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Gail Buckley & Greg Land



If Content Is King. Then The
WOW Content Club is the Kingdom
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**Tips for Starting
Your Own Affiliate Program**

Plan To Succeed Online

Take The Guess Work Out of Starting & Building a Successful Business Online!

"What is the difference between an obstacle and an opportunity? Our attitude toward it. Every opportunity has a difficulty and every difficulty has an opportunity."

J. Sidlow Baxter

Starting Your Own Affiliate Program

If you're really serious about making money and you have a great Web site and a great product or service, why not start your own affiliate program?

Is An Affiliate Program Right For You?

This said, however, not everyone is in a position to start their own affiliate program. You'll have to evaluate your business and determine if an affiliate program is going to work for you or not.

=> First of all, generally speaking, you'll need to be marketing your own products or services, and they'll have to be top quality ones that others would be interested in selling.

=> Secondly, you have to consider the profits. If your profit margin is already pretty slim, there may not be enough to go around. But if you are selling an information product or software, where your fulfillment costs are negligible, you should be able to build commission costs into your price without any problem.

The primary reason that affiliate programs are so attractive to online merchants is that by starting an affiliate program you are literally implementing an automated advertising campaign that will promote your products, services and/or web site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you allow absolutely anyone to become an affiliate it's probably the ultimate viral marketing strategy, because each new affiliate sends more traffic to your site, resulting in more affiliates who send more traffic to your site, and on and on.

If it sounds too good to be true, that's because it really is. As an online merchant you really can't lose with an affiliate program. At the very least, it results in lots of free exposure for your business. But, before you get carried away, if you're thinking of starting up your own program, there are some questions you must consider.

What Type of Program Do You Want to Set Up?

Basically, there are three types of programs, depending upon how you want to compensate your affiliates. They are:

- *Pay per click programs* - You pay your resellers based on the traffic that simply clicks-through to your site.
- *Pay per lead programs* - Your affiliates are paid for each "lead" they send you. Typically, "leads" have to fill out a form either on the affiliate's site or on your site and submit it in order for their referrers to get paid.

- *Pay per sale or revenue sharing programs* - You offer your affiliates a percentage of the profits on every sale they help generate. This is the most common and popular type of program, mainly because it is a no lose or win win arrangement for both parties, but particularly for the affiliate merchant sponsor. With this type of program you are guaranteed to profit because you only pay your associates when you actually make a sale. This is also known as *performance-based affiliate marketing*.

One Tier or Two?

In single tier programs affiliates only sign on to promote your product or service. They profit from direct referral sales only.

In two tier programs, your affiliates not only profit when one of their referrals purchases your product or service, they also profit when one of their referrals signs up with your affiliate program and generates a sale or sales. They earn what's called "residual income" through no particular effort on their part. Two-tier gives your affiliates more incentive to promote your program, and you benefit by having more affiliates sign on to do the promoting.

Two tier affiliate programs usually divide commissions over two levels. For example, if you want to give your affiliates a total of 40% commission for each sale, you would offer 30% on first level sales and an extra 10% commission for second level or sub-affiliate sales.

Quality vs. Quantity

Once you've decided on an affiliate program model, you still have a very important decision to make. How many affiliates would you like to have participating in your program? Who are you going to "allow" to be an affiliate? Your first inclination might be to say, "Well heck, I want as many affiliates as possible!" But, in reality, this may not really be what's best for you and your business. Consider the following three options:

1. *Let everyone and anyone sign up to become an affiliate.*

This is the "more is better" approach. The theory is that even if each affiliate generates minimal sales, if you have thousands and thousands of them it can add up to something significant. If you're concerned with branding and have both the desire and the resources to support thousands of affiliates, this is the way to go.

2. *Let only paid "members" or customers become affiliates.*

This is sort of a middle ground. The theory behind this variation is that if a person has spent some money with your company, there's a better chance that they are serious and will be productive for you as an affiliate. Whether you require affiliates to pay some type of registration fee or you simply require that they make a purchase from you, this will weed out a lot of the curiosity-seekers.

3. *Hand-pick your affiliates, limit your program to a relatively select few.*

In this case, you pick and choose who you want to sell your products, usually a relatively small number of serious marketers who you know have the experience and wherewithal to generate sales. The reason for choosing this option is the 80/20 rule that generally applies to affiliate marketing and that is that, given the same opportunity, a small percentage of your affiliates (20%) will wind up making all or most of the sales. By hand-picking only a certain select group you can focus on giving them all the help and support they need, rather than being bogged down with hundreds of inexperienced non-producers.

Of course there is a trade off. If you go with the "more is better" approach, you are going to have more advertisers and more links, but you will also have more headaches and more problems. Many who sign up will need a lot of help in learning how to set up their links and go about the business of marketing your products, and you'll have to be prepared to give them as much help as necessary. This is going to take a big chunk of your time, and as we all know, time is money - or at least, as a sole proprietor, yours should be spent as efficiently as possible, doing those marketing tasks that ensure that your business makes money.

Here's another way to look at it. If you go with #3 and it turns out that you later want to allow for more affiliates, you can always expand your program. But it's not so easy to do it the other way around. If you build up a huge affiliate program and then decide that you want to get rid of all of the dead wood, it's a lot more complicated - and you'll likely make a lot of enemies, because many will take it personally when you revoke their affiliate status.

SIDEBAR: If you are going to go with this option, you might be interested in a nifty piece of software Neil Shearing developed called Internet Success Spider. It hunts down high performance "Super Affiliates," the ones that refer thousands of dollars in sales each and every week, so that you can try to recruit them to promote your program. It comes with an e-book called the "Irresistible Formula," which explains exactly how to craft an email to entice Super Affiliates to work with you to jumpstart sales of your product.

Affiliate Tracking Options

The next thing you must decide is how you're going to set up your program to keep track of your affiliates' performance or sales. Broadly speaking, you have two options:

- You can manage the program in-house yourself, using duplicate sites or affiliate software.
- You can use a third party affiliate network or management service to run your program for you.

Ensure the Success of Your Program

Once you've made the above three crucial decisions, you need to focus on factors that will make your program stand out from the crowd of its competitors. Make no mistake about it, in order to be successful you must promote your affiliate program just like you would any other product or service. As you know your product the best, you should provide your affiliates with compelling text links, banners, sample ads and articles and anything else you can think of that would help them sell your product or program.

One way to keep your affiliates motivated is to set up an opt-in list to enable them to subscribe and receive new promotional materials, strategies and advice. This will not only assist them in making more sales, it will enable you to keep in touch and introduce them to any new products you might have.

As affiliate expert Neil Durrant sagely points out: "the long-term success of your Affiliate Program depends on the ongoing support and loyalty of key partners. Plan your program with your affiliates in mind. Step into your 'Affiliate's shoes' and really discover what an affiliate wants from you."

Your 'Affiliate Wish list' will certainly include the following:

- Generous commissions
- Fair 'return-days' (crediting sales for visitors who return via your direct URL at a later date)

- A merchant site or landing page designed to actually sell
- Quality products/service backed by a reliable service
- A fair Affiliate Agreement
- Accurate 24/7 real-time statistic reporting
- Effective and tested linking methods
- Wide selection of banners/product links to suit various site designs and available space
- Prompt and efficient Affiliate support
- Commission that is paid regularly and on time
- Low minimum payment quotas

In his latest book, [The Practical Guide to Creating and Managing a Profitable Affiliate Program](#), Neil examines each of these factors to help you focus on the details that come together to create a great program for both you and your affiliates. This guide is jam-packed with important and useful information, tips and insights into running a successful affiliate program (and Neil should know as he has run one for several years over at [Affiliate Announce](#))

SIDEBAR: Once you've got your program up and running, I highly recommend using Neil's [Affiliate Announce](#) Affiliate Program Listing Service. For a small fee your affiliate program can be announced to all the major affiliate directories on the "Net. This is an excellent, time-saving way to get the word out and drum up affiliate recruits.

Affiliate Program Management Solutions

Managing Your Program In-House

If you opt to manage your affiliate program yourself, you can do so in one of two ways:

Setting Up Duplicate or Mirror Sites

Basically, each associate gets their own unique Website. This is the least expensive but most time consuming way to go about setting up your program. For each affiliate that signs up, you create a separate but identical site to yours, assigning each site a different tracking number. If I was doing it for this site, I might assign my first affiliate the URL <http://www.websuccessmaker.com/af1.html> . My next sign up would get the URL <http://www.websuccessmaker.com/af2.html> and so on, with each associate's tracking number hard coded into the html, so that when I received an order a hidden code in the order form would print out the identity of the affiliate.

Mirror sites are great for affiliates because they are assured of getting credit for customer sales made on repeat visits, but if you are running the program it puts the burden of tracking and crediting sales and compensating affiliates squarely on your shoulders. If you aren't planning on having many affiliates or selling many different products, or you simply want to keep a tight rein over your program, this may be the way to go.

On the plus side it's pretty cheap, if you discount the time involved in setting up each page and assuming you have a pretty solid knowledge of html. On the minus side, if you make any changes to your Website or add any new products or graphics, you will have to spend time updating every associate Web page as well. And you won't be able to offer your associates "real time" statistics. They won't be able to find out how much they've earned or get their sales statistics in order to track their advertising until you manually calculate it at the end of each month.

This inability to provide "real time" reporting is a serious drawback that will become even more of a handicap as the competition for affiliates heats up in the years ahead. Many webmasters nowadays have found a way around the real time tracking problem by providing duplicate sites that are actually dynamically created CGI pages. This may sound pretty complicated - and it is, but the good news is that there are several services and software tools available to you nowadays that make duplicating your website a breeze. Two excellent options are:

- [BECANADA Replication Systems and Services](#)
- [Webscape Worldwide Simple Replicator](#)

If you're going to go with software, however, you might want to consider purchasing a tool that will run your entire affiliate program for you.

Using Affiliate Tracking Software

Using affiliate software sidesteps most of the drawbacks of duplicate websites. You keep your affiliates happy by providing all the "real time" information they need, when they need it. You can grow your program as large as you want and sell as many products as you want. And you can offer many benefits and incentives that you'd be hard-pressed to offer with other tracking methods, like paying residual commissions. Best of all, you retain complete control over your program and keep all the profits, while the software does all the work.

Some of the many benefits affiliate software provides include:

- Signing on and setting up affiliate prospects.
- Accurate tracking of all affiliate activity.
- Working with shopping carts.
- 100% reliability in tracking all orders, whether online or off.
- Ability to track visitors who come back at a later date and assign appropriate affiliate credit.

In fact, the only drawback to a software solution is the initially expense. On the plus side, however, it is only a one-time expense. Once you've bought and installed the software on your site, you can operate your affiliate program forever, free and clear.

Just how much this initial outlay will be depends to a large extent on how much you want your software to do. Since this purchase will be the heart and soul of your business, it's not the time to count your pennies. You should buy the best service you can afford and look upon it as an investment in the future of your business.

Affiliate Program Management Software

Some of the best choices include:

1. [AssocTRAC Affiliate Network Software](#)
2. [My Affiliate Program Software](#)
3. [Pro-TRACK](#)
4. [Commission Cart™ Pro](#)
5. [1st Affiliate Software](#)
6. [CGI Toolbox Package](#) (Includes *Little Salesmen Affiliate Management software, MailMaster Pro, ClickGate Pro, Ultimate Ad Tracker* and more...)
7. [Ultimate Affiliate 2000](#) (CGI Scripts)
8. [Affiliate Zone](#) (CGI scripts)

Outsource Your Management with Affiliate Network Services

This is by far the easiest way to get an affiliate program up and running. You won't have any tracking headaches with these services because they take care of everything for you. However, you won't have full control over your program either. Here are some services that can have you set up and signing up affiliates in a matter of hours...

- [Commission Junction](#)
- [LinkShare](#)
- [ClickBank](#)
- [BeFree](#)
- [CCBill.com](#)
- [Affiliate Shop](#)
- [PluginGo - Partners in Profit](#)
- [Fusion Quest Affiliate Program](#)
- [QuinStreet](#)

All of these sites host multiple affiliate programs. They handle all the details of your affiliate operation as far as signing up your affiliates, supplying their advertising codes, tracking their sales, and paying their commissions. In exchange for all this, you are charged a one time set up fee and must agree to a deduction of a percentage of the profits from each affiliate sale. (Some of these programs don't charge a set up fee but take a bigger cut of your profits. Others charge a hefty up front set up fee and then take a smaller monthly cut. Either way, you can bet they are going to get theirs.)

SIDEBAR: If you are going to go the network route, you're best off going with the more popular networks like [Commission Junction](#), [LinkShare](#) and [BeFree](#), because they attract more visitors and more visitors mean more chances that your program will be selected. If you are selling digitally deliverable products and are in the market for a merchant account or e-commerce credit card processing solution, as well as an affiliate program manager, I'd go with either [ClickBank](#) or [CCBill.com](#), as with these services you can kill two birds with one stone.

These networks do an excellent job and, if you're just starting out and don't have a big operation, they may be the way to go. Bear in mind, however, that if you start this way and grow, their share of the profits grows too. And, to a certain extent, you may be bound to sticking with them because they hold the reins to your program. Also, these networks can change the terms and rates they charge for running your program at will, as evidenced by Commission Junction's recent rate adjustments.

Related Resources You Can Use

The first and most important thing you need to acquire in order to succeed in any business is... knowledge. If you are really serious about succeeding in a business... if you want to avoid the common traps and mistakes... **it is absolutely necessary that you acquire the right knowledge.**

You have started your journey in the right direction with this report but, as every wise man knows, the pursuit of knowledge is not finite. If you're going to be conducting any type of business online, any investment that adds to your store of knowledge on the subject is a wise one. Below I've listed some additional resources on this subject you might want to look into.

The most successful entrepreneurs, who report the best results, tell us they got even greater performance from their marketing efforts by combining the tips that they got from us with the cutting edge tools and more in depth information on this specific topic provided by many of the Internet's most experienced and established marketers in the resources listed below.

And because I want that for you also, I'm delighted to let you know about them, so you also can try them out - absolutely risk free! I want to give you every chance at the best outcome from your online marketing. That is why I'm inviting you to at least take a look at them. If they make a difference, keep them. If they don't, just send them back for a full, no-questions-asked refund.

At the very least I would like you to accept **our free gift** of our **Affiliate Program Solution? Portfolio**.

Click the link below to download this mighty pdf publication right now for FREE!



[The Affiliate Program Solution](#)

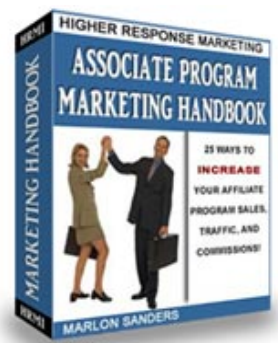
Actually, this is just one of 12 completely customizable, lead and income generating, professionally created, **PDF Perpetual Profit Portfolios**, all of which are jam-packed with solid, usable valuable information that you can lay your hands at our <http://www.websuccessmastery.com> site. If you're looking for a way to make multi-stream earning effortless, to make all the money you want *without selling a thing*, why not pay us a visit when you finish up here. I guarantee you won't regret it!

Now on to those resources...

[The Associate Program Marketing Handbook](#) by Marlon Sanders

At last there is a training manual that shows you step-by-step how to get traffic and make sales. It's unlike any you've ever seen before at any price. *Associate Program's* Ralph Wilson has this to say about it: "This is cutting-edge, right-up-to -date stuff that works." And he should know!

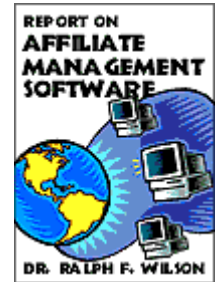
The book is the result of an extensive survey Marlon conducted of resellers and associates. The main complaint was the lack of tools and methods for getting traffic and making sales. You can't make sales if you don't have any traffic. So, Marlon decided to come to the rescue with [The Associate Program Marketing Handbook](#). It gives you 23 ways to get traffic, make sales and promote an affiliate or associate program.



[Report of Affiliate Management Software](#) by Ralph F. Wilson

If you're considering developing an affiliate program, then you know the wide variety of choices available in Affiliate Management Software and third party service providers. How do decide what is best for your company? Author, e-commerce expert Ralph Wilson, spent some time researching this for his paid newsletter subscribers. In addition to studying the online information (often incomplete and hyped), he talked to many of the software and service provider companies to learn about their products. But even more important, more than 90 individuals whose companies manage an affiliate program gave him candid user feedback as well as their own ratings.

You'll find this [108-page Report](#) an eye-opener - candid information you'd never find out any other way than talking to actual users. If you are considering starting an affiliate program, this Report is worth its weight in gold. It will save you from costly errors, and give you confidence in the correctness of your final decision.



[Super AffiliateFinder](#) by Roy Oron

Would you like to know how to find hundreds of super affiliates that want to promote your program, products or services? How about finding out your competitors Affiliates and recruit them to your program? Professional Internet Marketers use this genius breakthrough technology to EXPLODE their sales and now you can use it too. With just one click you will be able to:

- Get all the traffic in the world for FREE.
- Recruit the super affiliates in your industry - It is so simple you wouldn't believe.
- Spy on your competitors and find THEIR super affiliates - this is a 10 minutes Process.
- Get targeted traffic.
- Boost your Sales conversions.
- Explode your online sales.

The [Affiliate Finder](#) includes two breakthrough software tools and an ebook that will show you how simple it is to recruit the super affiliates in your industry. The process is very, very easy to replicate and most importantly extremely profitable.



[Internet Success Spider](#) by Neil Shearing

This nifty piece of software hunts down high performance "Super Affiliates," the ones that refer thousands of dollars in sales each and every week, so that you can try to recruit them to promote your program. You just enter a website! Then the software...

- queries the search engines and finds out which sites link to the site you entered (the affiliates)
- queries the search engines AGAIN and finds out how many sites link to each *affiliate site*
- returns the results in order, from most links to fewest.

The ones with the most links are the SUPER Affiliates of the website you entered! The next step is to visit the site of the SUPER Affiliate, check it out and see if you think they would be a good match for your product. If there's a match between their site and your product, then you write them an email... but not just any email, one crafted precisely according to Neil's "*Irresistible Formula*," the bonus report that comes with your purchase of [Internet Success Spider](#) that explains exactly how to entice Super Affiliates to work with you to jumpstart the sales of your product.



[AssocTRAC Affiliate Network Software](#)

[AssocTRAC](#) (Associates Tracking Resellers and Customers) Affiliate Network Software comes from the Internet Marketing Center (Corey Rudl). Automate your reseller program, payouts and tracking completely, in one easy to use system. [AssocTrac](#) features real time tracking stats, tracks both visitors and sales for each associate and includes an easy sign-up process that instantly creates associate accounts, so they can be up and running in a matter of minutes.

The easiest and most complete affiliate tracking software system that Internet Business Resources has come across. A true turnkey solution for running a successful reseller or affiliate program on the Internet. (Installation on your server is included.)



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