

Affiliate Classroom

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The journal of affiliate marketing and management best practices

**More
Sales**

**Revenue
Streams**

**AIDA for
Affiliates**

**Applying
for New
Programs:
Merchant
Tips**



Conversions

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Top 5 Affiliate Programs



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Top 5 Programs: February 2007

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Passions.com

<https://passion.com/go/g787241-brk>

[FriendFinder](#) is the most successful brand of personals and networking websites operating in the world today. They feature a full range of sites that both celebrate diversity and cater specifically to numerous regional, cultural, religious, sexual, and age demographics.

Over 40 million members currently use the [FriendFinder](#) network as their gateway to new friends and life-long partners, which in turn build communities where people can connect and improve their lives. [FriendFinder](#) business development offers lucrative affiliate programs as well as maintenance-free co-branded partnerships. Promote [FriendFinder](#) and earn up to \$1 per click, 75% on initial sales with rebills, or \$30 per order.

BigChurch.com

<https://bigchurch.com/go/g787241-brk>

[Big Church](#) already has a half a million members worldwide. Become a part of their program and help create connections for people who share the same spiritual beliefs. They have three different payout programs for you to choose from.

First you can earn \$1.00 for each member that signs up for a free membership. Next, you can earn up to 60% of initial orders and reorders. Their third program is even better, allowing you to make an extra 10% from simply referring other webmasters to get in on it!

Clicksor

http://track.clicksor.com/click_banner.php?cid=35&sid=62&bid=88&rid=

[Clicksor](#) is an online contextual ad network. This means that they provide content targeting technology. [Clicksor](#) gives affiliates the opportunity to place content relevant ads on their sites and get paid up to 70% of revenue. [Clicksor](#) has a large variety of ad formats available for use including banners, skyscrapers, pop-unders, text links, etc.

Their most recent feature, CLICKSOR CONTROL, is so revolutionary that you simply set your minimum bid for each type of campaign (CPC, CPV, or CPM), and control your earnings. Join a network that has already stepped up its game to be one of the best in its industry!

Until next time...

Check us out in our [Industry Watch Newsletter](#)
(http://www.affiliateprograms.com/industry_newsletter/10-17.htm)

In our newsletter you can find all the latest industry news, tips, and tools. Communicate with our team of experts through in-depth articles and free online resources. These resources will help you to dramatically, increase your knowledge of affiliate marketing. Here is a place where you can receive the guidance and support you need to reach your full potential.

The Fundamentals of Increased Conversions

by Evelyn Grazini

http://www.reawakener.com/free_gifts.htm



In the world of Internet marketing, and especially affiliate marketing, there is always a lot of discussion about optimizing websites for search engines, finding profitable niches, blogging and ping, etc. The one word that doesn't come up quite as often is "conversions." I wonder why?

Make sure your site loads quickly. In our current world of instant access to everything, if a site takes more than a few seconds to load, visitors will go elsewhere.

It seems like increasing a site's conversion rate would be one of the most important topics discussed. After all, the conversion rate is a measure of the percentage of visitors that come to a site — and then make a purchase.

Even if you do everything in your power to get visitors to your site it's imperative that, after they get there, they actually buy something. The visitors that just stop by and take in all of the free information aren't worth much. The ones that buy are like gold.

There are some easy things that can be done to make sure a site's conversion rate is as high as possible. I'll show you three things you can do now (easily). I'll also discuss a few tools that will make your tracking efforts easier. Lastly, I'll take a look at a new concept: using "Search Scent" to improve ROI and profitability.

3 Easy Ways to Increase Conversions

Make Sure Your Site Is Accessible, Fast and Easy To Use

Make sure your site loads quickly. In our current world of instant access to everything, if a site takes more than a few seconds to load, visitors will go elsewhere.

Make sure to test with different browsers. I had a site that looked fine when using the Internet Explorer (IE) browser. But not so fine using others. Firefox, for example, now has almost 11% of the market to IE's about 85%. Much smaller, but still substantial.

This means that if your site doesn't work for other browsers, 15% of the visitors attracted to the site will leave before ever seeing it. All links should be visible and easy to read on whatever browser is being used. Test using at least IE, Firefox, and Opera.

Make sure the shopping cart check-out button is in a prominent place. I can't tell you the number of times I've been forced to leave a site with my items in the shopping cart because I couldn't find the final check-out button. So when a customer has a credit card in-hand, make it easy to check out.

Display totals (including shipping and handling) prominently. Always inform customers of the return policy. Collect only the information that is needed to complete the sale. This should always include the customer's email address for future reference and possible back-end sales.

Examine Your Sales Process

Try to offer upsells and complementary items. When a customer makes the decision to buy from a site, they have already determined that the site can be trusted. Once that trust is developed, take it one step further.

Let's look to Amazon.com for a good example of this. At Amazon, when you select an item, you are shown other items that people bought when they also purchased the item you are looking at. The new item is closely related to the one you clicked on; there is a high probability that it's of interest to the buyer.

They also have a "Best Value" deal where you can add another book or product to your purchase for a discounted price. You get two items for just a little more than one. It's a concept that works. And, it can be easily incorporated into any website by using the upsell method.

Another good example of this is Infomercials. The companies advertising via this method increase sales by adding additional bonus items. The bonus items sometimes appear to be more valuable than the original one they advertised.

Make the offer too good to pass up, and watch your conversion percentage increase immediately.

Ensure Visitors Bookmark your Site

The easiest way to get people to bookmark your site and come back often is to be a valuable resource for them. A good site has a lot of information. Not just a lot of products. Add reviews of products and other interesting information. Then, update it regularly.

Add a list of new items to a front page. It's important that visitors can tell what information has been added since their last visit. Always let them know what's new. Then add a "Bookmark this Site" button to the home page or sidebar. Your buyers may then become steady return customers.

Software Tracking Tools

Tracking and measuring is not everyone's favorite thing to do. However, there are quite a few tools available to help. These tools can track a website visitor's progress through the site. Nothing can be fixed until the inefficiency is discovered. Add analytics and click tracking tools to the site and find out exactly where to focus your efforts.

The first place to look for tracking tools is in your own server's control panel. Most servers use Awstats, which will tell you where your visitors are coming from, and how long they

spent visiting. It has a lot of useful charts and graphs that you can break down by month. This way you will be able to determine how many people visited, vs. how many people actually purchased.

While Awstats will not tell you how many people purchased, you will know that number from your sales reports. Whatever tracking tool you use should be able to break down information by month, day, or a specific time-range.

By using Awstats, along with the other tools in your control panel, you can track page views, visitor sessions, unique visitors, and length of visits, among other things.

Another free tool is within Google AdSense. There is a huge amount of free information on how to use Google's tracking tools. Use them to find out where ads should be placed on the page to get the highest conversions. Do a search for "Google AdSense Heat Maps" to find information. One that I ran across is at:

<https://www.google.com/AdSense/support/bin/answer.py?answer=17954>

There is a neat little Conversion Rate Calculator here:

<http://www.futurenowinc.com/ccrcalculator.htm>

Use this calculator to determine your current conversion rate. It's also beneficial for "what if" scenarios. Just input the numbers you *wish* you were getting, and see how much it changes the ROI. The results of this calculation may show you how one little change could pay for the costs of making the necessary improvements to your site.

If by now you're really getting into this tracking thing, check out this site for more conversion-type calculators:

<http://www.futurenowinc.com/freeresources.htm>

Make Your Site Smell Good: Add "Search Scent."

It may sound odd to think that your website actually has a "scent" but I'm not making it up. There is an entire white paper on the subject presented by Xerox Palo Alto Research Center: <http://www-users.cs.umn.edu/~echi/papers/chi2000/scent.pdf>. It's called "The Scent of a Site: A System for Analyzing and Predicting Information Scent, Usage, and Usability of a Web Site.

The search scent concept now goes beyond what was included in this original white paper. The basic idea revolves around how users navigate the Web. It draws conclusions from where visitors go when they're on a site, as well as where they go after they leave. (Isn't that what we were just talking about in the conversion area?) It's all about the steps people take when looking for information.

The scent concept is actually an analogy between human Internet surfing and animal behavior. It is said that humans search for information the same way animals follow a scent and visual cues in their search for food.

So, when visitors are forging for information at a website, it's important to take note of the places they "stop and smell the flowers," so to speak. It's not really a new concept, but merely a better way to describe what should happen when visitors arrive at your site.

How To Perfume Properly

The site should be sticky – The ultimate goal is to keep visitors moving through your site. Discourage hitting the back button to get out. Make it easy for the visitor to see that they have arrived at the correct site. Then, keep them moving ahead, not away (unless it's to someplace that makes you money).

One way to do this is to highlight the keywords they may have used to get to the site. This is easily done if there is an AdWords campaign attached to the page. Simply highlight (or bold) the same words that you are using in the campaign.

I did a small test of my own in this area and searched for "red wine under \$20." Some of the paid listings I ran across were for wine stores in general. They just took me to a regular home page full of wine. However, the ad I clicked on had the heading that included "Rated Wines under \$20." When I got to the page, that's exactly where I went – to a sales page for 90+ rated wines under \$20.

There was no mistaking that I had found what I was looking for. And it only took me a few seconds. That makes for a very happy customer.

PPC Keywords

This brings me to the second area where scent is important. Most PPC advertisers bid on a variety of keyword phrases. It's best to be creative when coming up with these keyword combinations. You want to stand out from the crowd if your "scent" is to be picked up first.

Don't just use keywords that will help get backlinks, use keywords that describe exactly what information the user will receive when they get to your site. Make your keyword very targeted. Help your visitor easily find what they're looking for. This way, when they find what they desire, they'll stay at a page (or site) longer and look around. This not only gives your site a good scent, it also makes it sticky.

To prevent people from hitting the back button, give them a way out through an AdSense Ad. You paid to get the visitor there; you might as well get paid when they leave.

Sip Some Fragrant Wine

All this talk about scents and stickiness may be making your head spin. Just take a moment to relax, have a glass, and let it all sink in. It's a new Web 2.0 world and it would be a good idea to get up to speed quickly – I understand Web 3.0 is just around the corner. I hope it smells

About the Author

Evelyn Grazini is an Affiliate Classroom student and the author of "Directed Dreaming, Success From The Subconscious." Her specialty is Self-Help information, including Dreaming, Hypnosis, and Stress Relief. Her writings effectively condense volumes of professional research into one succinct resource. Get some of Evelyn's free reports at:
http://www.reawakener.com/free_gifts.htm

Boost Affiliate Conversions With the AIDA Formula

by Katalin Torok, <http://mktg.idared.net>



Affiliate marketing, just like any marketing activity is chock full of fancy acronyms. We have EPCs, SEO and SEM, PPC, OPMs, CTRs, SERPs, and whatnot. But every once in a while it pays to remind ourselves of some of the slightly older acronyms in the realm of marketing.

Far from outdated or irrelevant (even in the fast changing world of Internet marketing), marketing textbook material can be useful in fine-tuning a website to increase conversions. Affiliates, meet AIDA.

AIDA is an acronym that describes the stages of the sales process:

- **Attention**
- **Interest**
- **Desire**
- **Action**

Introducing AIDA

One of the fundamental marketing and sales concepts, AIDA is an acronym that stands for Attention - Interest - Desire - Action. It describes the stages of the sales process. (1) attracting the potential customer's Attention, (2) creating Interest in what you are selling, (3) creating a Desire to own it, and (4) leading the customer to take the Action to close the sale.

Applying the AIDA formula to your website effectively means you will be optimizing the different aspects and areas of your site for the different steps in the sales process.

Let's look at the steps one-by-one.

Attention

Short and sweet, the idea is simple. You can use any number of ways to catch the prospect's attention — a search engine result with a great headline that the searcher clicks on, a PPC ad, or a link from another site.

Look through some magazine or Internet ads and notice which catch your attention. Try to analyze why you stopped on this or that one. Was it a catchy title? An unusual photograph? A clever or informative phrase? They don't always have to be highly unusual or exotic — PPC ads on Google are just a few words.

Interest

This is where deciding what to do gets harder. You have the visitor, but now you need to keep them, too. As the saying goes, your competitor is just one click away. You need to present the right information in the right form, at the right place and time to raise and keep the visitor's interest in your offers.

In Internet terms, attention is measured in split seconds. Studies have shown that customers wait only a few seconds for a website to load before abandoning the site. Even if the site loads, if a quick scan of the page doesn't confirm to the visitor that they are in the right place, they hit the back button without even reading the first line of your sales copy.

If your site doesn't excel at raising interest in your visitors, your traffic driving expenses are not working to their full potential! Think about adding some 'scent' to your site. (See "The Fundamentals of Increased Conversions" on page 5 in this issue.)

If your site doesn't excel at raising interest in your visitors, your traffic driving expenses are not working to their full potential.

Desire

Once the visitor is convinced that you have something to offer that they are interested in, it is time to take it to the next level. Bring on the emotions. Create a desire to own your product or service by engaging the customer while describing your terrific product or service. Bring on the customer testimonials, strong benefits, and bring the product closer to the customer, more personal.

This is where your time spent on market research will really start paying off. The more you know about your prospects, the more you know how to engage them. Learn about their needs and wants, and you will know how to appeal to them. Look into behavioral targeting techniques.

Action

The holy grail of selling: the sale itself.

While the AIDA model is most often discussed in the context of selling a product, or service, in fact, it can be applied to any number of conversion scenarios. No matter whether you are "selling" your customer a product, an idea, a service, or a newsletter subscription (even if it is free), you are leading them on the same sales path from attention to action. You are:

- **Converting their attention...**
- **Into interest...**
- **Creating a desire...**
- **And finally getting them to take action.**

The Affiliate Sales Process

As an affiliate marketer, your ultimate goal is to realize sales or leads for your merchant partners. You are converting the visitor into a buyer by pre-selling the merchant's products or services. The conversion is realized when the customer completes a purchase on the merchant's site, so it is important to always keep the whole sales process in mind when crafting your affiliate pages.

Since you have no control over the final part of the sales process, you can try tailoring your sales tactics to how the merchant site handles this final part. If the merchant has very detailed product pages with lots of specs, demos, and data, you can complement this by emphasizing the emotional aspects in your sales messages.

On the other hand, some merchant sites are more of a destination site with scarce product information, but strong branding that resonates with the target market. In this case, you can leave more of the desire-creation to the merchant site and concentrate more on providing information, demos, reviews, etc to create interest.

Just make sure to always keep a balance between the two aspects. An emotional sales page will rarely work without at least some product specs, and vice versa.

Parallel to this affiliate-merchant joint sales process however, you need to pay attention to your website's individual conversion process: you need to convert your visitor from browser to interested customer. This "mini-conversion" is realized when the visitor clicks through to the merchant site through your affiliate link.

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Your website needs to work on two levels at the same time: pre-selling the product itself, and convincing the customer to click through to learn more about the product, the merchant and subsequently buy.

To highlight the importance of this second conversion process, imagine the following scenario.

Your visitor clicked through to your site from a search engine looking for flower delivery for Valentine's day (attention). You have a page dedicated to flower delivery companies, with short reviews of each company, and a logo linking to the merchant.

The visitor reads your content (interest), and is happy to find out from your review that Fictive-Flower-Merchant was a Flower-Enthusiast magazine customer's choice for the last 5 years.

Being an avid fan of that same magazine, the visitor is convinced they have found what they are looking for (desire). But, since valentine's day is still 3 weeks away, he decides that he will come back to order later. He closes the browser window.

What went wrong? He didn't click through to the merchant. (No action.)

Failure Analysis

In this scenario two conversions needed to happen in order for you to earn a commission:

- 1. Convince the buyer to buy from one of your merchants**
- 2. Convince the buyer to click on one of your affiliate links for tracking to be enabled.**

You successfully sold him on the idea of ordering from Fictive-Flower-Merchant, so the first conversion was successful.

However, you did not achieve conversion for your own site. One piece of the AIDA process was missing. You neglected to convince him to take the action you want him to take on your site, that is, to click on the merchant banner.

Your website needs to work on two levels at the same time: pre-selling the product itself, and convincing the customer to click through to learn more about the product, the merchant and subsequently buy.

Tips for Increasing Conversions

After covering the basics, let's look at a couple of practical ideas on how to apply the AIDA formula to your website's elements.

As in any marketing environment, to grab attention in the online space you need to **stand out from the crowd**. Use branding, great headlines, title tags to differentiate yourself from the competition and capture the attention of web browsers and searchers.

Also keep in mind, that sometimes standing out means being the silent one in a loud crowd. (e.g a page title that is optimized for humans will stand out from the half-dozen SEO-optimized keyword-stuffed page titles occupying the rest of the search engine results page.)

Once you have attracted attention, **keep reassuring the visitor that they are in the right place for their needs.** Provide answers to their questions - even those they haven't asked yet.

If your merchant provides a stock product description or bland sales copy, rewrite it and enhance it to make it more persuasive. **Copywriting is an art in itself, and a very important factor in sales conversion.**

Make your content accessible, too: if the reader is confronted with a page-long paragraph, they will most likely not bother to read it. Your content should be broken up into short paragraphs and use bulleted lists to make it easy to skim. Use headlines to highlight important parts.

Copywriting is also the focus of creating desire to buy the product. Present an irresistible offer by emphasizing emotional aspects of the product or service. **Nourish the emotional self of your customer**, or engage them by appealing to their competitive or success-oriented self.

Take a look at these two articles from Copyblogger, an online copywriting blog, for ideas:

<http://www.copyblogger.com/headline-swipe-file/>

<http://www.copyblogger.com/10-sure-fire-headline-formulas-that-work/>

Wrapping Up

Always include calls to action in the places where action would naturally occur. For example, at the end of a long product review, don't make the visitor scroll back up to click through to the merchant, put a text link at the bottom of the review: "Click here to buy this product at thisfinemerchant.com now!" After reading a page-long sales copy, we can safely assume that the reader is interested in the product and maybe ready to buy, so make it easy for them to do so.

With any call to action, always be clear in what you want the visitor to do. "Click here, buy now, compare this, subscribe now" are strong calls to action and also tell the visitor what they can expect by clicking that link.

AIDA is more than just another fancy acronym. It's a great, simple rule-of-thumb to keep in the back of your mind when you are building and optimizing your site.

About the Author

Katalin Torok is an independent marketing consultant with a focus on Web 2.0. Her website and blog contains many helpful tips at: <http://mktg.idared.net>

What Merchants Want You to Know... Six Tips to Follow Before Applying to Their Program!

by Debra Rabin

<http://www.AmericanLifeDirect.com>



An affiliate applying for a merchant's program has a lot in common with a job hunter applying for a job. The more you know about the company, their products, and yourself and your skill sets, the more likely you are to land the job (or in this case, become an approved affiliate).

As an affiliate applying to a merchant there are several steps you can take to make sure that your application gets out of the gate. The more of these steps you can take, the more likely you'll gain approval.

If you've ever sat through an interview, on either side of the table you can sympathize with a merchant. The applicant doesn't know anything about the company or the job opening. The company (the merchant) wades through application after application from eager but uninformed affiliates.

Rejection is inevitable.

Here are some tips to help you get approved, and like everything else in life, it takes some hard work.

As an affiliate applying to a merchant there are several steps you can take to make sure that your application gets out of the gate. The more

of these steps you can take, the more likely you'll gain approval.

Tip #1 Research the Merchant and Their Offer

The Internet makes it easy to find out what programs are available, and the resources are right there for you to read. Check the merchant's own site – read everything they have to say about their affiliate program and the offer itself. This should always be step one.

Step two is to read up on the merchant company. Is this their main line of business? Where are they located – in the USA, or outside the country or continent? Do they have an 800 number? Are they running their own affiliate program or do they have a network relationship?

Tip #2 Understand the Merchant's Offer

The next item on your agenda is to thoroughly research the offer. What type of affiliates are they looking for? What is the best way to promote this product, search, blogs, or email? If you can't find the answer to this, email their affiliate manager and find out. What steps are you

going to have to take in order to complete the action and get paid? How hard will it be for you to accomplish this?

As a merchant I've seen misspellings and even worse – typos on email addresses and wrong phone numbers. Don't let those errors sink your application!

Tip #3 Develop a Promotion Strategy

If you've done your homework on the merchant, you should know what their offer is, what type of promotion works best, and what action is necessary to get paid.

Now, how does this match up with your abilities? If you are seeking a search program, find a merchant that wants you to be successful with search, gives you approved terms and maybe even more help to make you successful with their offer.

Tip #5 Read the application – Don't Fill It Out (Yet)!

That's right – first read the application thoroughly and then once you can see how best to promote yourself and your skills, complete the form. Don't submit it until you've read it over and made sure there are no errors.

As a merchant I've seen misspellings and even worse – typos on email addresses and wrong phone numbers. Don't let those errors sink your application!

Tip #6 Wait One Week, Then Email the Merchant

If you haven't heard in one week, it's fair to contact the affiliate manager or marketing department and ask about the status of your application. Be polite and offer to fill in any blanks they may have about you and your ability. If you get rejected, try to learn from it. What was missing from your application or skill set that caused the rejection? Can you fix it and re-apply?

Conclusion

Each applicant needs to do his or her homework and put out their best effort to land that affiliation relationship. Just like applying for a job, that extra effort will make you the best candidate!

About the author

Debra Rabin is in charge of Business Development for Spectrum Direct Insurance Services, Inc., a life insurance sales and marketing organization and the largest seller of E-Commerce Life Insurance in the United States through its www.AmericanLifeDirect.com , www.LibertyDirect.com and www.SpectrumDirect.com websites.

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Adding New Revenue Streams

by Mark Thompson

<http://www.income-academy.com>



Once you have established a website and have spent time promoting it it is often very tempting to just leave it running without changing anything. However, in many circumstances this is a mistake. Your site has the potential to earn you an income from many varying sources. In this article we will look at a number of methods that you can employ to create a steady additional income stream.

Before adding a new stream of income to your site it is imperative that you know as much about the origin of your traffic as possible.

Know Your Traffic

Before adding a new stream of income to your site it is imperative that you know as much about the origin of your traffic as possible. Once you determine where your traffic is coming from it is much easier for you to choose a source of additional income that will fit in nicely with the requirements of all your current customers.

Determining the source of the traffic to your site is easier than you would imagine. The first tool you can use is Awstats which can be found in Cpanel. Looking at these stats should give you a good indication whether your traffic is coming from search engines or from backlinks on other sites.

It is also possible to purchase various tools which will give you far more detailed information. Many of these tools can provide you with very in-depth stats. Some even go so far as showing you the keywords which were used to search for your site. Once you have determined your source of traffic it is just a matter of choosing the right additional income stream tailored to the people browsing your site.

No matter which additional income source you choose you will need to have a good level of traffic to ensure that the income generated is worth the time and effort taken to establish the income stream. If you don't yet have good traffic I would recommend making this your priority.

Keep the Focus

You will also need to ensure that the additional income streams do not impact on the primary focus of the site. Remember the primary purpose of your site, its major income generator. Sometimes secondary income streams will become larger than the primary. If so, you may want to do some re-design. But make sure not to confuse your visitor.

Selling Text Links

Text links are actually one of the best ways of getting additional income. It won't detract from your site or distract people surfing your site. It does, however, have some prerequisites. Adding text links to your site is only viable if your site has good page rank. In this case, page rank is more important than a steady stream of traffic.

If your site has a page rank of 4 or more then this will prove to be one of the easiest ways to create an income stream. Selling text links on your site requires very little maintenance. You just need to ensure that the links are working correctly and that they are not pointing at a site you would not want to promote.

Before placing links on your site it is necessary to decide how many links you wish to place. I would recommend placing no more than 10 on your site and preferably fewer than six.

A single link will provide you with more money than several individual links however the individual links will result in higher accumulative income. A PR5 site can earn up to \$99 a month for a single link. Ten site-wide text links on the same site could earn almost \$40 per link. The fewer the links, the more money each link is worth.

Mechanics

Many novice publishers overlook the value of having a responsive and receptive email list.

To place links on your site you can choose to either register your site with a text link broker (such as <http://www.text-link-ads.com>), or you could contact clients through various forums (such as <http://sitepoint.com> or <http://www.digitalpoint.com>). You can choose to have the links on individual pages or as a site wide links with a site wide links being the most popular.

Links are usually placed for either three months, annually, or the lifetime of the site. Where people pay for a number of months in advance, it is usual to give a small discount. Of all the methods I discuss I would recommend selling links above all others. It is, by far, the easiest and takes the least amount of work.

It is not unknown for webmasters to buy high page rank sites for the sole purpose of selling links. It is quite possible to earn several hundred dollars per month from a site, once the site has a good page rank. As you can imagine, getting a network all these types of sites can be very profitable.

Email List Marketing

Make a Squeeze Page

Another method of generating additional income from your site which is often overlooked is to collect email addresses of people who visit the site. That's the purpose of a squeeze page. Having a squeeze page and an autoresponder (software that sends out email, or responds

automatically to emails received) should really be automatic for anyone who wishes to earn money online.

Never be tempted to send the same offer to all your lists. Using autoresponder companies like AWeber will allow you to create many separate lists.

Many novice publishers overlook the value of having a responsive and receptive email list. If you treat your list well and don't constantly spam them, but simply provide them with good quality information, your list will benefit you for years to come. It is often possible to earn \$20 or \$30 per member over the period of a year.

It is often not necessary to even have a large list to generate an reasonable income. A recent offer to one of my small lists of around 150 people generated a response of over 23%.

A simple drop-in email capture form and the offer of a free eBook, a regular newsletter, or a series of related tips is usually all that is required. Once you have set up an autoresponder to deal with the sign-ups, it is just a matter of offering your list regular good advice, additional tips, and the occasional sales pitch.

Many Internet users are aware of the benefits of being on an email list. Many can be on 20 or more lists at the time and so are receptive to signing up in return for some benefits. By not constantly sending offers and by giving your list useful free tools or information you can create a responsive list. Your members will want to hear from you. Try to be different and this will keep your members interested.

Pay Per Lead/Cost Per Action

Pay per lead/cost per action offers are ideal ways to make money from a list. A friend of mine had about 1,000 people on a list who liked golf. He found a cost per action program which offered three free golf balls in return for an email address and the postage costs. He informed his list of this offer and several hundred signed up for it. For each verified sign up he received \$1.50.

It is often said that the "money is in the list." However, it would be more accurate to say "the money is in your relationship with your list".

It is important that you are aware of what the interests of your list members are. It is self-defeating to send an offer for golf balls to a list that you created from a cross stitch website. Never be tempted to send the same offer to all your lists. Using autoresponder companies like AWeber will allow you to create many separate lists.

Amazon

It is often possible to use companies like Amazon.com to create another viable stream of income. By placing a series of recommended books in the sidebar or navigation pane of many sites, it is often quite easy to make several books sales a day.

I have one site on which the Amazon sales alone pay all my hosting bills each month. If you don't want to add a list of recommended books to the front of your site, you could consider

adding a full Amazon shop within the site. It is not unknown for these Amazon shops to actually earn more for the site owner than the affiliate product they are promoting.

Once again as with generating an email list it is necessary for you to know where your target audience's interests lay. Selling books on golf to a group interested in poker will be counterproductive. Some software will automatically select the adverts to place on your site. Where possible you should to monitor this closely.

Many customers will purchase several items at a time from Amazon. So, what you lose out on because of Amazons low affiliate commission, you make up by making additional sales.

PPC and Beyond

Finally, we will look at more traditional methods of monetizing a site. When people think of ways of monetizing a site they very often think of placing AdSense on the site. This often leads to overlooking a number of higher paying programs. There are many PPC (pay-per-click) programs available. A wise publisher will consider four or five of them before choosing.

Many pay-per-click programs are less restrictive and higher-paying than Google's AdSense program. Personally, where possible, I tend to avoid pay-per-click advertising on my sites. I feel they very often distract the person viewing the site from the main product I am trying to sell. As a result you might make only 10 cents from a click rather than a \$25 sale commission. But it does work well for some.

Start Today... and Test!

We have looked at a number of methods of adding additional income to your websites. There is no reason why you couldn't add two or more of these methods and test them on some of your sites. When you first add a new potential income stream, it is important for you to monitor the performance of the site for at least a week. If you find your sales dropping off, then you need to remove it and try something else.

Of course, if the new method is proving to be more popular and profitable than the original site, there is nothing stopping you from migrating your site to the new income stream. The goal, after all, is to make money!

So get out there, look at your sites, and start trying some of these income boosters today. Don't be afraid to experiment – you'll learn from every attempt you make.

About the Author

Mark Thompson spent many years working in IT consultancy in London. Following a re-evaluation of his goals and lifestyle in 2004 he sold everything he couldn't fit into the family car and moved to rural Spain where he now pursues a variety of online ventures. See: <http://www.income-academy.com>

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