

What is Affiliate Marketing?

For starters, affiliate marketing is certainly something that I'm a huge fan of. In fact, I'd go as far to say that if it hadn't been for affiliate marketing, I probably wouldn't have gotten my start on the Internet - I'd be stuck in my job working seventy hours a week doing something I wasn't passionate about.

On that basis, I'm obviously a huge fan of this business approach. But truly, the reason I can fully endorse affiliate marketing is because I've been able to prove time and time again, that it's the fastest way for individuals without any experience, or even any existing business knowledge, to get started in becoming self-sufficient, and have the ability to write their own paycheck from home. As long as you've got a laptop and an Internet connection, you can get going. The beauty of affiliate marketing is that it doesn't require huge start-up capital like most businesses.

My first business venture which was a franchise cost me twelve thousand pounds to get started; it was all borrowed money. It cost me about twenty thousand US dollars and it took a lot more capital and a lot more time to get going. With affiliate marketing, you can quite literally get started the same day that you find it, in theory. That's not to say there isn't a bit of a learning curve, but you can get started very quickly - and you can potentially begin seeing results and generating revenue faster than almost any other business model that exists.

To explain exactly what affiliate marketing is, let's start with an example. Take the offline world - if you think of it, every single day you walk into shops or retail outlets, there are products available for you to purchase. When you buy those products you obviously pay the vendor/shop owner. They get paid for the products, you get to take the products away with you, and that's how we see traditional business done every day. In the Internet world, most of the business owners with products and services, including the likes of marketplaces like Amazon, actually rely on affiliates to get customers through the virtual door.

Say you found a new shop in your local town and tell your brother, sister, friend, or neighbor, that this new shop has just opened and they have some fabulous products in there. Then, the following day, they go to purchase these goods and services and the shop owner gets a lovely referral from you, but you don't see anything in return for that referral. Well, with affiliate marketing on the Internet, you have the opportunity to make referrals and get paid for every single referral that you make through the system or business model called *affiliate marketing*.

Another example in the offline world, just to make it really clear, is if you were to go to a lovely restaurant and tell all your friends and family about the fabulous meal you've had, so that the following day they go and eat at that same restaurant. Again, they'll probably thank you for the referral but they're not going to be putting any money in your pocket.

It's the same online - we're all constantly making recommendations for products or services, whether it's things like information products that can be downloaded and accessed immediately, or physical products in the Amazon marketplace. As an affiliate though, any referral you make that leads to somebody completing a purchase earns you a commission, a check in the post, or a bank deposit every time you make a successful referral.

So, in reality, affiliate marketing isn't about referring friends and family at all. It's about finding customers or potential customers who are looking for a particular product and service, then playing that middle man and making that referral. People are doing it for marketplaces like Amazon every day.

You could think of any product on Amazon that you may have purchased recently, and I can tell you that there's a very good chance that when you clicked the link or did a Google search that it was actually an affiliate that made the referral. Affiliates have come to learn how to do online marketing and are matching compatible people to specific types of products.

One of the greatest things about this business model is that you can have the potential to build a business around your passions by finding and selling product or services that you're passionate about. Chances are there are people who have already created products around that niche or market, so you get to sign up as an affiliate, work on your business, make referrals and potentially start getting paid for that work.

The obvious question is, "Why aren't more people doing affiliate marketing?". Chances are, if you take a look around at your friends and family, probably not many of them are affiliate marketers. Most of them probably have traditional jobs, working in shops or in services, maybe even doctors, lawyers, dentists. Well, I think the answer is that affiliate marketing is still very new, even though the Internet has been around for over 20 years and is something that people use every day.

A clear understanding of the different ways of making money on the Internet is still very limited. It's not until you make a decision to become educated in this area that you're



ever going to really see these opportunities around you. Most of my friends, because of the industry that I'm in, make their money on the Internet, and the vast majority of them make the bulk of their income through this affiliate marketing business model we're talking about.

Like I said, it was affiliate marketing that enabled me to get my start at real success. Are you: somebody who likes the idea of making money online but you don't know where to get started, and don't have your own products to sell, but you like the freedom that's offered with an Internet business, maybe you want a second income around your current job, maybe you want to be in a situation like I was and become full-time on the Internet? Then in most instances, if I'm sitting down having a one-on-one conversation, my advice would be to "Become an affiliate marketer." You can start it right away, and learn how to make referrals on the Internet. It's definitely not as hard as it might sound once you get the education, and the amount of money you can make is almost unlimited if you work for it. People are scaling up their incomes almost every single month once they grasp the basics. So yes, affiliate marketing is definitely something you'll want to consider.