

The Top 13 Questions Affiliates Ask

Expert Q&A – A Baker's Dozen of Frequent Affiliate Questions



Ask Us Anything Affiliate!



Mike Allen

@mta1



Jeannine Crooks

@Jeannine_Crooks



John LoBrutto

@JPL65



The Questions (& Time for Yours)

1. How do I make money with affiliate marketing?
2. How do I choose the right merchant?
3. In-house vs. Network programs?
4. Should I just work with Amazon?
5. When can I apply to an affiliate program?
6. Is it important to provide added value for the customer or just lots of traffic for the merchant?
7. Should I put text links or banner ads on my site (or both)?
8. How do I find the right traffic for my affiliate links? How do I find the right affiliate links for my traffic?
9. How can I get credit for sales when I can't post an affiliate link, such as on social media?
10. How much do I really get paid? Why is conversion rate important and how do we improve it?
11. Should I use Google Analytics to track my results?
12. What is cross device tracking?
13. When should I contact a merchant to ask for a rate increase?

1. How do I make money with affiliate marketing?

Definition – Someone clicks through your link to the merchant and completes an action for which you are paid a commission.

- **Action Types**
 - CPS/Rev Share – Cost per sale. Paid a portion of sale amount
 - CPL – Cost per lead. Usually paid a fixed amount
 - CPI – Cost per install. Paid when an app is successfully installed.
- **Promotional Methods**
 - Content – blogs/websites offering information on product/merchant.
 - Social Media – links to merchants from Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest.
 - PPC – Pay per click, ads purchased by affiliate, direct to merchant.
 - Display – banner ads purchased by affiliate, direct to merchant.

2. How do I choose the right merchant?

- Product Selection – good options, good prices, in stock, promotions
- Well designed site – would you buy from them?
- Good program terms – commission rate, cookie length, T&Cs
- Strong conversion rate, EPC, approval rate, prompt payment
- Good affiliate support – responsive program manager
- Deeplinking available – link to a specific product for better sales
- Datafeed – set up a store on your site
- Competitors – what merchants do your competitors use?
- Favorite network – recommendations from network, interface preference.

3. In-house vs. Network programs?

In-House:

- The Advertiser owns the relationship
- Direct 1x1 relationship with partners
- More flexible with terms, commissions and platform
- Limited to internal or 3rd party provider development
- Exclusive community by invitation or referral

Network:

- The Network owns the relationship
- Access to larger Market Place
- Better program scalability
- Access to new markets and different partner types
- Limited to Network application process and payment platform terms

4. Should I just work with Amazon?

Absolutely not... Why limit yourself? More than double your chance for earnings!

- Some Amazon negatives:
 - Generally just a 1-day cookie
 - Tiered and often very low commission rates
 - Sometimes there are earning caps
- Suggested strategy:
 - Offer choice to your readers
 - Show options (and boost your credibility) – and set more cookies!
- Suggested tools:
 - Datafeedr API via WordPress (using WooCommerce)
 - Skimlinks or VigLink & services like Fresh Press Media (FMTC)

5. When can I apply to an affiliate program?

Early but not too early

- Ideally when you have compelling content, readers/shoppers
- Tips:
 - Put effort into your affiliate network publisher profile
 - Make sure your site works (and has a strong "about us" page)
 - Be transparent – who you are, how you'll promote
 - When applicable, explain why the fit is valuable (don't oversell)
 - Consider using LinkedIn
 - Personally reach out

6. Is it important to provide added value or just lots of traffic?

Depends on Publisher's business model

- **Traffic**
 - Does the traffic convert?
 - Is the traffic quality a match to the campaign?
 - SEM traffic sources expensive, but with proper ROI can create volume sales
 - SEO traffic determined by content and relevance to search engine logic
 - Social Media traffic sometimes low quality and low conversion, but useful
- **Content**
 - Adds value to the user experience and sets the table for the advertiser
 - Creates SEO relevance and improves organic search results
 - Very useful with an industry vertical focus, generates interest in community
 - Provides the user with a unique benefit and creates loyalty

7. Should I put text links or banner ads on my site (or both)?

Yes!....but only when they make sense to do so

- **Test....and make sure they look good and add real value to reader**
- **Tips:**
 - Don't become a "banner farm" or a "link exchange"
 - Write for readers (not Google)
 - Add links conversationally within your content when possible
- **Tools:**
 - Use Skimlinks/VigLink for testing
 - Tip – Using WordPress? Try the PrettyLinks plugin

8. How do I find the right traffic and affiliate links?

- **Quality of traffic key to successful Advertiser-Publisher success**
 - Identify the key demographic for each product or service
 - Develop unique ways to attract this demographic
 - Provide incentive for user to follow your recommendations
 - Work with multiple advertisers to increase overall conversion
- **Match traffic demographic to proper affiliate links**
 - Work with Advertiser for the best link and landing page option
 - Use different links for each product or service, highlight promos
 - Optimize with the Advertiser and test new offers and Landing Pages
 - Test new products or offers, keep the content current

9. How can I get credit for sales when I can't post an affiliate link?

- **Use click-less coupon tracking when possible**
 - Pepperjam, Impact Radius, Awin & ShareASale offer private coupons
 - Ask for an "exclusive" or "private" coupon code
 - Great for podcasts, YouTube, social media, print, t-shirts, more
- **Other strategies:**
 - Try URL shortening to embed affiliate links (Bit.ly and others)
 - Direct to your site or landing page first (can use PrettyLinks for this)
 - Focus on your branding and reputation
 - You won't win them all the first time so think long-term

10. How much do I really get paid? What is the conversion rate?

Example A: High Volume (Optimized)

Impressions	25,000	Results
CTR - Click Through Rate	4%	1000
CR - Conversion Rate	3%	30
CX - Cancellation Rate	10%	-3
CPA - Cost Per Action	\$200	27 x 200
Publisher Revenue		\$5,400

Example B: Low Volume

Impressions	25,000	Results
CTR - Click Through Rate	4%	1000
CR - Conversion Rate	1%	10
CX - Cancellation Rate	20%	-2
CPA - Cost Per Action	\$200	8 x 200
Publisher Revenue		\$1,600

Performance dramatically effects Publisher's Revenue

11. Should I use Google Analytics to track my results?

- In a single word – NO!
- Google Analytics designed to track site activity
 - How visitors arrived, their path and time on site, exit point
- Different criteria than merchant/network –
 - Numbers will rarely match what the network records.
 - Network/In-House program has final decision of sales amount.
 - Doesn't track returns, cancellations, declined credit cards.
- Use Google Analytics to:
 - Identify top performing keywords
 - Best/worst converting pages

12. What is cross device tracking?

- Follows a user's purchase journey across multiple devices through completion.
 - Traditional tracking – cookie drops on first device only
 - Cross Device Tracking – cookie drops on first device, then user is tracked through other devices until purchase is completed
- Consumer habits changing, especially through growth of mobile, but use of desktops remains strong
- Affiliates do nothing; networks do all the tracking.
- Content sites benefit the most.
- In 2016, Awin tracked 630,422 transactions involving more than one device.
- \$63,962,577 in revenue > \$2,648,571 in commission

13. When should I ask for a rate increase?

- When you have a solid track record
- If you create a compelling reason
- For a win-win joint venture
- After you've established a relationship with the Advertiser
- When sharing with the Advertiser the competitive landscape
- When more commission can be turned into more sales volumes
- If the reversal rate (cancellation/ fraud) is low
- If you are seeing more higher value orders and only paid a flat fee
- If there is an opportunity for an exclusive or premium placement

Your Turn...

Q&A

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Mike Allen

@mta1

mike@businesswright.com



Jeannine Crooks

@Jeannine_Crooks

jeannine.crooks@awin.com



John LoBrutto

@JPL65

jlobrutto@liquidweb.com

