

Affiliate Marketing Basics

One common cause of apprehension that people who enter Internet marketing have is that they don't have a product to sell. Because online marketing inevitably involves selling something for it to become a profitably viable business, having nothing to sell can truly be a serious concern.

As I mentioned in my article "

Information Products - A Viable Basis for a Profitable Business ", identifying a niche is a key factor in getting into the Internet Marketing business. A niche is what will bring in a stream of targeted customers with a high potential of buying what you are selling. A niche is also what can provide you with a business area that you can dominate, if you can find a market niche good enough to have few competition.

Identifying a niche then is one critical factor in creating a successful online business campaign. As long as you can identify the market that you want to reach, selling to them need not mean having your own products. One very successful area of Internet Marketing that has an equal potential of creating a viable online business is selling other people's products or what is more commonly known as Affiliate Marketing.

Affiliate marketing as the name implies is marketing other people's products as a sales partner of the product owner and earning commissions in the process. It generally involves getting people interested in a particular topic to be interested too in relevant products that you are promoting. The good thing about affiliate marketing is that it need not involve hard selling on the affiliate's part. More often than not, the affiliate is merely sharing knowledge and recommendations on what he or she has encountered in the course of studying the particular niche.

The basic affiliate marketing model then is:

- The affiliate writes a topic about a particular niche or area of interest;
- The affiliate mentions relevant resources or additional information that can help the reader expand his understanding of the topic;
- The affiliate provides a link to a vendor's website where the additional information may be found;
- When the visitor clicks on the link and explores the vendor's site, he or she may find something interesting enough that can lead him/her to buy what the vendor is offering;
- Since the affiliate's link is being tracked, the sale on the vendor's site gets credited to him/her and he/she gets a commission in the process.

As simple as this may sound, it is not as straightforward when implemented. There are a lot of questions that beg to be answered before one can truly say that one has a business model that has a good chance of succeeding. The question of what niche market to penetrate is one obvious concern. Is there a way to find out whether a particular niche has a good potential of making money for an affiliate even before one ventures into it? Once you have identified a profitable niche, where do you get affiliate products to sell? Are all affiliate products created equal? Or do some products perform better than others? How does one find out?

In my next articles, I will answer these queries and more.