

FEEDFRONT

VINTAGE GARY VAYNERCHUK

Keynote Excerpts Page 7

The Sweet Science
Of Landing Pages
By Jeremy Schoemaker
Page 3

Are You a Loser or a Failure?
By Jim Kukral
Page 24

Three Effective Communication Tactics
for Affiliate Marketing
By Brian Clark
Page 28



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Table of Contents

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 03 The Sweet Science of Landing Pages
Jeremy Schoemaker | 15 Five Minutes with Kellie Stevens
Shawn Collins and Kellie Stevens | 25 Bamboo Laptops and Man Caves at CES
Shawn Collins |
| 04 Can Brand and Direct Response Marketers Coexist?
Michael Sprouse | 18 Leveraging LinkedIn to Expand Your Brand
Wade Sisson | 26 Advertiser Liability for Affiliate Spam
Anne Mitchell |
| 05 A Look at the Very Profitable Membership Site Business
Tim Kerber | 19 Tips for Taking Pictures for Your Web Site
Deborah Carney | 27 Take a Hike, Mr. Cynical Marketer
Missy Ward |
| 06 Datafeed Do's and Don'ts
Scott Jangro | 20 Coming Soon: MLM / Affiliate Marketing Convergence?
Debbi A. Ballard | 28 Three Effective Communication Tactics for Affiliate Marketing
Brian Clark |
| 07 Gary Vaynerchuk Keynote at Affiliate Summit West 2009 | 21 Five Affiliate Challenges for Long Term Success
Andrew Wee | |
| 09 Using Video to Sell Online
Ken Price | 22 Affiliate Marketing 101: Setting the Stage for Your Success
Chantelle S. White | |
| 10 Legal Issues Surrounding Sweepstakes and Games of Skill
David O. Klein | 23 Autopilot Affiliate Program Management—A Recipe for Failure
Geno Prussakov | |
| 11 Affiliate Summit West 2009 Brings the Thunder
Amy Rodriguez | 24 Are You a Loser, or a Failure?
Jim Kukral | |
| 13 How Do You Talk About Yourself?
Chris Brogan | | |



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FeedFront Editor’s Note – 5th Issue

The Art of Affiliate Marketing



Missy Ward and Shawn Collins.

Affiliates suffer for their art. But not in the way you think. We listen to the folks who preach that it is somehow impure to monetize blogs, video, Twitter, etc.

But we suffer these fools gladly.

That’s because we are doing something we love and making a career out of it.

And make no mistake, it is an art. Many people can produce quality content, but they have no marketing chops.

Just the same, there are marketers that wouldn’t know good content if it fell in their lap.

So celebrate your skill set and keep doing what you do.

Gary Vaynerchuk touched on this during his keynote speech at Affiliate Summit West 2009 this past January in Las Vegas...

“There’s a really interesting divide in the global social media Web 2.0 world, right?

You’ve got the artists. And you’ve got the entrepreneurs. And I’m completely blown away by why we can’t be both.

I don’t understand why we can’t be both. I don’t understand why we’re not allowed to make money. And you know what the funny part is?

If people don’t like the way you’re going about making money, they don’t have to buy it. They don’t have to follow you. And they can call you all the bad names in the world.

Let them knock themselves out, because, if you want to make money, then you should. And if you don’t, God bless you, don’t.”

So yeah, we’re suffering artists. And it’s a great gig.

Missy Ward & Shawn Collins
FeedFront Co-Editors-in-Chief



The Sweet Science of LANDING PAGES

By Jeremy “ShoeMoney” Schoemaker

Let’s say you’re a total newbie to the world of Internet marketing, and have heard there is “big time” money to be made in affiliate marketing. After researching different affiliate programs, you’ve decided to enter the highly lucrative (yet highly saturated) commercial ringtone industry.

You have already completed PPC training programs (I recommend Google AdWords training... and it’s free!) and now have a great list of keywords (using keyword list generators like the ones at tools.shoemoney.com).

You’ve even purchased traffic via Google, Facebook, MySpace and other advertising vehicles. Now a steady stream of users are coming directly to the landing page provided by the advertiser because that makes sense. Right?

But wait. You are losing money... and fast. This traffic is costing you a lot and not many people are biting at your offer and converting. What should you do?

Make your own landing page!
Why will your landing page out-perform the advertiser’s? Because you’re going to pre-qualify your user.

Carriers
Many ringtone offers only cater to specific carriers. Some may convert

well for Verizon, some for Sprint and others for T-Mobile. (Don’t hesitate to ask your affiliate manager which provider is working best on their network.)

Now, on your landing page you’ll ask the user who their carrier is and send them to an offer they can actually use.

Geo-targeting
You can also use your landing page to see what country the user is coming from and then send them to an offer based on their location. There are ringtone offers in over 100 countries now.

Don’t assume that just because you have selected only US traffic that this is what you’ll get. In fact, I often see a 5-10% margin of error here.

Other Ways to Monetize
What if the landing page you made doesn’t offer a user’s carrier? Or what if the user decides they don’t want to participate in the program? This is why your landing page should also include a huge Google AdSense leader board along the bottom.

By placing it at the bottom, you are not only getting some money from them (as a last ditch effort), but you are not making the ads so prominent that the user prematurely leaves your site. (Don’t forget, to make money from Google AdSense someone has

to **leave** your site.)

Putting products like Google AdSense on your page will give you back a percentage of your ad spend and you may be surprised at how much you receive.

Test It
Setting up your landing page sounds easy, huh? Almost foolproof? Well, not quite. Don’t forget to test your landing pages. I recommend using Google Website Optimizer to see which versions convert the best.

Should I use buttons or text for my links? Red or blue? These variables make a difference, and only testing will give you answers.

So with a little fine tuning, your landing pages should be ready to earn you more revenue – within hours.

Jeremy Schoemaker is President of ShoeMoney Media Group, INC.

Can Brand and Direct Response Marketers Coexist?

By Michael Sprouse

It is the classic “church and state” argument; brand advertisers in TV, print, and outdoor advertising and direct response marketers in infomercials, catalogs and direct mail. Very seldom have the two worlds collided, traditionally.

Early in online marketing, measurement, tactics and mindsets were simply ported over from the offline world. Branded advertisers would pay high CPM rates for premium inventory on premium sites (akin to a billboard in Times Square). Direct response advertisers would run and evaluate campaigns based on CPA or CPC, with less concern over whether inventory was “premium”, just that it worked (akin to direct mail).

One side was Madison Avenue-sexy; the other was not. It was supposedly “neat and tidy” since this hierarchy was what worked for decades, offline.

Beginning only recently, we have started to see an unprecedented shift. A myopic view would suggest that the impetus behind this shift is tied to the overall economy, with “fluffy” ad dollars simply being pinched more than ever.

A broader viewpoint might indicate that advertisers and agencies of all types are taking proactive steps in educating themselves and spending more effectively.

Why exactly is this shift taking place? It is that both brand-focused advertisers and direct response advertisers are moving ad money online, and that the business models ported from the offline world are changing.

For performance marketers who make their living in front of a machine, this isn’t exactly “news” – you know the power, scale, efficiency and measurability of the medium and how to leverage it.

But traditional offline marketers and brand marketers (who still hold a majority of overall ad dollars) are beginning to take a closer look at performance-based campaigns, or at least “hybrid” campaigns.

We will continue to see branding and customer acquisition lines blurred, compounded every time you read about CPM rates declining. I’ve long held the notion that the best way for brand advertisers to extend their brand was to gain more customers, make them happy, keep them, and communicate with them.

Uniquely in the online world, a consumer’s use of social media, blogs, forums, discussion groups after interacting with a brand



can be powerful – and measurable. Some large advertisers finally understand this and are surprised at the increased insight they can have into user’s interactions with their product or service.

Is Online there yet in fully satisfying all types of advertisers in peaceful coexistence? Not yet. There is more education needed across the entire advertising ecosystem, measurement techniques can be improved and the economics of the marketplace have to stabilize further.

But for the first time, I’m seeing advertisers and large brands beginning to address the medium internally, push more advertising dollars online and take steps to become more educated. The next few months will be fascinating to watch as this shift presumably becomes more apparent.

The takeaway is that there could be real opportunity for responsible performance-based marketers and affiliates as more ad dollars are funneled online.

Michael Sprouse is the Chief Marketing Officer for Epic Advertising, and is based at the company’s headquarters in New York, NY.

A Look at the Very Profitable Membership Site Business

By Tim Kerber

Running a membership site has exploded in popularity as an Internet business model. Online business owners are finally recognizing what the “early adopters” discovered years ago: membership sites can be extremely profitable, have a low startup cost, and can actually be fun to run.



The concept is easy enough. You have some information, knowledge, or passion about a topic that others are interested in, as well. You set up an exclusive community and charge whatever fee you want to allow entry. Your members benefit from having access to, not only very specific information on the topic but also, a community of others who share their interest in that topic.

As an example, RestaurantOwner.com was started by a friend of mine, Jim Laube. Jim had 20+ years in the restaurant industry and frankly was burnt out from the long hours.

He decided to leverage his experience in the industry and started a membership site. Jim provides a wealth of information for his members, such as articles, interviews, downloadable excel spreadsheets, and PDFs. Topics range from how to start a restaurant to cutting

down on employee turnover, picking a location, pricing etc. You name it and Jim will write about it.

He charges \$99 to join and then under \$20 a month to stay on as a member. Jim’s site has thousands of members. I’ll let you do the math.

They all pay him month after month to stay on.

That recurring revenue brings up a crucial point about running a membership site. You have a steady, consistent stream of income coming in, month after month.

With a normal business, regardless of how good last month was, on the first day of the new month you are basically starting from scratch with revenue. With a membership site, you know that if last month you pulled in say \$15,000 for the month that this month is going to be very close to that number. Perhaps even more with a bit of marketing.

In my work, I have a bird’s eye view of over 920 active membership sites. I know what these sites are making. Quite a few are making tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of dollars per month, and are often run by one or two people.

Some of the topics of the sites we have may come as a surprise you, including craft sites (embroidery, cross stitching), health, fitness, education, sports, dog enthusiasts, and how to get a cruise ship job.

One of the most consistently successful is the ____owner.com type sites. That is, choose a niche business and provide the tools for people in that industry. The previously mentioned restaurantowner.com is one example but that can be applied for almost any industry: hair salons, gas stations, CPA’s, handy man business, affiliate managers etc.

Everyone has knowledge or interests. Why not consider leveraging it in a very profitable way?

Tim Kerber is CEO of MemberGate Solutions and also runs MembershipSiteOwner.com

Datafeed Do's and Don'ts

By Scott Jangro



Product Datafeeds go with affiliate marketing like peas and carrots. They first entered the scene almost ten years ago when merchants and the affiliate networks began to make this information available.

Back in the "good old days", it was easy to build a gigantic website based on the products provided by one or more merchants, using their category structure that would rank very well, very quickly. Eventually search engines became effective at eliminating "Datafeed sites" from their search results. Literally overnight, high-traffic, high-earning datafeed-based affiliate websites fell off the map, closing another chapter in the long, twisted relationship between affiliate marketers and search engines.

Over the years, we've had a lot of successes and failures using product datafeeds. As such, we learned a lot about what works and doesn't work with using retail product data, and being successful comes down to a few simple rules.

Don't be tempted by "store builder" type scripts and approaches that build a big store out of merchants' data with "buy now" and "add to cart" buttons that redirect to the merchant. A sure way to get a site de-valued or outright banned from the search engines is to simply

republish product datafeeds. Search engines have become very good at identifying duplicate data. When it comes to datafeeds, if it's too easy, then it's probably not going to work. There is no (longer) a free lunch.

Do data cleanup - merchants have their own way of naming products and formatting product descriptions. Use tools that will clean up the language that merchants use consistently in their feeds. For example, a merchant may put the same sentence in the beginning of each description. Clean that up. Better yet, write your own descriptions. We never use merchant product descriptions anymore.

Do Automate - It is critical to keep product data fresh. Products change prices and go in and out of stock every day. Write automated scripts that will update product data on a daily basis. Learn some PHP and MySQL skills or hire a programmer on one of the many freelance websites to create tools that will keep your product data clean and up-to-date.

Don't make a mess - Datafeeds fall squarely into the "enough rope to hang yourself" category. So much easily accessible data allows webmasters to push out vast amounts of product information, provide bad user experiences, publish outdated information, and otherwise pollute the Interwebs. This is the right way to a smacked bottom.

Do something different and valuable - Most importantly, be creative. Mix up product information in a way that's never been done before. General price comparison Web sites are a dime a dozen. But has anybody ever created a website organizing sports jerseys by number? Get niche and do something awesome! People will use it, love it, link to it, and search engines will reward you with high quality scores and low minimum bids for paid traffic, and even with good natural rankings.

Scott Jangro is a long-time affiliate marketer and a publisher of niche retail community shopping websites. Read his blog at <http://www.jangro.com>.



Gary Vaynerchuk Keynote at AFFILIATE SUMMIT WEST 2009

The following are excerpts of the keynote address

delivered by Gary Vaynerchuk, star of Wine Library TV and
Director of Operations at Wine Library in Springfield, NJ at
Affiliate Summit West 2009 in Las Vegas, NV.

The complete transcript of the keynote address from Gary Vaynerchuk can be read at www.FeedFront.com. Audio and video of the keynote are available at www.GeekCast.fm.

"Last year, I was here, and Jason Calacanis keynoted and threw up pictures of people and made fun of them for taking pictures with checks next to themselves. I, on the other hand, started clapping because I was thrilled that people made \$100,000 by finding a keyword that converted well. I respect that. I respect this whole sector so, so much.

On the flip side, I think there is a lot of opportunity in this sector. See, the thing that I thought about when I first thought about doing this keynote was singles. I feel that there are way too many people in this sector looking to get a single when they have the talent to hit home runs.

And I think that is a fundamental missed opportunity for a lot of people in this room and this entire space, and I'd like people to start swinging a little bit more for the fences."

"If you blog or video blog, way too many people are spending too much time on their actual content. Content is important, very important, because at the end of the day, if you have the skills to get eight trillion people into a store, but you don't know how to sell to them, and you sell nothing, you have accomplished nothing. However, there is not enough emphasis put on community and marketing. I always say content is king, but marketing is the queen, and the queen runs the household."

"I have never, ever, ever taken a second shot or stopped Wine Library TV. Ever. If the phone rings, phenomenal. It changes up the fact that I pump out five shows a week, 20 minutes long. It gives the fan base something to laugh at. At least it's a little different.

You want to be as authentic as possible, and if wine spills on you or if the Jets lose or make a big trade in the middle of your taping and you have to stop and walk off camera and find out what happened and come back, then that is what you need to do. You have to make it authentic.

But here is the funny part. I spend 45 minutes to

“The funny part is that, there’s a really interesting divide in the global social media Web 2.0 world, right? You’ve got the artists. And you’ve got the entrepreneurs. And I’m completely blown away by why we can’t be both.”

an hour max on content a day, max. Sit down, tape Wine Library TV, bang it out. Maybe I’ll do a GaryVaynerchuk.com, which is where a lot of you guys know me from, batting that out. And then the rest of the time is spent on monetizing, biz devs, phone calls, jumping on people’s blogs and doing interviews, and probably eight to nine hours a day of pure interaction within Facebook and Twitter and whatever it may be.”

“If you are not searching, vanity searching as people call it, ego searching, if you are not searching your name on the blogosphere and on Twitter and on any other platform that has users every single minute, you are a fundamental clown, like ‘Boop, boop, a boop, boop,’ that kind. It is a monumental mistake.

Whether it is your name or your company, you have got to have a pulse for what people are saying about you and your company. You’ve got to. You have to know everything pros and cons, and the cons need to be addressed immediately, absolutely immediately.”

“I think what I’m passionate about is crushing it every day for making yourself happy. And I think when you talk about, and you build a business around a passion, that’s when you can really knock it out of the park.

As a matter of fact, I think the far majority of the people in this room have the ability to build their brand while they fool around with the other stuff that maybe got them here, or make some side cash, but should really sink their teeth into their fundamental passion.

The thing that they want to do for the rest of their lives, if we went through the greatest depression of all time, and nobody got paid ever again, what the f*** would you do? That’s what you want to do. Because I promise you, if you do that, and you spend as much time with your family, you’ve lived a solid life. Because guess what, we only get to play this game one time. Once.”

“The funny part is that, there’s a really interesting divide in the global social media Web 2.0 world, right? You’ve got the artists. And you’ve got the entrepreneurs. And I’m completely blown away by why we can’t be both.”

I don’t understand why we can’t be both. I don’t understand why we’re not allowed to make money. And you know what the funny part is? If people don’t like the way you’re going about making

money, they don’t have to buy it. They don’t have to follow you. And they can call you all the bad names in the world.

Let them knock themselves out. Because, if you want to make money, then you should. And if you don’t, God bless you, don’t.”

“Way too many people are frustrated, and you guys are trying to rah-rah, cheerleading style, people to understand our space, “No, you don’t understand. Twitter is good. I will show you. It is not about eating bananas. There is business to be done.”

Everybody is always, always trying to convince the mainstream of its value. Guys, don’t tell them. The longer we know and the longer they don’t know; the more straight Benjamins are going to be put in your back pocket.

I don’t want them to know anything. I am disgusted that they know. I get pissed when I see CNN’s Rick Sanchez say, “Twitter.” F***! That’s what I say.

Rick! Give me one more year, Rick! One more! As a matter of fact, this bad economy is the greatest thing that happened to us hustlers and people in the trenches. It’s the best thing!”

“This is not the Great Depression, people. Please. Please. It is not even close. The fact that we are here they did not do this in the ‘30s. Trust you. I mean, please. Do you see how much food is still being left around in the halls of this hotel? That s*** was snatched up in the ‘30s.”

“What’s changed is direct to consumer and word of mouth. All that Twitter is word of mouth on steroids. Twitter is Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens. That’s what Twitter is for word of mouth. It’s a fundamental shift. It is word of mouth on steroids, because the biggest yenta, the biggest socialite on the Upper West Side in Manhattan liked something you did, how many people could she tell? A hundred, if she was really working the scene?

Now, people can retweet your stuff and thousands and thousands of people see what you’re doing. It’s word of mouth that’s changed. That’s important to understand. It is very powerful, and is a seismic shift in the way we do business.”

The complete transcript of the keynote address from Gary Vaynerchuk can be read at www.FeedFront.com. Audio and video of the keynote are available at www.GeekCast.fm.

Using Video to Sell Online

MOST OF US KNOW THAT ONLINE VIDEO IS EXPLODING, AND WANT TO CAPITALIZE ON IT.

BUT BEFORE WE THINK ABOUT HOW, WE NEED ASK WHY. BY KEN PRICE



The only two reasons for posting video online are ego and money. Ego can be the desire for attention, to show-off, make someone laugh or capture snippets of life’s kaleidoscope. If you doubt this, one thing everyone checks after posting a video is the number of views. Views = ego.

Money is straightforward. Some create great content to monetize via advertising. Others use video to directly or indirectly sell something. This makes sense, because an online video can be like a virtual sales person. It’s an excellent way to attract, engage and inform customers.

This combination of ego and money is important to understand. If you are camera shy or uncomfortable “selling”, then video is not for you. Either that or you split the ego/ money equation wherein a partner is in front of the camera and you just handle the money.

Also, we should understand the only two reasons people watch video. As Jim Kukral, the BizWebCoach, points out, it’s the same two reasons people use the Internet: information or entertainment – and that’s it. We need to remember this as we ask the next question:

How can affiliate marketers use online video?

First, we can break up much of online video into two formats: long form and short form. This isn’t just about length of time, but about continuity of attention.

If a person is doing weekly “webisodes” with regular characters, vlogging, or hosting their own show (i.e. Gary Vaynerchuk), I would argue these are long form regardless of how many minutes each video is.

The value of long form is building audience over time and then converting that audience into revenue. This can be from ad revenue, affiliate commissions or speaking engagements in Las Vegas. All of which are viable.

Short form is more granular. It’s about three minutes or less, informs and/or entertains, and can stand on its own (no history or context is needed). This is the vast majority of YouTube videos.

If using short form to sell, there’s some corollary to traditional TV commercials, but you’ve got a little

more time and can try the “mini Internet infomercial” route.

This is great if your video is atomic down to the product level (one video = one product). You also have the advantage that the video can be surrounded and enhanced with additional information such as images and text.

Unlike TV though, the screen format is tighter, and I would argue it’s even easier to click away then change channels. This is why you’ve got to keep “inform and/or entertain” in mind!

Lastly, you can try a “hybrid” approach. In this scenario, the videos themselves are atomic and stand alone, but you build a longer continuity of attention by establishing yourself within a vertical.

Ken Price is President and Founder of ShopWatchBuy.com, an affiliate friendly video enabled marketplace.



Legal Issues Surrounding Sweepstakes and GAMES OF SKILL

By David O. Klein

The use of “game promotions” is a popular and effective way for Internet marketing companies to create buzz. Even if it is only a nominal prize being offered, game promotions are effective in making would-be customers aware of your company and persuading them to register to use your products and/or services.

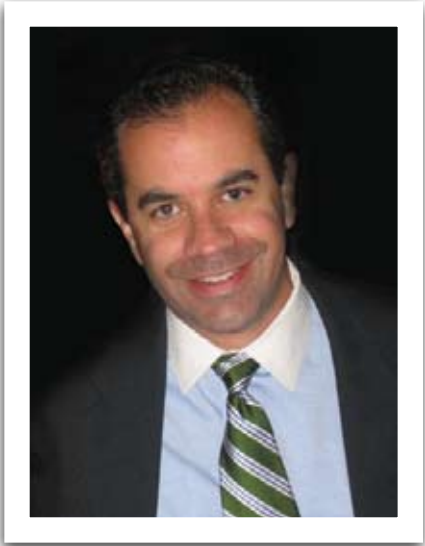
The purpose of this article is to provide a brief overview of some of the legal issues that you should be aware of prior to conducting a game promotion.

Game promotions generally fall into two categories, “games of chance” (commonly referred to as “sweepstakes”) and “games of skill.” “Games of skill” which, if structured correctly, are legal in every state, select their winners based upon the entrants’ skill.

In contrast, “games of chance” are considered illegal lotteries in every state unless one of the following three traditional elements of a lottery is removed: (1) prize; (2) chance; and (3) consideration.

For obvious reasons, the element of “consideration” is most often removed in order to run a legal sweepstakes promotion. To remove this element, an alternative means of entry that does not require the entrant to make a payment or sign up to receive goods or services, and that is accorded equal weight, must be offered.

If you are offering a non-cash prize,



applicable state game promotion regulations require that the cash equivalent of any such prize also be offered. In connection with awarding the prize(s), you must maintain a list of all contest winners and make such list readily available at no charge to all entrants.

The list of winners must also be filed with Florida and New York at the close of the contest period (and provided to Rhode Island upon request).

One of the most common mistakes made by many businesses in advertising their game promotions is the misuse of the word “free.” If the consumer is required to incur any cost whatsoever, the game promotion cannot be labeled as “free.”

Another mistake that must be avoided is sending direct or electronic mail that informs the recipient that she is a “winner” or a “guaranteed winner.”

Failure to follow these and other rules related to advertising may result in the commencement of regulatory proceedings against your company.

You must also be aware that three states – Florida, New York and Rhode Island - have specific sweepstakes registration and bonding requirements. For example, if the value of all of the prizes in your game exceeds \$5,000, Florida and New York require that your game be registered and bonded.

In Rhode Island, the prize threshold for registration is \$500, but there is no bonding requirement. To avoid having to adhere to these requirements, you can disallow residents from all or any of these three states from entering your game promotion.

Please note that this is only a brief overview of some of the legal issues surrounding game promotions. Remember to obtain guidance from a licensed legal professional prior to conducting a game promotion.

David O. Klein is a partner in the firm of Klein Zelman Rothermel LLP in New York, New York. Mr. Klein practices Promotional Law and Internet Marketing Law. He can be reached at (212) 935-6020 or via email at dklein@legal.org.

Affiliate Summit West 2009 Brings the Thunder

By Amy Rodriguez



All Photos by Brad Crooks . From top to bottom:
1. AdStation Booth 2. Speaker Rosalind Gardner 3. Stephanie Lichtenstein and Andrew Wee 4. Angel Djambazov, Shawn Collins and Missy Ward 5. Google Booth
6. Peter Shankman, Anita Campbell, Jim Kukral and Lisa Picarille Speaker Panel 7. eBay Booth 8. Affiliate Summit West 2009 Meet Market 9. Pinnacle Awards 10. Jen Goode and Jeannine Crooks 11. Affiliate Summit West 2009 Meet Market 12. Session Roundtables 13. As Seen On PC Booth 14. Bridaluxe Meet Market Table 15. Affiliate Summit West 2009 Session Audience



With more than 3,200 in attendance, Affiliate Summit West 2009 in Las Vegas goes down in the record books as a sell out and the largest show to date.

Opening up the conference on Sunday was the Affiliate Meet Market; the room was full of energy. A scaled down version of the exhibit hall (tables instead of booths), the Meet Market was the place to be for networking and continues to be a show highlight.

Concurrent breakout sessions took place on Sunday as well. Hot topics of the day included monetizing chat, automating websites, merchant mindsets, ethical issues, and expected trends.

On Monday morning, Gary Vaynerchuk spoke with vigor and intensity. His excitement and motivational keynote set the tone for the rest of show. You've got to love how he said "I think what I'm passionate about, is crushing it every day for making yourself happy. And I think when you talk about, and you build a business around a passion, that's when you can really knock it out of the park."

Gary oozed enthusiasm and it was infectious.

Days 2 and 3 also brought a full agenda of breakout sessions via panels and solo presentations. Session themes included anything social media, SEO, PPC, videos and mobile. Audiences were thrilled with the lineup of speakers and the rooms were packed with eager attendees ready to learn.

Traffic and networking in the exhibit hall were awesome on Monday and Tuesday, with attendees visiting over 100 booths. New products and tools in the industry were demonstrated and lots of business cards were exchanged.

One of the culminations of the show was the annual Affiliate Summit Pinnacle Awards, which were given to affiliate marketing leaders in six categories. Congratulations to this year's winners: Affiliate of the Year - Mike Allen, Affiliate Manager of the Year - Angel Djambazov, Exceptional Merchant - CelebrateExpress.



Brian Littleton at Triathlon

com, Affiliate Marketing Advocate - Melanie Seery, Best Blogger - Scott Jangro and Affiliate Marketing Legend - Kellie Stevens.

As the show drew to a close, everyone let loose and had some fun to raise money for the National Breast Cancer Foundation at the Affiliate Summit Triathlon. Dozens made donations to enter the 3 events: adult tricycle, virtual golf and basketball challenge.

Congratulations to the winner, Charlie Calabrese of Buy.at.

Lastly, special thanks to all of our distinguished speakers, exhibitors, general sponsors and metal sponsors: AzooglesAds, ShareASale, OneNetworkDirect and Buy.at. Your contributions helped make Affiliate Summit West 2009 a huge success.

Like folks did at this past show, instead of concentrating on the country's troubled economy and uncertain future, focus on working smarter and more efficiently. Learn ways to adapt and grow despite the nation's challenges. This will be pivotal to making it a banner year.

See you in the Big Apple, Affiliate Summit East 2009 - August 9-11, Hilton New York.

Amy Rodriguez is the Conference Director at Affiliate Summit.

How Do You Talk About Yourself?

By Chris Brogan



There's a huge difference between someone saying that you're amazing and you saying it about yourself. On the one hand, you sometimes

have to explain your credentials. For instance, if I'm asking you to think about what I'm saying, you might want to know my credentials, my qualifications, where I'm from. That's why blogs have an "About" page (or at least, that's the best way to use an about page, in my not nearly humble opinion).

But, there really is a huge difference between explaining your perspective versus outright bragging about yourself. No, you can't really cheat by restating what others have said about you. That's still basically going to come off as bragging (to me). And this works on the personal scale as well as the company scale.

Which works better? An ad about how awesome you are, or an ad about how awesome your customer is?

Keep the Conversation Focused on Your Customer

In advertising and marketing and all business communications, think about your customer. One way the iPod won the MP3 war was they came up with a way for customers to think easier about the product. It fits 1000 songs. That was way easier to understand than number of megabytes. Thus, the conversation was from the perspective of the customer.

Think of the old cheesy car salesperson. "Can you see yourself in this baby?" There's a reason they say that. It works. People think from their own perspective.

In talking about yourself, talk instead about others, if you can.

(Continued on page 14)

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(Continued from page 13)

I really loved what John Andrews was doing with his customer of the day blog posts for his little bistro. (Then again, I just read that John's shop closed down, so does that make it a bad strategy?) John had the perspective that by praising his customers, they'd feel motivated to return. Seems reasonable to me.

Mick Galuski, who I wrote about as a small town superhero, earns and keeps my business because he customizes his communication to me to make it about my interests. In turn, I praise Mick all the time, and talk with him about business, and give him potential ideas for future efforts.

What This Means to Personal Branding and Self-Promotion

In situations where you're talking with others, do your best to talk more about them. Learn about them. Ask questions. The smartest people are those who plumb the depths of

the other person, and come away knowing them deeply. We seem to fear, as humans, that the other person in a situation won't hear us. We get worried that we'll leave a conversation somehow unequally.

Strangely, the most "important" people (in at least the public business sense) I have ever met in my life have all asked me more about myself, and even with me trying hard to turn it around, they were gracious and interesting and still worked hard to know more about me than themselves. People like Vinod Khosla, Seth Godin, Guy Kawasaki, and many more have always started with more questions about me than about themselves.

If that's how they roll, why wouldn't you do the same yourself?

It's certainly something I notice more often when meeting people,

or learning more about them on the web. While writing this post, I was distracted twice to do other things, and in one case, I read someone's about page on their blog and choked on how self-important they seemed (and hey, read mine and call me out if you think I seem stuck-up). The other was a request from someone whose event I once attended, where he spent the first 10 minutes doing a strange "you love me, you really love me" type performance. Great guy. Super smart. Off-putting as all hell to start an event that way.

What do you say?

Chris Brogan is President of New Marketing Labs, a social media agency and education company and blogs on ChrisBrogan.com

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Five Minutes with Kellie Stevens

The name Kellie Stevens has long been synonymous with affiliate marketing integrity, and her body of work was recognized at Affiliate Summit West 2009 when she was given the Affiliate Marketing Legend Pinnacle Award.

FeedFront's Co-Editor-in-Chief, Shawn Collins, recently talked with the legendary Stevens about her career, the prognosis of adware in the affiliate marketing industry, and the likelihood that the New Orleans Saints will win the Super Bowl in the next five years. (interview next page)

Shawn: How did you get started in affiliate marketing?

Kellie: I was faced with having to leave my prior career in physical therapy because of some questionable medical issues with my vision. I knew from my days working in community re-integration rehab the many benefits and adaptations of computers for visual impairments. I was also looking for something I could do from home as public transportation is very limited in my area, should I no longer be able to drive.

I decided to try an online business, even though I had very little knowledge of the internet at that point. Ignorance really is bliss at times.

I bought a book to learn HTML and put up a web site. I began researching online marketing for ways to promote the web site. In the course of that research, I came across affiliate marketing. I recognized the immediate value in affiliate marketing over other forms of marketing. I was immediately drawn to the channel and have never looked back.

I suppose you can say I blindly stumbled upon affiliate marketing. It really is a case of something potentially negative in my life turning out to have a very positive influence. Fate really does rock at times!

Shawn: What was the first domain you purchased?

Kellie: I am soooo not going to even go there. LOL.

Shawn: I see you worked in the healthcare industry. If BHOs (Browser Helper Object) were a fatal health condition, which one would they be?

Kellie: That's a tough one. I guess I'd have to say Hansen's Disease, known as leprosy in layman's terms. While not immediately fatal, if left unchecked or treated, it can lead to very debilitating conditions which can result in a premature death. Leprosy does cause serious impairments to critical areas of the body, such as the nervous and respiratory systems. There is a strong negative social stigma connected with leprosy. For an outsider looking at leprosy, they see something that is obviously diseased with disfigurement and blemishes.

For anyone who may be curious, yes I did do some volunteer work at one of the few Hansen's Disease Research Centers in the world.

Shawn: What has been the highlight of your time in affiliate marketing to date? What has been the lowlight?

Kellie: Thankfully, there have been many highlights. Every time I am even a small part of a bad affiliate being removed from a network or program or a change in policy that fosters fair competition and increases true value of the affiliate marketing channel, is a good day.

I've been fortunate to have met many incredible people over the years who have taught me so much and helped me grow both professionally and personally. The biggest honor I've received was during this past Affiliate Summit in Vegas when I won the Pinnacle Affiliate Marketing Legend Award. I'm not one to get too caught up with awards, but my efforts being recognized by such a diverse cross section of our industry has been both a very humbling and motivating experience.

I try not to think of things as lowlights, but rather learning experiences. I've had my share of those, too. I think one of the hardest things for me to come to terms with over the years is when my personal integrity and motivations have been attacked by those who I have supported and advocated, when I did not react to an issue as they thought I should. However, it was those times that have reinforced the need for me to stay true to my overall beliefs and goals.

So in the long run, the low points have helped to keep me focused on the things that I feel are important in the big picture for the industry.

Shawn: What is the biggest goal you hope to accomplish with AffiliateFairPlay.com?

Kellie: To help shape policy, define legitimate revenue generation, establish Quality Assurance policy and protocols, and define best practice standards within our industry allowing for fair competition.

Shawn: What do you see as the biggest threat to affiliate marketing?

Kellie: I'd have to say ourselves. There have been so many times that we have seemed to be our own worst enemy. Political infighting, personal attacks, egos, personal agendas and the like, have seemed to block productive advancement within the industry.

I'd also have to say we need to develop our skills at critical evaluation of the practices and business models that are deemed the majority to be acceptable use for affiliate marketing. For an industry of marketers, it seems that often times that marketing spin is accepted readily without critically evaluating what is actually being promoted.

Shawn: Which is more likely to happen in the next five years – the eradication of adware by affiliates or the New Orleans Saints in the Super Bowl?

Kellie: Definitely the New Orleans Saints in the Super Bowl. Adware isn't going to go away.

Shawn: What is one thing affiliate networks should do tomorrow to help clean out the bad guys?

Kellie: That isn't a one step, nor necessarily easy, process. But, the first step a network must take in "cleaning out the bad guys" is to set strong policy as to what the bad behavior actually is and then follow through with the commitment to enforce that policy. There needs to be a mindset shift from allowing certain practices that are making revenue in the short-term, to sound policy on acceptable promotional methods by affiliates/publishers which bring true value to the affiliate channel.

Shawn: What is your favorite site today (not including anything related to affiliate marketing)?

Kellie: I'm not a big fan of having a "favorite" anything. I tend to like too many different types of things for that. I guess I'd have to say the site I use the most on any given day is Google. I'm able to find sites related to whatever my whim of the day is, no matter how obscure it might be.

Shawn: What are some red flags that indicate an affiliate is cheating?

Kellie: I really don't like getting into that in very much detail publicly. There is a constant battle by the bad players to try and figure out just how much the folks who are watching know and then come up with techniques to avoid detection. Some affiliates have become pretty sophisticated in those methods. An electronic trail is always laid down though if the affiliate wants to receive the ill-gotten commission. That is the one thing they aren't able to get around.

The most helpful thing that any affiliate manager, OPM, merchant or network can do in order to detect bad behavior is to truly understand what techniques are currently being utilized. Once you understand the behaviors being used, the "red flags" become much more obvious.

I've always advised my clients that each time a bad affiliate is detected, the real value doesn't just come from removing that affiliate from program/network. Rather, a careful analysis of all the data related to affiliate's account or accounts should be made in relation to the type of techniques they were using. Over time, when all that data is analyzed, a pattern emerges which can be used to more quickly detect bad behavior and identifying changes methods being used. As "footprints" are established, more robust compliance methods can be implemented.

Shawn: Do you see the emergence of social media as a good or bad thing for affiliate marketing?

Kellie: I think it is a good thing. It's another avenue which can be pursued by affiliates/publishers. As with anything, there will be those who can effectively use social media in their marketing efforts and those who will bomb trying to use social media.

I have seen some really interesting and innovative experiments by some affiliates who are pursuing how social media can be leveraged in affiliate marketing. Many affiliates are willing to take the risks of experimenting with new technology and marketing approaches. I've always felt this is a strength of the affiliate channel.

Shawn: What is the last book you read?

Kellie: I'm reading Robert Ludlum's The Road to Omaha right now. I was in the mood for some satire of the political system and the human condition.

Shawn: Complete this sentence: Affiliate marketing was _____ five years ago, but now it is _____.

Kellie: Affiliate marketing was a toddler five years ago, but now it is a pre-teen.

Shawn: Do you think StopBadware.org is making a positive difference?

Kellie: I think they probably are providing benefit to consumers. They also provide a benefit to webmasters who have had their web sites compromised by hackers.

No system is going to be 100% accurate because automation is required to achieve the scale necessary to be meaningful. There will be false positives and negatives. The one thing I do like about StopBadware is their appeal process that they've implemented to address those issues.

I would like to see Google take a firmer stance with regards to their advertising being displayed in some of the very same applications flagged by StopBadware. On one hand, they are warning end users about certain types of software. But on the other hand, they are helping to financially support some of the very same applications with their ad inventory. I would have thought that Google would devote more resources to protecting the integrity of their own ad inventory.

Shawn: What's your favorite movie?

Kellie: It really depends on my mood. I am a sucker for the old black and white movies though. I don't watch too many slasher movies or comedies that are slapstick. I think good dialogue is becoming a lost art with the advances being made with special effects.

I'll also admit I'm a hopeless case when it comes to Pixar movies and other animated "kid" movies. I've no shame....I won't even bother to bring a kid along with me to watch many of those movies.

Shawn is a Co-founder of Affiliate Summit and Co-Editor-in-Chief of FeedFront Magazine. He is also a New York Jets fan and thinks the Saints better get in line behind the Jets for Super Bowl glory.

Leveraging LinkedIn to Expand Your Brand

By Wade Sisson

As with any social media site, LinkedIn.com offers you a great opportunity to present and maintain your desired brand image. Here are some tips for putting your best foot forward on LinkedIn.

Get involved

You will only get from LinkedIn that which you put in, so be an active member of the community. Invite new contacts regularly and respond quickly to requests from others. Don't just limit your profile to your current position. List all previous positions and you will increase the number of contacts you will make.

Target your contacts and be selective

Just as you wouldn't enter a room full of people and hand each person a business

card, imploring each to "Hire me today!," you wouldn't randomly invite people to join your Contact list on LinkedIn. Only invite relevant professionals to join your contact list. Don't settle for LinkedIn's templated invitations, either. Instead, tailor your own message to your invitees. For example, after a trade show send a message to the people you met and say, "It was great to see you at Affiliate Summit in Las Vegas. Let's keep in touch through LinkedIn."



(continued on page 19.)

(continued from pg 18.)

Be found in all relevant searches

LinkedIn provides you with many opportunities to insert keywords into your profile. You'll want to pay particular attention to your Summary, which contrary to popular belief is not the place to post your resume. Do searches where you'd want to be found and assess the competition and their keyword count as compared to yours. Make the necessary adjustments.

Ensure recommendations match your message

When you ask for a recommendation, take the time to offer guidance about what kinds of things you'd like the writer to say. If the recommendation contains some of your target keywords, all the better.

Share your expertise by answering questions

By asking or answering questions, you will become a more active member of the LinkedIn community. You will also be positioning yourself as something of an expert in your industry. Make sure your answers are straightforward and thorough. Do not insert sales pitches or requests into your answer. Just the facts, please.

As you develop your presence on LinkedIn.com, remember you're representing your brand. You want to do things that reflect positively on your brand. You also want to connect with others in your industry. Most importantly, you want to contribute to the community. As you build your identity and your credibility, you will find your brand reaches a strong position within that part of LinkedIn that belongs to you and your target audience.

Wade Sisson is Director of Marketing for PartnerCentric, a full-service provider of affiliate program management and Internet marketing services.

Tips for Taking Pictures for Your Web Site

By Debrah Carney



Hold it Steady

Hold your camera steady when you are taking pictures that you are going to use online. If it is in the evening or at night and you don't want to use a flash (like night shots in a city for a travel site) lean the camera on a light pole or a mailbox. Anything that you can set the camera on that won't move can be used as a makeshift tripod. Even if you have a tripod, some cities and parks don't allow them to be used in certain areas without a permit.

Good Exposure

For daytime pictures, shooting outdoors in sunlight is usually fine, but avoid shooting directly into the sun. Indoors you want to use a flash to avoid images that are dark or have a yellow overtone to them.

Crop it

Use a photo editing software (most computers come with them now, and there are plenty of free ones) to crop your images and resize them.

The image that comes straight from the camera is WAY too big to use on your Web site. Don't use the resize tags in your HTML code to make the file fit. Doing that uses valuable bandwidth and slows your page load time.

Open the picture in your editing software and use the crop function to eliminate extra space around your subject. Next resize the image so that it is 500 pixels on its longest edge. Then use File, Save As to save the modified version of your image.

Hopefully these tips will help you take pictures that will spice up your Web site and make a good impression on your site visitors.

Deborah Carney is a professional photographer, affiliate manager and Webmaster; you can see her photography on <http://LoxlyGallery.com> and contact her about her affiliate programs at <http://TeamLoxly.com>

Web sites need images to break up the text and show your visitors things you want them to see. Taking photos that you specifically want to use on a Web site is different than taking family photos or photos for print production.

First, they don't have to be huge in size. You simply want an image that is big enough to show what you need, clear and properly exposed. Let's take this step by step.

Good camera

It doesn't have to be a DSLR to get good images to use on your Web site. You can use a small camera or even the camera in your phone, as long as it has good optics and exposure settings. The largest size image you want to show on a Web site is about 500x500 pixels, which is very small by today's camera standards.

But you want that image to be super sharp. If your phone takes blurry underexposed pictures, don't use it. Most digital cameras are fine for general photography.

If you need to take close ups of products, you will need a better camera, one with a "macro" mode that will let you get close to your subject. Be careful, though, with close up shots that you don't use a lens that makes the subject distorted (fisheye effect).

And remember that since you don't need large files you can crop to make the subject bigger.

Do more, code less.

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COMING SOON:

MLM/Affiliate Marketing Convergence?

By Debbi A. Ballard

There will be a convergence of two worlds, MLM and affiliate marketing. If you're only in one world, you need to understand the other so you can get beyond the misconceptions and better compete.

Know that there are legitimate MLM ("network marketing") companies. These differ from pyramids which are illegal.

When a firm pays new independent reps (or "networkers") for sponsoring others into the program or mandates that new reps must each purchase a certain amount of product to receive the right to sponsor others into the opportunity, then the company can be vulnerable to pyramid challenges.

Most mainstream MLM companies do require the purchase of a start-up kit containing sales materials to become an approved independent rep.

To stay within legal parameters, MLM companies have extensive policies and procedures for their reps. In addition, they have compensation plans that, because of their tiered structures, have some complexities that have to be accurately explained.

Also, disclaimers and disclosures regarding the income opportunity and the products are needed.

That's why mainstream MLM firms will have start-up kits whereby the reps are given information needed to help them operate their businesses within ethical and legal parameters. A manual is included along with brochures, business cards and other sales materials.

Note that reputable companies sell these kits at cost without any bonuses made to reps. This is done to avoid any possible legal challenges relating to monies being made purely for the act of recruiting.

From a marketing perspective, having a start-up kit also helps to screen reps from those who just impulsively sign up as opposed to those who show some real interest since there is this minimal purchase involved. (Many of the kits sell for \$49 or less.)

MLM companies without start-up kits have a far greater number of people who sign up and never get active selling products as opposed to those mainstream firms that do require the purchase of a kit.

Affiliate marketers can relate to this. You know that since people can become affiliates for free, resulting in an overabundance of inactive affiliates in a given affiliate program.

Hence, how one enters an MLM program as opposed to an affiliate program differs. Agreements, along with the policies and procedures, are usually more stringent in the former.

If you participate in the upcoming convergence of MLM and affiliate marketing, you'll want to utilize the best strategies and tactics to create a synergy between the two to expand your business.

This article serves as a start to a more vivid understanding of both worlds.

(This article is for informational purposes only and no legal advice is given as an experienced MLM attorney should be consulted for such matters.)

Debbi A. Ballard is a well known MLM consultant, expert witness, speaker and author who is educating people about the upcoming MLM and affiliate marketing convergence, and spearheading the development of MLM best practices at www.MLMconsultantsblog.com.



Five Affiliate Challenges for Long Term Success

By Andrew Wee

As an affiliate marketer, there is a tendency to want to maximize conversions and profits, and it's sometimes difficult to see the forest through the trees and easy to lose perspective of the greater goal of growing your business and expanding its scale.

Ultimately affiliates overcome five challenges to bring their business to the next level:

1.Master Plan and Consistent Action:

Having a list of goals/resolutions at the start of the year is pretty useless... unless you put in the action to back that up. Consistent, focused action, and refusing to get sidetracked by small, more interesting projects is what separates serious affiliates from those who have a myriad of "interesting" hobby affiliate sites.

2.A Systems-based Business Architecture:

As your marketing campaigns, with their components involving research, set up, tracking, analytics and optimization, become more sophisticated, so too will the need to document the processes and have step-by-step procedures to not only increase the probability of success when launching new campaigns, but it will also reduce the time taken to set them up.

Sitting down once a month to map out your business processes will give you a clear blueprint and help you identify your strengths which have led to successful campaigns.

Building on these strengths will likewise build your business. Checklists, flowcharts and procedures can aid in this process.

3.Business Leverage:

No matter how superhuman your resolve and physical endurance, you're still limited to 24 hours a day. Looking at options like hiring employees, automating repetitive elements of your business by developing software or scripts to reduce manual labor, and outsourcing tasks outside of your expertise to experts

can increase your effectiveness and efficiency.

This will free you to focus on high value activities like sourcing for new offers, as well as negotiating for better terms from merchants and networks.

4.Joint Ventures/Collaborations:

Partnerships are one of the best, and sometimes worst, ways to grow your business. In some cases, the partnership will not work out because each side had different expectations from the project and the reality doesn't match up to it.

However, if the partnership works out, particularly if your partner complements your strength, this could be a classic case of 1 + 1 = 3.

5.Building a Long-term, Brand-based Business:

Affiliate marketing is growing up. Thin affiliate sites created with appropriate About Us, Contact, and Privacy information pages to meet Google AdWords requirements are still out there, but the writing is on the wall. As the industry matures, users will look for full fledged destination/portal sites that they'll be returning to for repeat purchases.

Success will be measured not just in conversions, but ultimately in repeat purchases.

Long term affiliate success will lie in rolling with the five forces that will help you shift your game to a higher level.

Andrew Wee blogs about blogging, affiliate marketing, and social media at <http://WholsAndrewWee.com>.

AFFILIATE MARKETING 101:

Setting the Stage for Your Success



By Chantelle S. White

Affiliate marketing is a journey that provides you with the entrepreneurial freedom to choose a business model that caters to your professional strengths and personal interests.

All successful conquests begin with a clear and concise roadmap and as an affiliate marketer yours must be transferrable and innovative.

Your marketing strategy should be as dynamic as the landscape is, and by incorporating these points into your initiatives, you will be well on your way to a success campaign launch.

Identify and Become the Brand

- Take the time to assess the active marketing initiatives of the brand you are looking to promote.
 - Which mediums is the brand actively using to market its product (online, radio etc)?
 - Current SEM promotion: is the brand marketing on all tier 1-3 engines?
 - Note the verbiage and graphics used in all of the promotions (is the message clear and marketable?)
 - What is the value proposition

to the user and is there a sense of urgency (seasonality/limited-time offer)?

- Determine the core demographic of the brand and identify who the online target audience is.
 - Is there a similarity (brand demo and online target audience)?
 - If so, draw the parallels and note the similarities. This will assist you with marketing to the most conversion prone audience.
 - If not, be sure to target both audiences, as there may be an opportunity to capitalize on a new (unsaturated) market share.

Competitive Landscape Analysis

- Conduct an extensive search to determine who the brands offline/online competitors are.
- Analyze each competitor's campaigns by taking note of the features/benefits of the product and the value proposition to the user.
- Note the distribution channels that the competition is using to promote their campaign (IE: SEM and Social Media etc).
 - Diversifying distribution channels allows for an extensive reach to multiple market shares (ie. SEM targets real-time purchasers while social media provides brand engagement/awareness).
- Do not simply mirror the competition but trump it through innovation.
 - Identify what is marketable

about the competitor's campaign and finesse it.

Distribution Channel: En Route to Conversions

- Establish a marketing budget, which is flexible to the emerging media landscape.
 - SEM distribution: Be clear with what your ceiling and floor spends are but ensure you have the ability to inflate/deflate daily.
- Institute a monthly test budget.
 - If you're monthly marketing budget is \$1000 (SEM distribution), allocate \$200 of that to test distribution via an alternative channel.
- Marketing your campaign through more than one distribution channel will assist with stabilizing your revenue streams and building your portfolio. Diversification is the claim to fame.

Follow these steps and you will greatly improve your chances of success in your affiliate marketing journey.

Miss White joined the MediaTrust Business Development team in 2008 where she's responsible for strategic partnership alliances, new business development and portfolio management.

Autopilot Affiliate Program Management—Recipe for Failure

By Geno Prussakov



Webster's Dictionary defines autopilot as "a device for automatically steering ships, aircraft, and spacecraft." Such systems of directing vehicles without assistance from human beings are excellent when used in the contexts that they were created for. Affiliate marketing is not one of them.

However, numerous merchants run their affiliate programs the "autopilot way," and many are not even aware that they do.

I've found this problem to be more common with programs run on affiliate networks. When a merchant starts a program on a network, they often mistake the affiliate network for a self-adaptive autopilot.

Aerospace avionics expert George Siouris defines this type of affiliate program as one that "measures its own performance, compares it to a standard, and adjusts ... parameters until its performance meets the standard."

Similarly, some merchants believe that once an affiliate program is started on an affiliate network, the network will both measure its performance, and ensure that the program keeps developing according to a "standard".

However, the job of the affiliate network is to provide the merchant with tracking, reporting and payment solutions. The rest is affiliate program management, and most affiliate networks do not have it on the list of services provided by default.

An affiliate program is a marketing campaign. Launching it on a reliable platform (affiliate network, for example) is only half the job. The second half entails active affiliate program management.

The key management elements are (a) recruiting new affiliates, (b) educating and motivating current ones, and (c) policing all affiliates for compliance with your Terms of Service. Yes, you want to make sure your program has a detailed TOS agreement, in which you specify what affiliate behavior is unacceptable, and what consequences such behavior will bring about.

Examples of the most frequently banned affiliate behaviors include trademark bidding, forcing clicks, cookie overwriting, cookie stuffing, and use of downloadable software.

Besides recruiting and policing, the affiliate program manager is also responsible for reviewing new applications, and maintaining a healthy communication channel with the affiliates.

In February 2009, Econsultancy.com published the UK and the US Affiliate Censuses. Among the top reasons for not promoting a merchant, US affiliates pointed to "slow acceptance to program" (17%), and "bad follow-up communication" (10%). Poor communication has also been mentioned by 12% as the reason for dropping affiliate programs.

UK affiliates have also stated that "merchants do not communicate a variety of issues to them," and whatever communication does exist, "ranges from bad or impersonal contact" to "failure to convey important information."

US affiliates echoed this observation by underscoring that "merchants do not communicate enough with them," and when they do, it is performed in a generic, mass-mailing style.

All dangers of the "autopilot approach" are too many to outline here. If you are serious about your online presence, treat your affiliate program as a serious marketing campaign. Otherwise, gaining genuine trust and loyalty of affiliates will be an impossible task.

Geno Prussakov is the CEO of AM Navigator, and author of "A Practical Guide to Affiliate Marketing" and "Online Shopping Through Consumers' Eyes."



Are You a Loser, or a Failure?

By Jim Kukral

What’s the difference between being a huge, complete failure and being a loser? It’s pretty simple. People who fail learn from their failures and get up and try again. And losers quit.

Which are you? If you wish to be successful in life and business, then it’s time to stop, sit down and make a conscious choice about which one you choose to be. The time is now, because if you don’t decide, you’re never going to be able to move forward and find the success you deserve.

Note: I hope you choose the failure route. :) Keep reading.

As entrepreneurs and small business owners, there are going to be circumstances in your path that will help you figure out which one you are. Here are a few examples.

Example number one: Did the last big project you dreamed up die on the vine? Was it something you truly believed in, but for whatever reason, it didn’t work out? What did you do? If you were a failure, you kept at it and learned from your mistakes and continued to make it work. If you were a loser, you quit it and walked away.

Example number two: Ever make a mistake at your job or with your spouse that you wish you hadn’t and now you’re being punished for it? In a loser’s mind, they figure there is nothing they can do to remedy the situation, so they throw their hands up in the air and simply quit. But not the failure. The failure understands that it’s time to learn from their mistake and move forward.

Getting the point yet? Being a failure is not the same as being a loser. If you’re going to run your own business and be an entrepreneur, or wish to be successful in your life or career, you’re going to have to understand these differences.

There’s one major thing to remember, and that is that it’s much easier to quit. Perhaps that why we see so many losers living unhappy lives or working in horrible jobs they hate? That’s not you, right?

Failure, on the other hand, requires hard work. It requires you to suck up your pride and learn from your mistakes and for you

to try harder! It requires you to get off the couch, and to stop pitying yourself and believe that you will win! Because you can.

As an online entrepreneur with over 10-years of experience experimenting and building Web businesses, I’ve failed countless times, across multiple levels and projects. Sometimes so bad that I wondered if I would ever find a way to be successful. We’ve all been there. But I never gave up. I never quit. The reason I am in the position I am in today is because I refused to be a loser.

Still undecided? I sure hope not.

Go ahead; show me one successful person who didn’t fail 1,000 times before they succeeded big. This life we’re all having is not about to come easy.

Ok, now get to work. Or are you a loser? You tell me.

You can find out more about Jim Kukral by visiting [TheWebCoach.biz](#).



Bamboo Laptops and Man Caves at CES

By Shawn Collins

The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) was in Las Vegas the same time as Affiliate Summit West 2009 this past January, so I dropped in to have a look at the latest in electronics to get an idea about trends that could be leveraged by affiliates.

Netbooks are hot. If you’re not familiar with netbooks, they are a relatively new segment of laptop computer that is smaller and cheaper than a typical laptop.

I think there are some strong opportunities for promoting them with their current popularity and price point.

A quick look at the Amazon bestsellers in laptop computers reveals that netbooks dominate the first page.

One of the best known netbook manufacturers, ASUS, had an interesting laptop in their area at CES - the ASUS Bamboo Series Notebook.

This “EcoBook” got a lot of attention at the conference for being a “partially biodegradable laptop.” But according to Engadget, the price is in excess of \$1,800. So, I don’t see a big audience clamoring for this machine, despite the nice aesthetics.



Aside from the netbook explosion, another big focus at CES was the man cave.

Many booths were focused on cool ways to bring music, video, decorations, and games into these lairs of manhood.

There were also some areas of CES that left me scratching my head, like a booth of products from Jackie “The Joke Man” Martling (former cast member and head writer of the Howard Stern Show).

The Joke Man was peddling hot items like his Jackie Jokeman Talking Insult Mirror and Jackie’s Talking Joke Machine. Not so sure on the market for these items.

There you have it, affiliates – get your netbook and man cave sites and campaigns up now.

Shawn is a Co-founder of Affiliate Summit and Co-Editor-in-Chief of FeedFront Magazine.

ADVERTISER LIABILITY FOR AFFILIATE SPAM

By Anne Mitchell



Few people are aware of, much less understand, the “Vendor Liability” clause of CAN-SPAM. Yet it is critical for anyone who has affiliates to understand this aspect of Federal anti-spam law, as it is specifically aimed at affiliate program administrators who ignore spam complaints about affiliates.

The Vendor Liability section of CAN-SPAM works like this: if you have an affiliate who is sending email that advertises your product, and that email is in violation of CAN-SPAM, then *you* are on the hook, legally, just as if you yourself had hit the “send” button.

The test is whether you stand to profit from that spam, and if you do, then the explanation that “I didn’t actually send the email” just won’t cut it. And of course, if one of your affiliates is spamming information about your product, then you *do* stand to profit from that spam.

The Vendor Liability section of CAN-SPAM does require that you either knew - or *should have known* - that your affiliate was sending spam.

It’s that “should have known” that really puts affiliate program administrators on the hook. It means that you have to carefully monitor who joins your affiliate program, and even more carefully monitor what they are doing

once they have joined. And it means that you have to pay particular attention to any spam complaints that may come in for any of your affiliates.

Once you start receiving spam complaints about a particular affiliate, at that point you *should* know that they are spamming and that you stand to benefit from the spam that they are sending.

This may seem like an onerous law, and it *is* burdensome. In fact, many affiliate program administrators will no longer allow their affiliates to use email at all in conjunction with their affiliate programs. But it’s important to understand that there is a breed of rogue affiliate who signs up for all sorts of affiliate programs, and then blasts spam out to millions of people with whom they have no relationship, to turn a quick buck. And there is a corresponding breed of affiliate program administrator who looks the other way so long as the money keeps rolling in.

The Vendor Liability section of CAN-SPAM is intended to nip this in the bud, holding affiliate program administrators accountable as the beneficiaries of their affiliates’ illegal spamming activity.

Because of this, if you administer an affiliate program - or participate in affiliate programs yourself - it’s important that you be very familiar with the requirements of CAN-SPAM. We offer free CAN-SPAM compliance resources on our site, at <http://www.ISIPP.com/>.

Anne Mitchell is the CEO of ISIPP, which provides email deliverability and accreditation services to make sure your email makes it to the inbox, and not the junk folder.



Take a Hike, Mr. Cynical Marketer

By Missy Ward

I was recently reading a post that my business partner, Shawn Collins had up on his blog, AffiliateTip.com, entitled “Cynical Marketing.”

In the post, Shawn talks about how there are some marketers out there that simply don’t get the fact that not everything they do has to revolve around making money. They forget that sometimes, it’s more important to just give back.

The content of his post was dead on and the timing in which I read it, couldn’t be more ironic.

You see, earlier that day, I was approached by a marketer who read a post on my blog, MissyWard.com, that discussed me coming out of affiliate management retirement to help support breast cancer research and treatment – a cause that is very close to my heart.

This marketer had the chutzpah to ask me “what my angle was and why on earth would I bust my a** to grow someone else’s company when there was absolutely nothing at stake for me”.

Rather than chastising him for his ludicrous implications, I simply told him how I felt.

Giving is in my DNA and since affiliate marketing is what I do best, it seemed like a natural fit.

He followed up with a “you’re nuts.”

You know what, Mr. Cynical Marketer? Maybe I am.

But I keep very good company.

Aside from the folks that Shawn mentioned in his post that give back to the online marketing community without ever asking for a thing back (Haiko de Poel, Jr. of ABestWeb.com, Scott Jangro of Jangro.com, Jim Kukral of JimKukral.com, Melanie Seery of NYAffiliateVoice.com and Kellie Stevens of AffiliateFairPlay.com), I can think of dozens of marketers, including Shawn, who neglected to name himself) who do the same.

Chris Brogan who takes the time to answer every single questions he’s asked on Twitter; Brian Clark who provides amazing free content on CopyBlogger.com everyday; Brian Littleton of ShareASale who takes the time to educate his merchants and affiliate marketers to both make the affiliate marketing industry better and push it forward.

Also, all of the folks that walked 60 miles with me to raise money for breast cancer research on behalf of AffiliateMarketersGiveBack.com; Jeremy Schoemaker who provides dozens of case studies and tips to marketers to grow their businesses — the list goes on and on.

Now, it’s not to say that I’m averse to making money. I think I do a pretty good job at it. So do all of the people that I’ve mentioned above.

Maybe I’m just an idealist, but I believe that when one does well, there is an inherent responsibility to give back to the industries that have helped us get to where we are today and to help the less fortunate.

So, to all of the other idealists out there that give so much, with no strings attached – I salute you. Please keep doing what you’re doing. You ARE making a difference.

Luke 12:48 “From everyone who has been given much, much will be required, and from the one who has been entrusted with much, even more will be asked.

Missy Ward is a Co-founder of Affiliate Summit and Co-Editor-in-Chief of FeedFront Magazine. She also manages the ThesisAffiliates.com program in which all of her management fees are donated to the National Breast Cancer Foundation.



Three Effective Communication Tactics for Affiliate Marketing

By Brian Clark

Getting the prospect in a “buying frame of mind” helps you maximize the amount of money you draw from your traffic, and you do that with the words you use. Here are three tactics that can bring you immediate and long-term revenue from affiliate programs by communicating more value before sending a prospect to the merchant site.

1. Endorsements

A personal endorsement is the strongest way to pre-sell an affiliate offer, assuming your audience values your opinion. Effective endorsements are sincere and enthusiastic based on real experience with the product or service. That’s not to say that people don’t pitch things just for the money, but that can be a dangerous game that erodes your trust and authority if the product or service is poor.

As with any effective copy, endorsements focus on benefits more than features. You might find that picking out the most compelling benefits is easier in a personal endorsement, because you’ve experienced those benefits first hand. Share how a recommended product or service has changed your life for the better, and you’re naturally talking benefits.

2. Tutorials

Years ago, the easiest way to do really well with content-based affiliate marketing was to release a free ebook loaded up with affiliate links and watch it go viral. That strategy can still work, but generally the content must be much stronger, and the affiliate pitches more subtle. Another long-time strategy is the email mini-course, in which you deliver tutorial-style content by autoresponder that ultimately promotes one or more relevant offers.

These days, producing video tutorials that show how to use a product or service are extremely effective at pre-selling affiliate offers. Remember, teaching and selling are closely related, so “how to” content that naturally gets a prospect more comfortable with a purchase is smart. Plus, you can use broader tutorial content as an “ethical bribe” to get people to subscribe to your blog or a targeted sub-list, which allows for multiple relevant offers to be made over time.

3. Bonuses

Using a bonus or special deal approach is a great way to uniquely sweeten an affiliate offer. You essentially promise to add in an additional item if people buy through your link, or you work out a promotional deal with the merchant that only you can deliver. You then work the extra value into your endorsement, review, or announcement with a great headline and benefit-oriented copy.

You’ll see this strategy used quite a bit in competitive pay-per-click situations, and also during big product launches where lots of people are promoting at once. But it’s a really strong strategy anytime, because it demonstrates that you’re focusing on adding value and delivering great deals to your audience.

It’s All About Value

In each case you’ll see that you’re focusing on the prospect and communicating value before sending the traffic off to the merchant. This can give you an edge in ultra-competitive niches, but also boost your bottom line across all your affiliate marketing efforts.

Brian Clark teaches content marketing and copywriting at Copyblogger.com



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