, you need to pull all sorts of tricks to get the person reading your stuff to dwell on your stuff despite the fact that it's at least 1,500 words.

Better Explained Concepts

One major reason why people look for niche content in the first place is because they have concepts that they have heard about. They've come across all sorts of ideas. But since they are not really experts in the niche, they're confused at some level or another.

When your stuff explains all these otherwise confusing concepts, you stand out. People are more likely to pay attention to you because you do something that other websites can't or won't do. You actually explain stuff in such a way that people do not have to have a PhD to figure out what you're talking about. This is a big deal.

Easier to Scan

Believe it or not, people no longer read on the internet. I know that sounds crazy, but it's absolutely true.

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In fact, if you need proof, I just want to turn the question to you. When was the last time that you read each and every item you click through on Facebook? Chances are, it's been a long time. Chances are, you feel that you just don't have the time of day to do that kind of thing.

Well, welcome to the club. That's how most people feel. Instead, people scan.

So, when you're on Facebook and you are swiping down, you are actually scanning for keywords. And when you see the keyword, you stop and you dwell on it a little bit and you scan some more.

The same applies to search results. This is especially true if you are consuming content through some sort of mobile device that doesn't really have that big of a screen. It turns out that the more mobile the internet becomes, the less likely people are to read.

Now, this doesn't necessarily mean that they have stopped reading altogether. Instead, they scan. So they're just going through the materials and they're quickly going through the keywords looking for a keyword that stands out. And when they see that, they slow down.

If you want to make your content special, you have to take advantage of this. You have to understand that this is happening, regardless of whether you like it or not.

You have to format your content so that it's easier to scan. This means you're going to use subheadings, use short paragraphs, and use bold fonts to draw people's eyeballs to key parts of your content that you think are important to your readers.

Multimedia and Bells and Whistles

If you just offer plain text, chances are, your target audience will get bored. They will get tired. I mean, how many letters can you process in a day?

If you lose their attention, they probably would bounce out of your website. That's how things normally work.

To keep them engaged, you have to mix it up in terms of the media you present.

While you're still presenting at least 1,500 words per blog post, this doesn't necessarily mean that you're just going to offer words. You can split this up into sections using pictures, diagrams, short videos, teaser videos, or infographics.

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There are actually so many ways you can add a multimedia element to your text content to make it vastly more entertaining.

Offer More Comprehensive Information

Throughout your search engine research experience, you probably already know that a lot of the content out there is actually very shallow. You're just looking for a certain topic and when you find it, it's presented in a very stripped, very basic way.

In fact, given how Google presents snippets, a lot of these websites are actually losing out because they present the most relevant information right in the snippet. This is a problem for these websites' income because the visitor no longer needs to click through.

They're looking for a fairly restricted and shallow piece of information. Google's search snippet feature isolates this information so the searcher doesn't even have to click. They get the information, and they get out.

This is a serious problem. You have to offer comprehensive information. So instead of just shallow information, you draw the reader deeper and deeper into the guts of your content. Because the more they click through and the more pages they consume, the more you convince them of your website's value.

This can lead to them clicking on offers, and this can lead them to click on ads. There are just so many other things they can do. The key is to get them to dwell on your site.

That's going to be very hard to do when all your posts are just essentially very shallow. You have to have comprehensive information so as to get them to click on one link after the other and they go through one article to one blog post after another.

The more you get them to dwell on your site, the higher the likelihood they would consider you credible. And if you get them to stay long enough on your site, they might even join your mailing list or conclude you're authoritative to trust so they end up clicking on an affiliate link that you feature.

The Bottom Line: Your Stuff Must Blow Away Your Competitors

Now that I have stepped you through the most common ways to make your content extra special, let me bring it all together. It really all leads to one conclusion: you must be the best.

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If you don't play the game this way, there is a strong chance that you're not going to last all that long. Let me tell you, unless and until you can master traffic generation, you probably won't have a shot at success if you do not pay enough attention to your content.

Your content must be the best because in the beginning, you're not going to get that much traffic. Whatever traffic you do manage to attract must find your content compelling enough for you to start generating some sort of organic brand. That's not going to happen if you drop the ball as far as content quality is concerned.

The good news is, being the best is actually quite easy. How? Just look at the process I described.

When you go through reverse engineering, you already know where your competitors are. You have a clear idea of what they're doing, what their strong points are, as well as their limitations. This enables you to come up with some sort of framework or some sort of game plan to step up their game.

In other words, you build on their strengths and you try to solve the problems that they're struggling with.

The Secret to Content-Based Affiliate Marketing

A little bit of a caveat here. Not all niches are conducive to content-based conversion. Content-based marketing is just one example of a conversion platform. There are many others.

However, if you have selected content-based affiliate marketing by using some sort of content conversion platform, let me let you in on a secret.

Here is the secret: you don't have to create a huge amount of content.

Seriously.

A lot of marketers are under the impression that if their niche industry standard involves blogs, they have to blog every day or create a tremendous amount of content. This is not true. You can actually make a lot more money with less content.

In fact, depending on your niche, there seems to be an inverse relationship between the amount of content, posts, articles you have and the amount of money you make. The less content, the more money.

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Well, there's a missing ingredient. You have to be clear on the connection. You're not pumping out a lot of content, but you have to make sure that your content is top notch. That's the first part. Your content has to be the best or must be perceived as the best in your niche.

The next ingredient is promotions. In other words, you can't just promote the very best content and hope for the best. That's not going to work. You're going to have to publish less materials, while making sure that it's the best material you can come up with, and then spend the rest of your time promoting it.

This doesn't necessarily mean that you have to pay for traffic. You can promote it by sharing it on social media, forums and other sources that I will discuss in a later chapter.

Another key part of this equation of creating less content while making more money is to work consistently on optimizing the content you already have online.

In other words, you know that you only have a few pieces of content up. Don't just publish them once and never touch them again. You're going to have to keep optimizing them so they convert better.

The first step of optimization, of course, involves some sort of secondary content that your primary content links to. That's how you can track progress. So if you notice that your initial content has a high click through rate, that's a good sign that you can fully optimize the value of that initial content.

But this means that you then must pay attention to the "receiving page" or landing page. You have to optimize that so that people would want to click on your affiliate ads, your mailing list form, or whatever it is that leads to conversion. Do you see how this works?

The great thing about this is that each step of the way can be measured. And this all happens in the context of you publishing less content, promoting that content more, and maximizing conversions.

If you're able to do that, then you have carried out the secret. You work less on creating content while converting more of your visitors into cold, hard cash.

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Chapter 5 - Getting traffic the smart way

Just like with anything else in life, there are two ways to do things when it comes to online marketing. You can choose to do things the easy way, or you can try doing things the hard way. The funny thing is the easy way is often also the smart way.

In this chapter, I'm going to teach you the smart way to get traffic for your affiliate marketing business. Regardless of how you choose to convert that traffic, I'm going to teach you the smart way to produce traffic. Put simply, the aim is to work less while getting more results.

Unfortunately, a lot of books out there that teach you affiliate marketing have it in reverse. They talk a good game but you end up doing things the opposite way of what I'll teach you. You'll end up putting a tremendous amount of time only to have very little results to show for it because the turn-on-effort simply isn't there.

Social media is the key

Forget what you've heard about social media and the effectiveness of its traffic. Social media is the key to your affiliate marketing success. Here's how to do it.

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Find your competitors on all social media platforms

By this point, you should already have a clear idea of who your niche competitors are. Go ahead and find their accounts on all social media platforms. By “all”, I mean the major social media platforms. This means look for your competitors on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest. For bonus points, look for their account on Google Plus.

Focus on in the social media platforms where most of your competitors are found. After you’ve done your research, you should have raw count of where your competitors are and where they’re not. A pattern should emerge. It may well turn out, depending on your niche, that most of your competitors focus primarily on Twitter. Some niches tend to focus on Facebook. Whatever the case may be identify the social media platforms where most of your competitors can be found.

Figure out their influencer base

How influential are your competitors on the social media platforms your niche tends to focus on? In the most common platform for your niche, look for the base of influence your competitors have.

For example, on Twitter, are there special accounts that they keep mentioning? Are there industry specialists or industry experts or consultants that they always mention in their posts? What kind of hashtags do they use? Similarly, on Facebook, do you find them on certain groups? Do they tend to congregate in certain groups?

The bottom line on social media reverse-engineering

I hope the pattern is clear. Make sure that, regardless of where your competitors are on the major social media platforms, you figure out how they distribute their content.

Do they participate in group discussions? Do they have their own pages or do they basically promote their content on other people's pages? What kind of hashtags do they use?

Pay attention to what they’re doing on the major social media platforms your niche congregates in. Pick apart their patterns.

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The smart way to build credibility on social media

By this point, you should have the three crucial things you need to reverse engineer your competitors on social media.

First, you should have a clear understanding of which platforms to focus on. Since your niche tends to congregate within a fairly narrow range of social media platforms, you should know which ones these are.

Second, you should have a clear idea of where they promote on those platforms. You should try joining those groups. You should try to be visible in those areas.

Third, you should have an idea about the hashtags that they use. Facebook and Twitter use hashtags. So, identify the hashtags that are most commonly used in your niche.

Now that you have all this information, you are ready to build credibility on social media. This account must reflect your content branding strategy.

If you have a blog or a central website for all your articles, your accounts on your target social media platforms should look similar to each other. There has to be no confusion regarding your brand. If you feature a logo or a header graphic on your blog, it should be consistent on your social media accounts as well.

Next, you're going to gather as many of your competitors' best content. At this point, you should have already done that. You already should have a large list of top-notch third-party content that gets a lot of love from social media.

These get retweeted a lot. They get shared a lot on Facebook. They get a lot of Plus One votes from Google Plus.

Whatever the case may be there is an objective indication that these are quite viral on social media. You should have a list of the URLs of this content.

Your next step is to create a list of your improved versions of some of this content. This is your own top-notch content.

Your secret sauce

The secret sauce that you'll be using is to "sandwich" your best content with your third-party competitors' very best content. In other words, you use high-quality materials

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produced by third parties, and these could be your competitors, to establish credibility and context.

When people see your brand on social media and they see your post, it becomes readily apparent that you're only going to talk about a fairly narrow range of topics. This establishes your brand as some sort of expert or credible authority within a fairly narrow range of subject matter categories.

This is crucial. You can post all sorts of content about Kim Kardashian, celebrity content, Donald Trump, political, economic stories as well as gossip. That's going to dilute your message. You have to stay on message. You have to stay laser-focused on your niche.

On top of this, you have to feature the very best credible and authoritative content within your niche to position your brand as an expert. This is why it's crucial to go through that list of third-party content that you've reverse-engineered from your competitors with a fine-tooth comb. You have to be very meticulous regarding filtering that material to make sure that it gets people's attention as well as gets them thinking about your credibility and authority.

You may be thinking "How can this build my create ability when it's somebody else's content? This is not my own stuff. If people click on that link, they're not going to go to my website. They're going to go to my competitors' website. What do I get out of it?"

Well, here's the thing. When people can tell that they can reliably go to your social media account and get the very best content regarding the niche you're targeting, they trust your brand more.

So, even if they click on a link and it takes them somewhere else, they will still go back to you because they can then find another link that is guaranteed to add value to their lives and when they click that, they get quality. They get value so they would want to go back to you.

You are the hub that holds everything together. That's how you develop a solid brand on social media. That's how you become credible. This is also the way to establish context.

The key here is to establish this credibility to the point that when people just give you the benefit of the doubt automatically and they just click link after link that you post because they know that it's going to be on point, you basically have them feeding off the palm of your hands because sandwiched within these high-quality, top-notch third-party links are your own links.

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This is the payoff. When they click these, they go to your website. That's where you can show them ads that pay you money. That's where they can sign up to your mailing list.

Whatever the case may be once they go to your website, they can take an action that can end up putting more dollars in your pocket. That is the name of the game.

However, to get there, you have to be trustworthy. People have to have a good reason to trust you instead of somebody else. They should have a clear idea of why they should keep going back to your branded account instead of just picking out generic content through a random Google search.

I hope you can see the difference here.

How to execute the sandwich strategy

I call this the sandwich strategy because that's what you're doing. You're sandwiching your own content with the content of movers and shakers as well as proven and recognized authorities in your niche.

If you play this game correctly, you are essentially going to be piggybacking on the authority and credibility they worked so hard to build. The more people can see that your account only shares the very best content, the more credible your account becomes. You then end up benefiting from the existing brand authority of your competitors. Isn't that awesome?

It's definitely better than starting from scratch because, believe me, establishing a solid and credible online brand nowadays can set you back tens, if not hundreds of thousands, of dollars pores. There are specialized public relations firms in the United States and Western Europe that are built specifically for this job.

However, you're doing this on a shoestring budget. In fact, you're doing this for absolutely free thanks to reverse engineering and the sandwich strategy.

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How the sandwich strategy works

To spell it out in greater detail, the sandwich strategy works this way.

First, you need to get a massive list of your competitors' content.

Next, you're going to have to filter these based on social media signals.

Are people retweeting these materials?

Are people clicking the thumbs-up Like button on Facebook? Is this material getting a lot of love on YouTube?

Are the YouTube comments generally positive?

Are these getting up pinned a lot on Pinterest?

Do people on Instagram love this stuff?

Whatever the case may be there has to be some sort of objective social media validation. You can easily detect this looking at the social signals. Ideally, if a post gets retweeted a lot, that is more credible than a post that just gets a lot of thumbs up.

On Facebook, for example, if a post gets a lot of shares, that is more credible than a post that just gets a lot of thumbs up and reactions.

Once you have loaded these, you then get the URLs of your own content. Remember your content is reverse-engineered from the best materials your competitors can come up with. In other words, you've taken their best and improved on it.

Maybe you've updated it. Perhaps you've included all sorts of multimedia bells and whistles. Possibly, you've made it easier to read. Whatever the case may be just by looking at your own content, people can easily conclude that this is better than the competition.

This is the kind of stuff that you're going to be sandwiching so you're going to first post several links establishing context and credibility. This is done courtesy of your competitors' content.

Next, you post your own content. This immediately establishes your brand's credibility and quality. Your visitors only need to click on the link to your own content to see how you beat everybody else hands down in terms of the information and value you bring to the table.

After you post your own content, you then resume with posting other people's content. Again, it's all about building context and credibility. You also want people checking out

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your social media pages to see that all you talk about is your niche, and the way you talk about your niche is not to sell stuff or cram products or services down their throat.

Instead, when they go to your account, they see high-quality content that answers the questions that they already have.

After a few more posts of third-party content, you then follow that up with a call-to-action content. Call-to-action content is different from your own content.

Your own content is a link to your article or blog posts. It can also involve a link to your YouTube videos.

Your call-to-action content, on the other hand, goes to your squeeze page. This is where people can sign up for your mailing list. Usually, this offers some sort of freebie like a free book, free software or a free video course.

Whatever the case may be there is some sort of free premium being given out in exchange for the prospect entering their e-mail address. Once they get on your e-mail address, you can then send them prescheduled e-mails that qualify them to eventually buying something from you.

Once you have posted your call-to-action content, you then post third-party content and then you keep rotating. You're basically alternating between third-party content, your own content, third-party content and then call-to-action content and then back again.

Automate your social media presence

As you can tell from my description of the sandwich strategy above, this is going to be a bit much to handle on a manual basis. You can do that if you have a lot of spare time or if you've hired a virtual assistant from places like the Philippines or India.

However, the better approach would just simply be to automate. By using tools like SocialOomph or Hootsuite or one of many other versions of these two tools, you can feed your social media accounts a huge amount of content URLs ahead of time. You feed them once, but these tools make sure to publish based on the schedule you set. You don't have to publish manually one by one. Instead, you just input everything once, make sure you set everything up in terms of the link, the title as well as other elements and then the software does it on an autopilot basis.

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This doesn't mean that you're just going to relax and take it easy. Even after the software is already posting your updates, you should also log into your social media accounts and engage with influential thought leaders or known-and-proven subject matter authorities in your niche on those different social media platforms.

This way they can republish some of your stuff. Maybe they can retweet your stuff. Whatever the case may be you end up getting some of their fans' eyeballs because of your engagement with them.

Don't think that just because you have set up your automated software that is all you need to do. You also have to manually engage on social media. It is social media so this means that you have to be social.

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Chapter 6 - Master free traffic before spending a dollar on paid traffic

I know by this point you're probably thinking that you want to jumpstart your affiliate marketing business. You probably have heard that many people spend their whole day in pajamas while making thousands of dollars per day. If you want to get from point A, which is your stage, to point B as quickly and as smoothly as possible. Believe me I've been there. I understand where you're coming from.

However, let me tell you if you rush things and you go straight to paid traffic, there's a high chance you will lose your shirt. No joke. There's a high chance that after spending all those dollars, you have very little to show for it. Sadly, this is exactly the kind of situation many newbie affiliate marketers experience.

Don't put yourself in that situation. You have to be disciplined. You have to master free traffic before spending a dime on paid traffic.

After you have mastered how free traffic works and how you've optimized your online properties for optimal conversion, then and only then should you go crazy on paid traffic.

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Knock yourself out. However, prior to that point, I'm telling you if you want to avoid going bankrupt, you need to master free traffic before spending on paid traffic.

I don't want to sound like a broken record but given how high the stakes are, it's definitely worth it for your sake.

Pay attention to your social media content winners

The first thing that you need to pay attention in optimizing free traffic is to see which of your social media accounts are pumping the most traffic to your blog or website. This is the first order of business. This is how you know if something is working.

It's not as easy as you think. You may be thinking to yourself when you're going to Google Analytics that you're not getting any traffic at all. Well, think again. It may well turn out that you're getting ten clicks from Facebook, twenty clicks from Twitter, thirty clicks from Instagram and then zero from the other social media platforms.

Most importantly, do not get depressed. It's very easy to think that if you're not getting much traffic that you're wasting your time. Well, when you look at the traffic flow, as slow as they may be, they do indicate winners. Seriously.

First of all, you realize that some of the channels you're on produce most of your traffic. If you're on ten channels, there's a high likelihood that only three or less social media channels produce high-enough traffic.

The second thing I need you to realize is that traffic volume is comparative. In other words, you compare all your different channels and you pick the channels that produce the most. Now, in the example I gave you, it seems depressing because you're only getting thirty clicks per day from one channel.

That is still a winning channel because it beats all your other channels. So, what you're going to be doing is you're going to pay attention to the channels that produce the highest amount of traffic in your context.

Again, don't obsess about the fact that you're only getting thirty visitors from let's say Twitter or Facebook. What matters is that when you line all the social media platforms you're on against each other, some are producing traffic while the vast majority is not.

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This is good news because now you're going to be able to focus on the channels that have the highest capability of sending you traffic. However, don't make any rash decisions just yet.

First, identify the channels that sent you the most traffic.

Second, identify the content that gets clicked the most. For example, if it turns out that you're getting the most traffic from Facebook, look at the content that you shared on Facebook. Is there any indicator of the content that is being clicked the most?

Now that you have identified the specific type of content that's getting a lot of traffic from Facebook, the next step is to share that content more often on the other platforms.

Now, ask yourself "After I've done this, did the nonperforming platforms show any improvement? For example, did the platforms sending you zero traffic start sending you more traffic? Similarly, did lower producing channels start sending a higher traffic volume? Pay attention to these patterns.

Share your winning content in many other channels

By this point, you should not rush to cut off certain channels because they're not producing any traffic or not sending you traffic to your liking. You should first focus on sharing your most popular content on other social media platforms that you're not currently on. See if these other channels respond favorably.

Give it time

The next step is to give yourself about a couple of months to find your very best content, share those on other channels you're not on as well as give your nonperforming channels a chance to shape up. After three months, you should be in a position to start cutting back and focusing on your winners.

At this point, you already know what your winning pieces of content are. You should already have a clear idea of which themes get the most love from the social media channels you're promoting to.

You also should have a clear idea of which channels tend to be your most consistent producers of traffic. For example, if you're distributing to twenty, don't be surprised if only six or less of those channels or platforms produce enough traffic to make the whole thing worthwhile.

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At this point, you should cut back your social media channel distribution network to six or less social media platforms. If there are only three producing at a fairly decent level, stick to those three.

Whatever the case may be you're going to start cutting back because you don't want to spread yourself too thin. You want to direct your efforts to channels that at least produce decent returns. This is how you maximize your return on effort. Remember the name of the game is to put in as little effort as possible while getting as many dollars out as possible.

That's going to be very hard to do when you're basically spending all this time, effort and money blasting content to channels that really don't return enough traffic. Keep in mind that in this context, "enough" is comparative. You basically are going to line up all the traffic results you get and then you stick to the top twenty percent or top ten percent and cut out all the other channels.

Repurpose your content

By this stage, your sandwich strategy is looking pretty solid! It's already producing traffic, but to maximize its effectiveness, you need to repurpose your content. For example, if you have a blog, turn your blog posts into narrated videos. Maybe you can narrate it or you can turn it into a slide show. Perhaps you can hire a voice-over artist from places like Fiverr.

Whatever the case may be you already have the script. These are blog posts. You just need to turn them into video that people would want to watch.

Pay attention to your competitors' videos on YouTube and see how they present similar information to yours. Come up with something similar. There are all sorts of slide show programs out there that make it easy for affiliate marketers to turn text to video. You might want to consider those.

Text to pictures

Another approach you could take is to turn your blog posts and their data into pictures. These can be memes. Whatever the case may be these pictures really summarize the substance of your content. They really bring it home. They're hard hitting. They're easy to share. They also are quite illustrative. Whatever the case may be you might want to turn your text into pictures.

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Text to infographics

Another approach you could take is to zero in on one set of data in your among your most popular content and turn into an infographic.

Turn your text into questions

Finally, you can look through your winning content and strip them down into quick blurbs. Each blurb is a short question and a very short answer. You can then tweet out these out. These are easy to tweet. In fact, Twitter is very friendly to question-based content.

Share your repurposed content

Now that you have repurposed your content into video, pictures, infographics or short question-and-answer format, share your material. At this point, you're already automating your publishing on the social media platforms you're sticking to after cutting off other platforms. Now, you're going to be sandwiching more of your stuff.

At this point, since you've repurposed a significant amount of your most popular content, you should then include this in your content rotation. You then take off a significant amount of your third-party content and you share more of your stuff.

This is how you pull a lot more traffic to your website because now, instead of people just clicking on your blog post, they can click on your video link to YouTube. Then from YouTube, they can click on the description to go to your site. They can also click on your pictures on Twitter or the link that accompanies your pictures on Facebook.

They can click on the info graphics you shared on Pinterest. Whatever the case may be your target audience can find more ways to go to your website because you have a lot more content.

The best part to all of this is that your repurposed content is essentially taking the content that you worked so hard to create and coming up with different versions of them. You don't have to start from scratch. You don't have to research again.

You just take material you already have and just convert into a different form. This different form can then be content, which then draws more traffic.

Pump traffic from as many **free** sources as possible

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Now that you have figured out your social media top three to five sources of traffic, and you have committed to only sourcing traffic from these places, the next step is to take your repurposed content as well as your regular content and try to get as much traffic from as many free sources as possible.

Please note that repurposing your content is an important step because only until you've done that will you be able to go to free sources of traffic. For example, Quora uses a question-and-answer format. It's very hard for you to get traffic from Quora if you did not repurpose your content into a series of questions and answers.

With that out of the way, try to pump traffic from as many free sources as possible by going to the following places: Quora, Reddit, social media, YouTube and do blog outreach.

How does blog outreach work?

Do a search for the topic of your blog posts. You should be able to see all sorts of articles. Now, using a tool like ahrefs.com, you should be able to see the websites thinking to the articles or blog posts that are similar to your content. These third-party sites have published a link to content that is very similar to yours.

Just make sure that your content truly blows away this similar content. There should not even be a comparison. Just by looking at your content, it's obvious that it is several degrees superior to the similar content.

Get the backlinks of that similar content and reach out to those places that link to that similar content to also link to your site. In other words, include your superior content in their list of links or in their blog features of whatever they use to link to content similar to yours.

Please note that this is not easy. It also takes a lot of time. Do blog outreach maybe an hour or two every day. As long as you're consistent with it, you should be able to see results, but please don't expect overnight results. That's just not going to happen. This is a long-term thing. However, if you want to get high-quality search engine traffic, blog outreach must be part of your free traffic daily campaign.

Cross reference your traffic to conversions.

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I have some bad news for you. At the end of day, it isn't traffic that puts food on your table. You might be in a situation where you're getting a lot of traffic from social media. You might be getting a lot of traffic from Reddit and other places.

That's great and everything but, ultimately, until and unless those visitors convert into buyers, e-mail or zip code submitters or ad clickers on pay-per-click ads, that traffic is worthless. I'm sure you already know that.

You're going to have to look at your traffic statistics as well as your most popular content and figure out where your conversions come from. Which websites send traffic that convert it? Ideally, which content accounts for most of your conversions?

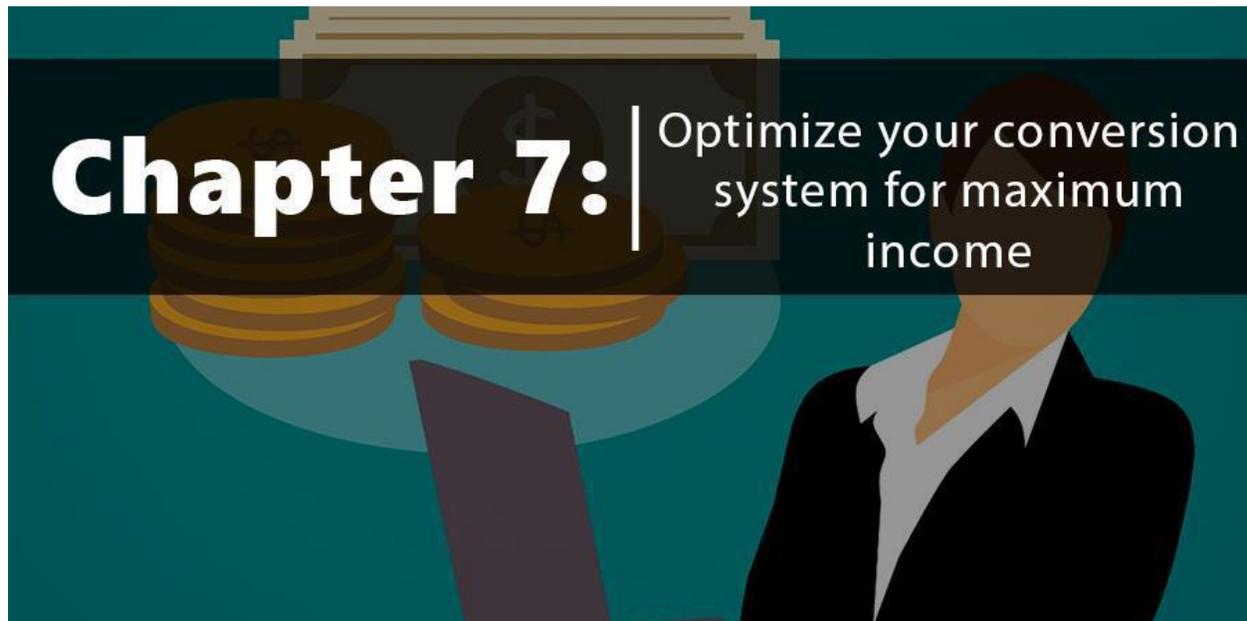
You always have to cross reference to conversions because the name of the game here is to create more content that converts and focus more of your promotion efforts on websites that sent the converting traffic.

Focus on sources that produce the most conversions

To recap, by this point, you have cut off low-performing social media traffic sources. Also, you are focusing on traffic that pulls in the most traffic and also converts the most traffic. You're going to be making some hard decisions here.

At the end of the day, you're just going to focus on the top three or the top five that work. You're going to zero in on a very narrow range of content topics that work. Drop everything else. You're going to then optimize the things that work and forget about the things that don't work. Remember this is all about maximizing return on effort.

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Chapter 7 - Optimize your conversion system for maximum income

Please understand that what I've taught you so far enables you to make money. That's not going to be the issue. The issue is how far you're going to take this. That is the real question that you need to wrap your mind around.

Unfortunately, a lot of people who try their hand on affiliate marketing set up their conversion systems. They drag traffic and they develop a brand. So far so good, right?

Well, here's the problem. Once they start generating a certain level of income, it can be one hundred dollars a month, five hundred dollars a month, or a thousand dollars a month. It doesn't really matter. What matters is when they reach a certain income, they stay there. They think that this is maximizing return on effort. They got it all wrong.

While it's true that you have to maximize the amount of dollars you get out of the system while putting in as little work into the system, this doesn't give you a license to stop working. The key here is to optimize your conversion system so that it produces the maximum amount of income.

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This doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to have to pour in all this amount of work to make that happen on a consistent and constant basis. You're going to be doing it wrong if that's what you're planning. Why? That's an active income system. I'm talking about a passive income system.

Let's put it this way. You're catching fish with a net. You know that your net is broken but you settled for the four pieces of fish you get every day. What if I told you that if you only fixed your net you will be able to catch fifty fish a day and you'd still be putting in the same amount of work which is not much? Would that be worth the time, effort and attention to detail in optimization?

Optimization requires work. But the good news is once you've optimized your conversion system to maximize output, you can stop. You've already put in the time to make sure that your net is properly working. So, you will have maximized the amount of fish your net could get given the fact that you're not putting any active work into it after you have optimized it.

Do you see how this works? Don't put yourself in a situation where you're pouring traffic on a broken conversion system. You're basically just going to be filling up a broken bucket or dragging a broken net through the sea.

Sure, you get results every once in a while. You get conversions every once in a blue moon but your system is not living up to its fullest potential. You have to optimize your conversion system. Here's how you do it.

Step by step guide to optimizing your conversion system

If your conversion system is a landing page, a squeeze page, an ad that links directly to your affiliate link, or any other kind of landing page, listen up! There's a better way to fix or optimize your conversion system. You can't just make random guesses and hope for the best. That's how other affiliate marketers do it and that's why they fail.

Some get lucky but the one's that get lucky are very few and far between. Here's how you optimize your conversion system in a systematic and methodical way.

Use an element by element approach

When you look at your sales, landing, or squeeze page, there are actually many different elements there. There's the graphics, the title, the font, the call to action, and the layout.

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You can basically slice and dice any kind of page in many different ways. These are your elements.

Become aware of them. Be mindful of them. By understanding the presence of these elements on the pages you're going to be converting, you make things so much easier on yourself. How come?

Instead of just jumping in with both feet and trying to "optimize" the whole page every single time, you optimize element by element. This way, you can keep track of the things you're changing and leaving everything else the same. This enables you to track the positive conversion and trace it to the specific element that you change.

More importantly, you'll be able to trace back to the variation of the element that you've just changed. Here's how the element by element optimization approach works.

Make a variation of your current pages element

The first that you need to do is to make variations of the specific element that you're going to be optimizing. Let's say, for your squeeze page, you're going to be optimizing the picture or graphic on your squeeze page.

This means that you're going to come up with many different versions of the picture or different pictures altogether. Make those variations.

Next, you're going to run traffic through your squeeze page. Once traffic comes in, you would be able to quickly tell which variation or variations got the most sign ups. Then, pick the winner. Since you ran the traffic, there should be a winner.

The squeeze page may have won by ten sign ups or may have won by a hundred sign ups. Whatever the case may be, you must give the variations enough time to produce statistically relevant results. In other words, pick the winner after a week of running this traffic.

Once you have isolated the winning variation, come up with more variations of the winner. For example, if you started out this process with a picture of a boat, a car, a train and a plane, and it turns out that the plane got the most sign ups, when you're varying the picture of the plane, come up with different types of planes.

Run the test again. There should be one winner who converted at a higher rate than the other planes and converted at a higher rate than the original. These two conditions must

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be met. Once you have identified the type of plane, for example, that got the most sign ups, come up with variations of the plane again.

Maybe you can show pictures of a blue plane, a silver plane, a chrome plane and a white plane. Run the traffic again and keep picking the winner and making variations as long as there is an improvement in conversions.

In other words, for every stage of variation you do, there has to be an improvement in the total number of conversions. In the case of this squeeze page example, the number of people signing up must increase each time you make variations.

Once you've reached a point where you can no longer improve on the conversion rate and have maxed out for that element, stay with that element but pick another element of the squeeze page and repeat the process about. This time, maybe you change the heading text.

After that, maybe you can change the call to action. Then, you can change the layout. Whatever the case may be, you need to go through all the elements until each element has been optimized so that the whole squeeze page or whatever page that you're optimizing, converts at a much higher level than the original. That's how you do conversion system optimization.

Please understand that this is your system. This is how you make your money. Regardless of whether you're blogging to make money or you're running a mailing list, it all goes to this page because this is where people sign up for your mailing list, click by-products or do other things that make you money.

If your conversion system simply involves ads that people click for you to make money, these are pay per click ads, you might want to change the variables allowed by the affiliate program behind those contextual ads. Make sure you stick to their rules.

In particular, if you're running Google AdSense ads, there is only a certain amount of ways you can play around with the parameters. Still, you need to do that so you can optimize the rate at which people click on those paid ads.

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Chapter 8 - Optimize your content for maximum conversions

In the previous chapter, we optimized our whole system. In other words, we optimize the squeeze page, the sales page or the other pages that lead to actual dollars showing up in your bank account.

In this chapter, we're going to focus on the content that populates the websites that feature your conversion platform. Maybe your conversion platform is a blog. In that case, you're going to learn how to optimize the content that you will be showing on your blog.

Pick which content produces the most conversions

This step is actually pretty easy. After your blog or website has been online for a couple of months, you should be able to determine the following: most popular content - this is content that people click on to enter your website; and content that leads to exit links. In other words, this is the most popular content that people click on. And from this page, they click on an exit link.

The exit link goes to your conversion page. Maybe it goes to your sales page. Maybe it goes to a page full of ads. Whatever the case may be, these are the content that people read and they end up clicking Google AdSense ads. This second batch of content is the ones that send traffic to places that can pay you.

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Analyze your most popular and highest converting content

I wish I can tell you that your most popular content or entry pages would automatically be your highest converting content. Oftentimes, there are not on and the same. There will be a content that does a good job pulling traffic from search engines or other places on the internet. They do an amazing job with that.

But people don't click the ads those pieces of content contain. Instead there are other pages on your website that account for the actual conversions. Your job at this point is to optimize content based on their best performance.

What I mean by this is since you know that there are entry pages that dominate the amount of traffic you pull from the internet, try to optimize those. Try to create more of those so you pull more traffic from the internet.

The second level of optimization is to play around with those pages so they push more traffic to pages that actually lead to conversions. If it turns out that your page on, let's say, horse breeds pulls a lot of traffic from the internet but your page on horse sheds produce the most money, then you're going to have to optimize the horse breeds pages to pull even more traffic.

Maybe you could create more horse breed profiles. Next, you're going to look at the text within the horse breed profiles to try to increase the rate at which people click them to end up on your horse shed pages. You then optimize your horse shed pages to pump more traffic to ads, to your squeeze page or to wherever else that pays you money.

Do you see how this works? This is a three stage optimization process for your content. The secret here is to know which is which. Don't automatically assume that just because a piece of content or a blog post pulls a tremendous amount of traffic from search engines that that's your conversion page.

You should look at it as a pump. This pump has to have the right link to the conversion page that grinds out dollars. Do you see how this works? There are three things that you need to optimize.

To recap, you're going to optimize your popular pages. So basically, you need to replicate more of these so more of your blog talks about the same topics so as to get more traffic from search engines and other places on the internet.

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You also have to optimize or tighten the link between these popular pages and your conversion pages. Finally, you need to work on your conversion pages so they can turn more of your traffic into cold hard dollars.

How to optimize content

How exactly can you optimize content regardless of whether we're talking about the entry page or the conversion page? Again, you should use an element by element analysis like the one I stepped you through in Chapter 7.

You should start with graphical elements. See if this improves the rate your popular pages pull traffic. You should also play around with formatting. Making these pages easier to read, lead to more people visiting the conversion page.

Finally, play around with the call to action. Create many different calls to action and see if this increases the click through rate to your conversion page. On your conversion page, play around with the call to action as well as the ads that show up to see if this increases the amount being pushed by these pages to your sponsors or to your squeeze page or to any other place that actually converts that traffic into dollars.

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Chapter 9 - Optimize your affiliate programs to maximize conversions

When you're promoting a niche in the beginning, you probably don't know which is which. You probably don't know which program does a great job converting your traffic. You would not be in a position to know because you're just starting.

You have to optimize your affiliate programs to maximize conversions. In other words, you have to figure out which affiliate programs actually does best with your traffic. Here's how I do it.

Run core affiliate programs through an ad rotator

As I've mentioned in the previous chapter, you should get all the affiliate programs offering offers involving your niche. You're going to sort them out later on. Once you got a list of these, you then filter them based on the parameters I've discussed earlier.

By this point, you should have a fairly nice list of pre-selected affiliate programs. These have a higher chance of succeeding. These pay well enough. These give you enough freedom for you to optimize them. Whatever the case may be, they are nice and filtered.

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If any of these is new to you, please read the previous chapters where I talked about affiliate programs and how you should filter them.

Now that you have your nice list, you're going to use a WordPress plugin that enables you to rotate the ads for these different affiliate programs. Let the ads run for at least three months. This way, whatever results you get will be statistically valid. You can't just run your affiliate ads for one month and expect the results to be binding.

There are all sorts of reasons why people may not be buying or clicking through in the space of one month. But three months should be long enough for these statistical patterns to be valid.

Pick the top three 3 affiliate programs

After running your list of affiliate programs through your ad rotator for three months, you should be able to spot the three highest converting affiliate programs. You have to be disciplined about this.

For example, if the top program generated a hundred sales. The second program generated fifty sales, and then the third program generated twenty sales. And the fourth program generated only eighteen sales. Resist the temptation to add the fourth program. You stick to the top three.

Once you've identified these top three. You will only run ads for these.

Come up with ad variations for each winning program

Here's where the magic happens. Since you know that there are top three affiliate programs that convert the best for your kind of traffic, the next step is to not take any of these lying down. You can't just stop here.

Instead, come up with ad variations for these three programs. Remember, you're running their ads through an ad rotator. So, you use the element by element conversion system I taught you on chapter seven but apply it to the ads for these affiliate programs.

For example, if an ad showed a picture of a woman, show a picture of a man. If it turns out that the picture of the man converts better, show five different pictures of different men with different features. Pick the winner there and keep making variations until you get more click-throughs and more conversions. You have to do this for all the ads you run for the top three converting affiliate programs

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This way, you maximize your click-through. You also maximize the amount of money you make per click. Keep making variations on an element by element and an affiliate program by affiliate program level until you reach peak conversions.

In other words, regardless of how many changes you make, if the rate of conversions no longer improve and have reached the ceiling, stop there.

Actively find other offers by these programs

Once you have found the winning offers of these programs and you've optimized them, look for other offers that they run that may appeal to your niche. Optimize those using the process above so you can increase the total dollars you make from those affiliate programs.

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Chapter 10 - How to build a multi-layered passive income affiliate marketing system

How many times have you heard the saying, “The money is in the list”? I’m sure if you’ve checked out affiliate marketing blogs and forums, you have come across that statement more than a few times.

The reason why people can’t shut up about it is because it’s absolutely true. The money IS in the list. However you need to know what you’re doing. Still, I suggest that you build a mailing list for your business regardless of the conversion platform you’re using.

Maybe you’re running a blog; you need to put up a mailing list. Maybe you’re just buying traffic and pumping it into you affiliate link, you still need to build a mailing list. This takes a form of an intermediate page where people sign up for your mailing list and then you blast them with affiliate ads.

Whatever the case may be, build the mailing list. Why? First, when people sign up to your mailing list, you get that traffic to come back. The bad news about online marketing is that the vast majority of traffic that goes to the page of promoting will never come back.

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They see the link. They click. They read your content and they're gone. Good luck getting them back. When you have a mailing list, you at least get another bite of the apple. May be you can say, "I posted a new blog post", or you get their attention by posting a warning. They freak out at the warning, so they click on the link and they find themselves back on your blog.

Whatever the case may be, you get them back. This doesn't necessarily mean that all the people on your mailing list will go back. But this is much better than the zero that you're rocking without your list. Do you see where I'm coming from?

Get that traffic to come back by building a mailing list. Next, when people sign up for your mailing list, they're actually signing up for a relationship. This is a business relationship, based on trust, credibility and authority. When I signed up to any mailing list, the implication of my act is I trust you to handle me fairly. I trust you to send me information that I'm looking for.

There's a lot of trust there. So when you send highly targeted, useful affiliate products through a mailing list, people actually look forward to it. Remember, people will only sign up to your list because they have a problem that they're trying to solve. They have a certain set of needs.

When your email's affiliate links leads to products and services that speak to these needs, people find value in your list. Your list actually solves their problem. Most importantly, you made money because they bought the solution you are promoting. It's a win-win situation and it all turns on a relationship.

This leads me to my third point.

When you build a mailing list and you run it well, you're building a long term asset.

Sure, certain percentage of people will probably stop reading your updates. There is a quick and easy way to get rid of them. You can simply prune your list. You create filter for emails that haven't been opened passed a certain date. You then set up your email management program to purge those list members.

This way, the only people remaining on your list are people who actually open your emails. Once you have that active list of people who read your updates, you basically have them eating of the palm of your hands. As long as you send valuable information and as long as you send solutions to their problems, enough people on your list will click and buy stuff for you to make money off your list.

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This is a long term asset. And the best part to all of these is that it becomes independent of your website. You can actually set up different set up ten different websites all feeding the same list. The list becomes more valuable than the different websites. You can even sell off those websites on Flippa and still make money because your list members still buy stuff that you promote.

Follow this highly effective mailing list strategy

A lot of list marketers fail because they think that once they build their list offering a freebie that the people on that freebie list would be ready, willing and eager to buy all sorts of stuff. Wrong!

Absolutely wrong!

There's a high chance that the people you recruit on the freebie list are just freebie seekers. They just want free stuff. They want something for nothing. They cannot be bothered with buying something improved, something better, and something that produces more value. They couldn't care less. They just want free stuff. Fair enough!

To play this game, what you do is you can have a general list that includes those freebie seekers. You then send updates that keep people engaged but at the same time, you only send offers that are one dollar. When you send to your freebie list updates, the call to action links will go to one dollar offers. Maybe it's a one dollar video seminar, or one dollar book, or a one dollar piece of software.

Whatever the case may be, you're offering only one dollar. To make this work, it has to be your own product or you use a PLR product that is priced at one dollar. Basically, you offer stuff for one dollar.

It's not like you're going to be a millionaire offering this one dollar item. The only way you can be a millionaire offering one buck offers of course, is if your list is so huge that a million people sign up for that dollar. But I doubt you have that big of a list.

The point of offering one dollar offers is to filter your general or freebie list. You can bet that the people who actually bother to buy that one dollar item are real buyers. These are people who are signaling to you that they will do whatever it takes to solve their problems. They've proven themselves to be buyers.

By making the friction point very low and thanks to one dollar, you have established a way of effectively filtering your general list between freebie seekers and actual buyers.

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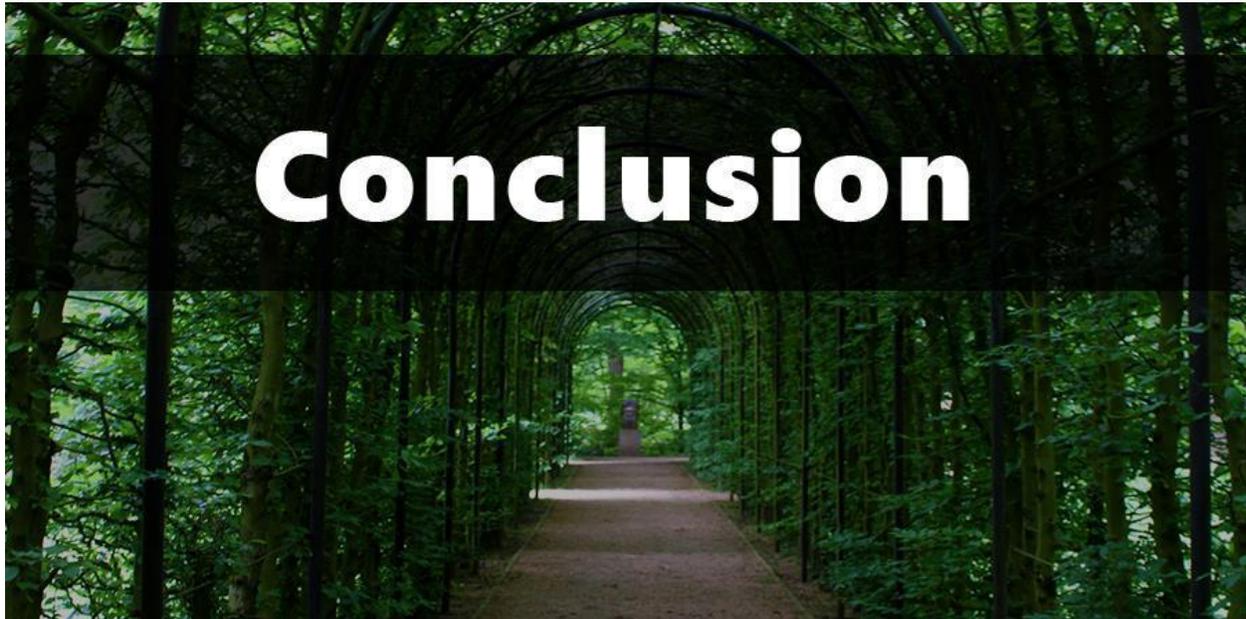
For people to buy the one dollar item, they have to sign up for another list. This is your buyers' list.

Most of your time and attention should be focused on sending high quality value added updates to your buyers' list. These are people who are willing to buy stuff. They're the ones who deserve the most of your attention.

From time to time, you should send updates to your general mailing list. But you restrict your calls to action to your one dollar item. You're still filtering that list. And you should also purge that list actively. Meaning, people who do not open are cut off from the list.

Most of your time should be spent on your buyers' list. This is where you send high value content with calls to action that sell higher commission affiliate products. That's how you play the game. So, all the other chapters that I've laid out here, they should feed traffic to your squeeze page that builds up your mailing list. You now know what to do to optimize your mailing list so it can continue to produce money and remain a money-making asset.

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Conclusion

I've stepped you through the process of making money as an affiliate. You sell other people's products. You don't have to create your own. I've also walked you through the many traps, confusing areas as well as potential areas for error.

By knowing the lay of the lands, so to speak, you know how to play the affiliate marketing game. You will now know how to anticipate problems. You would also know how to optimize your conversion systems.

The next step is to actually carry this out. Let me tell you, you can read book after book about making money but you will not make money not even one red cent until and unless you take action. It is time to take action now. Do it!

Don't wait for tomorrow.

Tomorrow may never come. Don't wait until you feel like it. Believe me, there will always be butterflies in your stomach. There will always be room for doubt. Just do it! Set a date. Commit to it and give it all you've got.

If you do this right, you will work less and earn more. That is the name of the game because passive income is where it's at. Forget the nine-to-five grind. Forget the typical

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job that takes up so much of your time, so much of your emotion and energy. And at the end of the day, the return on investment really isn't there.

Do yourself a big favor. Get on the road to a better life by setting up a passive online income system.