



Email Marketing: Grow Your Business With Affiliate Marketing

What is Affiliate Marketing?

Affiliate Marketing is a revenue sharing venture between two businesses. Business one (your business) pays business 2 (your affiliates) for sending new customers to your site. An example is having your affiliate host your ad on their website. When potential customers find your business through the affiliate site, you pay the affiliate money. The affiliate benefits by being paid to host your ad, and your business benefits by acquiring potential new customers. It is often one of the more cost effective channels since you only pay when a successful transaction happens.

Affiliate programs are ideal for businesses that are trying to get new customers. In as little as six months to a year, you can have hundreds of affiliates marketing your products or services, often at a lower customer acquisition cost than other channels of online advertising.

Affiliate Networks

If this is your first affiliate program, you may want to consider working with an affiliate network. Affiliate networks connect advertisers and publishers who can drive traffic to your website. Additionally they provide tracking, reporting and handle all affiliate payments.

With new programs, affiliates often feel more comfortable working through networks. There tends to be more confidence in tracking methods, as well as faith they will be paid in a timely manner. A downside to joining a network is the upfront costs, which vary from \$575 to \$6000. We have listed an overview of some popular affiliate networks.

- **[Commission Junction](#)** – A premium priced affiliate network. Since 1998 they attract a majority of the larger brands and have many high quality B2C and B2B affiliates.

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- [ShareASale](#) – Another great network known for industry friendly policies and a value conscious cost of entry. With a free datafeed, they are great for retailers of all sizes.
- [Buy.at](#) – A great option if you are looking to take your program global and appreciate great service.
- [LinkShare](#) – Founded in 1996, LinkShare is another well-known network with a wide reach.

Managing Your Affiliate Program

Successful programs require a serious commitment. Managing your program includes many ongoing tasks such as recruiting, launching new promotions, managing creative, reviewing applicants, newsletters and much more. With so many tasks to handle, you want to consider how you will manage your program. There are several options:

- **In-House Management** – Run it yourself or have another staff member handle it. Either way, be sure to dedicate adequate time to nurture the program in order to deliver the growth you are looking for.
- **Network Management** – All of the major affiliate networks offer the option of managing the program for you. Although costly, your program may benefit working with a team that can easily make the connection with the best affiliates for your program.
- **Outsourced Program Management** – You could opt to work with an outsourced program manager (OPM), which offers you not only industry experience but often costs less than network management.

Promoting Your Affiliate Program

Once your program is set up and ready to go, the most important task is affiliate recruiting. Recruiting quality affiliates to your program is an ongoing task that should never end. You want to be sure that affiliates and fans of your brand are aware that your program is alive and welcome them.

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There are many ways you can promote your affiliate program. Here are some simple and low cost methods you can do immediately and get the response you are looking for.

- **Website** – Create a webpage on your site for the affiliate program with basic information, as well as links to the signup page. Be sure to list this page in your footer links and your sitemap.
- **Company Newsletters** –Send an email solo announcing your new affiliate program to your email list or mention it in a section of every newsletter you send out.
- **Blog** – Announce the program on your blog.
- **Social Sites** – Share the news on your favorite social sites like Facebook or Twitter.
- **Affiliate Forums** – Create a program announcement on [A Best Web](#).

Affiliate Newsletters

Once your affiliates are on board, you want to stay in touch with them. That way they are always up-to-date with the latest products or services and news about your brand. You can also run contests and offer special bonuses during a given month. Sharing the latest details with them is motivating and also gives them the tools to help sell your product or service. Here are some popular items to include in your affiliate newsletter:

- Latest affiliate links
- New products or services
- Ideas on how to market your products/services
- Recent company news or updates
- Links to tutorials or videos
- Contests, new bonuses, activation incentives

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- Recent affiliate successes
- Marketing tools and resources
- Complete contact information of the program manager

You're On Your Way!

Although having an affiliate program is a great way to grow your business, it is important to note that this is a marathon and not a sprint. Affiliate programs take time to grow, but are worth it in the long run. Managing a program can be time consuming, as you want to attract only quality affiliates that engage in fair and honest marketing practices. Fraud can run high in this industry so you want to dedicate the time to ensure applicants fit your program requirements, and monitor their activity.

There is much more to learn about running an affiliate program other than what's listed in this guide. However, this is a great starting point for businesses looking to benefit from the increased traffic and sales that affiliate marketing can deliver.

Affiliate Program Resources

Check out the [VR Affiliate Program](#) for a program example and to learn more.

Here are some additional resources for you:

- **Ad Tax** – Also known as the [Internet Retail Tax](#)
- **Affiliate Fairplay** – Resources for fair practices in the affiliate industry. Stay updated on the latest info at [AFP](#)
- **Affiliate Summit** – Twice a year conference for all players in the affiliate marketing industry. [Learn more](#)
- **AffStat** – Read the [2010 Affiliate Benchmark report](#) by AffStat
- **Blogs** – [AM Navigator](#), [5StarAffiliatePrograms](#), [Missy Ward](#), [AffiliateTip](#)

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Grow Your Business With Affiliate Marketing

- **Books** – [A Practical Guide to Affiliate Marketing](#), [Affiliate Marketing on the Web](#)
- **Feed Front** – The official magazine for Affiliate Summit. [Read the latest issue here](#)
- **Performance Marketing Association** – The [PMA](#) is a not-for-profit trade association for performance based marketing professionals

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