

use affiliate marketing to  
**Make Money**  
with your blog



by  
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# What is affiliate marketing?

Affiliate marketing is a method of online marketing where websites sign up to sell a merchant's products or services for a commission.

The affiliate may be compensated based on clicks, leads or sales. Affiliate rewards may take the form of merchandise credits but typically are for cash.

Amazon.com really started the affiliate ball rolling. In July 1996, it launched its "associates" program and now counts over 450,000 sites in its network. Today there are hundreds of affiliate programs.



- **Step 1** – A customer performs a search for information about a product or service and links to the affiliate's website from a search results page.
- **Step 2** – Within the content of the affiliate's website, the visitor clicks a link that goes to the merchant site.
- **Step 3** – When the customer buys the merchant's product or service, or provides lead information, the merchant pays the affiliate a commission.

# What are the benefits of affiliate marketing?

There are a number of benefits to being an affiliate:

- ▶ **Almost zero overhead** – You don't have to stock merchandise or worry about fulfillment; the merchant take care of that
- ▶ **No need to handle credit card transactions** – Again this is the responsibility of the merchant; you simply provide the referral
- ▶ **Multiple ways to get paid** – There are a number of payment plans available to affiliates and in some cases you can receive payments for the life of the customer's relationship with the merchant
- ▶ **Easy to use** - Affiliate relationships are usually easy to enter and exit
- ▶ **Low maintenance** – Compared to a “bricks and mortar” businesses, or even other online businesses, affiliate marketing requires a modest time investment once it is set up and optimized
- ▶ **Full time or part time** – With the money making potential of affiliate marketing, you can do it as a career, or part time to earn extra income.

## Does affiliate marketing really work?

The answer, to be brief, is ABSOLUTELY! Check out these success stories of individuals who have created considerable income from affiliate marketing:

- ▶ **Jannis Garza** – Jannis runs a blog focused on products for cats. With the commissions generated by her affiliate links she has been able to quit her job and focus on her blog full time.  
<http://www.sparklecat.com/>
- ▶ **Robert Marcus** – Robert developed a niche focused on music that was paced especially well for joggers. Today he earns extra income from a market need he identified while jogging himself.  
[http://www.linkshare.com/affiliates/mystory\\_robertmarcus.shtml](http://www.linkshare.com/affiliates/mystory_robertmarcus.shtml)
- ▶ **Pedro Sostre** – Pedro was a web marketing consultant who created a group of affiliate sites focused on travel, cosmetics, audio books, book clubs, and financial services. His success has allowed him to work full time on his affiliate marketing business.  
[http://www.cj.com/downloads/casestudy/pedrosostre\\_cs.pdf](http://www.cj.com/downloads/casestudy/pedrosostre_cs.pdf)



Sparkle's blog has earned enough \$\$ (**think 6 figures**) that he has been able to hire Jannis Garza, her human, as a full time assistant.



Sparkle the Designer Cat is a highly successful cat blog.. According to Sparkle, "I'm a purebred Somali cat. This is my site or check out my advice column (cats only!). You can also find out about Somali cats, and read lots of info about cats in general. I even have my own Official Merchandise!"

# How does affiliate marketing work?

Here are the basic steps you'll go through in building your affiliate marketing business:

- ▶ **Set your goals** – Knowing what you want to achieve is an important part of planning your affiliate marketing business. Start with modest goals and adjust them as you gain experience.
- ▶ **Find a profitable niche** – Use online tools to help you identify and quantify the potential profitability of affiliate marketing niches.
- ▶ **Find an affiliate network or program to work with** – Research the various affiliate networks / programs that carry the goods and services you are interested in promoting and select the one that offers the plan best suited for your goals.
- ▶ **Add quality content with affiliate links** – Create quality content quickly by drawing from a variety of sources.

## How does affiliate marketing work? (cont'd)

- ▶ **Build traffic to your site** – Use a variety of organic and paid search techniques to rapidly establish the traffic to your blog which will be the source of your affiliate marketing income
- ▶ **Monitor and manage your affiliate marketing business** – Track your earnings with the tools provided by affiliate networks / programs and continue to improve and optimize your blog to improve your results
- ▶ **Become a part of the affiliate marketing community** - Expand your knowledge of proven money-making strategies and techniques by reading the affiliate marketing literature, joining affiliate marketing forums and participating on affiliate marketing blogs

Each of these steps will be describe in more detail on the following pages.

## How do I find robust market niches?

One of the most exciting things about the Web for online marketers is how measurable it is. This allows you to assess the level of interest in a product or service with relative ease. This ability to quantify potential demand forms the cornerstone of your strategy for finding niches that are large enough to provide you with the income you want, without being so competitive that it will be difficult to reach your earning potential. Below are the basic steps to finding and evaluating potential niche products and services:

- ▶ Start with general keywords related to topics you are interested in
- ▶ Continually refine those into specific product or service concepts
- ▶ Find out what keywords related to concepts people are searching for
- ▶ Examine the trends for these searches
- ▶ Select moderately popular keywords related to products or services – this is your niche

# How do I find robust market niches?

## Find candidate product / service keywords

Usually, when people are searching for information, about a product or service, they start with more general search keywords and work toward more specific keyword phrases as they learn more. You can mirror that process in your own search for products and services. You can use keyword discovery tools to look at search volumes associated with general topic areas and then drill into search volumes for more specific subtopics that relate to actual products and services.

*Suggestions from the SEOBook Keyword Suggestion Tool*

WordTracker	WordTracker count	Google daily est	Yahoo! daily est	MSN daily est	Overall daily est
<a href="#">digital cameras</a>	2085	<a href="#">2,606</a>	<a href="#">749</a>	<a href="#">325</a>	3,677
<a href="#">digital camera reviews</a>	1465	<a href="#">1,831</a>	<a href="#">526</a>	<a href="#">229</a>	2,584
<a href="#">digital camera</a>	1441	<a href="#">1,801</a>	<a href="#">517</a>	<a href="#">225</a>	2,541
<a href="#">digital cameras ratings</a>	454	<a href="#">568</a>	<a href="#">163</a>	<a href="#">71</a>	801
<a href="#">canon digital camera</a>	423	<a href="#">529</a>	<a href="#">152</a>	<a href="#">66</a>	746

Keyword suggestions based on the search term "digital camera"

Search volume on the major search engines

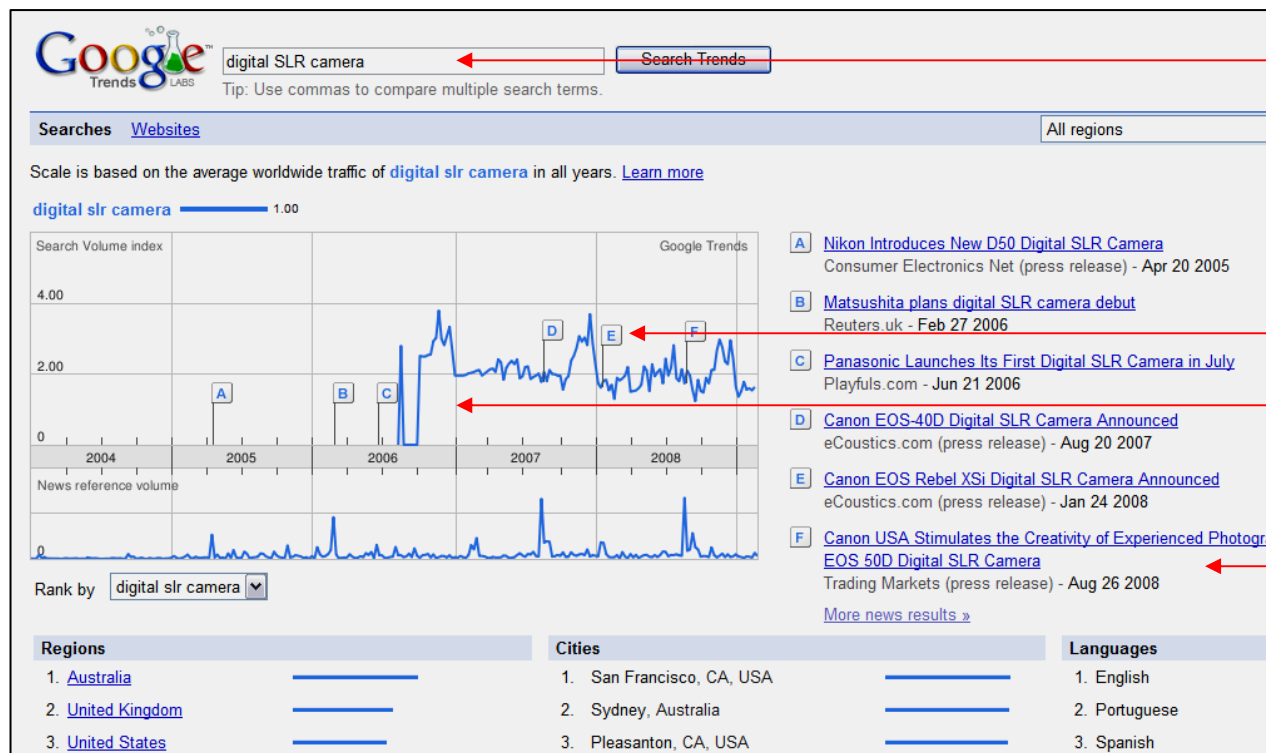
Note that the list contains product and service ideas



# How do I find robust market niches?

## Examine trends for these searches

One of the tools you can use to examine trends in keyword searches is Google Trends. It is free and it shows you how the volume of a particular keyword search is changing over time and how that volume correlates with news events.



Enter search keyword

News event markers

Graph of search volume over time

News stories associated with the search keyword

# How do I find robust market niches?

## Select moderately popular keywords

Your goal is to find a market that is viable, but one that is not so competitive that it is difficult to get the attention of prospects or for which keywords cost too much for use in ads. Translated into what sort of keywords you should be looking for, that means “moderately popular.”

Moderately popular keywords are those for which the monthly search volume is in the 75,000 – 150,000. The Google keyword tool (see example below) provides this information. (<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>)

Keywords	Advertiser Competition	Approx Search Volume: February	Approx Avg Search Volume	Match Type: Phrase
<b>Keywords related to term(s) entered - sorted by relevance</b>				
"digital cameras"		13,600,000	24,900,000	<a href="#">Add Phrase</a> ▾
"digital camera"		16,600,000	24,900,000	<a href="#">Add Phrase</a> ▾
"nikon digital camera"		74,000	74,000	<a href="#">Add Phrase</a> ▾
"canon digital camera"		165,000	165,000	<a href="#">Add Phrase</a> ▾
"digital slr camera"		1,220,000	1,500,000	<a href="#">Add Phrase</a> ▾
"digital camera batteries"		33,100	33,100	<a href="#">Add Phrase</a> ▾
"small digital camera"		8,100	8,100	<a href="#">Add Phrase</a> ▾
"cheapest digital camera"		2,400	2,400	<a href="#">Add Phrase</a> ▾
"waterproof digital camera"		90,500	90,500	<a href="#">Add Phrase</a> ▾

## Where do I find affiliate programs?

There are many companies now offering affiliate marketing programs – e.g. Amazon is one of the best known. There are basically two types of affiliate marketer:

- ▶ **Individual company** – These are companies which offer their own affiliate marketing program, tracking and payment.
- ▶ **Affiliate marketing networks** – These are networks which manage affiliate marketing programs for vendors who sign up with them. They recruit affiliate marketers, help them find products and services, track sales and manage payments.



# Site Content

## Private Label Rights Content

Private Label Rights is generally very affordable and allows the purchaser to modify the content; however, the right to modify and redistribute PLR is not always limitless. Each provider will have different rules about content use and will usually require the buyer to modify the PLR content. Possible modifications include:

- ▶ Post the PLR content in Article Directories
- ▶ Use as website content
- ▶ Break it up into blog posts
- ▶ Bundle it and sell or give away as bonuses
- ▶ Post it in ezines or e-mail autoresponders
- ▶ Use it to create an e-report or e-book with affiliate links

A list of PLR content sites is available at: <http://www.easyplr.com/bestplr.htm>

## When do I get paid?

There are 3 basic payment plans based on where in the sales process the prospect takes the desired action. These plans are:

- ▶ **Pay per sale** – You get a commission when the visitor buys a product or signs up for a service
- ▶ **Pay per lead** – You get paid when the visitor fills out a form or takes some other action which provides lead information to the merchant site
- ▶ **Pay per click** – You get paid when the visitor clicks the affiliate link to the merchant site



# What types of commission plans are there?

There are several different kinds of payment plans, but here are two that you will run into frequently.

- ▶ **Single sale** – In this plan, you get a commission for the sale of a single product or service. If the customer buys something later that is not part of your referral, you don't get a commission for that sale.
- ▶ **Recurring** – Sometimes the product or service involves a monthly fee – e.g. web hosting. In the recurring model, you receive a commission for each monthly or periodic installment.
- ▶ **Lifetime** – In the lifetime model, you get a commission on all sales to the customer you referred, whether it was specific to the product you promoted or not. This is clearly the most advantageous for the affiliate.

# Affiliate Marketing Resources

Here are some excellent online resources for affiliate marketing:

- ▶ Affiliate Networks - [www.maximizingmoney.com/affiliate-marketing/best-affiliate-marketing-networks/](http://www.maximizingmoney.com/affiliate-marketing/best-affiliate-marketing-networks/)
- ▶ Glossary of affiliate marketing terms – [www.100best-affiliate-programs.com/glossary/](http://www.100best-affiliate-programs.com/glossary/)
- ▶ Affiliate marketing forums – [http://www.abestweb.com/ /](http://www.abestweb.com/)

Two good print references are:

- ▶ Brown, Bruce, *The Complete Guide to Affiliate Marketing on the Web: How to Use and Profit from Affiliate Marketing Programs*, Atlantic Publishing Co., 2008
- ▶ Gardner, Gardner, *Make a Fortune Promoting Other People's Stuff Online*, McGraw-Hill, 2007

## Private label content sources

Here is a list of useful PLR content sites:

- ▶ Book Catcher - [www.bookcatcher.com/private-label-rights.php /](http://www.bookcatcher.com/private-label-rights.php/)
- ▶ PLR Buyer – [www.plrbuyer.com/](http://www.plrbuyer.com/)
- ▶ PLRDirectory – [plrdirectory.net/](http://plrdirectory.net/)