

CONVERZION
DIGITAL

A straight-forward guide to affiliate marketing

M **NETISE** **YOUR** **ONLINE** **PRESENCE**

Curated with bloggers, influencers and small publishers in mind.

CONVERZION DIGITAL

CONTENTS

- 1 An introduction into affiliate marketing
- 2 Understanding affiliate networks
- 3 Types of publishers
- 4 Understanding who you are as a publisher
- 5 How you can drive traffic and generate sales
- 6 Reaching out to brands you want to work with
- 7 Presenting your statistics
- 8 Creating content that drives conversions
- 9 Other ways of generating income
- 10 The terms you need to know

CHAPTER ONE

**AN
INTRODUCTION
TO AFFILIATE
MARKETING**

Every day, I speak to influencers and bloggers on behalf of my clients and it amazes me how many of them aren't even familiar with affiliate marketing. The penny then dropped that there are probably tonnes of people with a decent following or online presence that aren't aware that they can generate passive income through affiliate marketing. Hence the decision to create this guide. Because I'm a girl of the people, of course.

If you're promoting online goods without using affiliate links, you could be missing out on some serious cash. So, it's about time you got on board the affiliate marketing wave.

In a nutshell, affiliate marketing is the process of a brand rewarding affiliates for generating sales, clicks or actions on their site. For example, a fashion brand might offer 10% commission on all sales you generate for them.

Imagine that you're an influencer working closely with a brand to promote products from their range. You're driving traffic to their site, and it's turning into lots of sales for them. If you're doing this with a standard link, there is no way to track these sales. This is where affiliate links come into play. By using affiliate links, brands can monitor all traffic, sales and conversions that publishers drive to their site and pay you a commission for it.

Going back to the example of an influencer, imagine a brand sends you a nice little £100 dress and you feature them on your blog and social media in return. From the blog and social features, you generate 50 sales of said dress. $50 \times £100 = £5,000$. 10% of $£5,000 = £500$. That's £500 in your back pocket, simply by switching the links that you're using.

Sounds great, right? But that's not all. You won't just get a percentage of the sales for that one particular item; you'll get a percentage of any sales made once the cookie has dropped (I'll explain what this means shortly). Imagine that 100 users see your post and head to the site. The average order value is £130. $100 \times £130 = £13,000$. 10% of $£13,000 = £1,300$.

Now can you see why you're missing out if you're not familiar with affiliate marketing? Instead of kicking yourself for missing out on this cold hard cash in your years of building an online presence, keep reading. By the end, you'll be ready to start generating some serious cash from your side hustle or full-time gig.

While I used 10% as an example, the percentages offered by brands can vary massively. In my experience, fashion brands offer between 4-10% as a standard rate. However, this can be increased if you establish a relationship with the brands that you love (we'll come to that later on). Tech brands that sell higher ticket items may offer around 3% as standard, whereas some brands may offer as much as 25%. If you have certain

brands in mind, a quick search online will usually give you the information you're looking for.

While I'm on the topic of information to hand, now is a good time to break it down for you. When you're in search of the brands that are good for you to work with, generally speaking, there are three things that you should look out for:

Commission rates: I've covered this a fair amount. But, just to be crystal clear, commission rates refer to the percentage of the sale that you'll earn.

Cookie period: Cookie period refers to the duration of a cookie. No, I'm not talking about freshly baked chocolate chip cookies; rather, the technical kind. A cookie is a value stored online. When a shopper visits a website via an affiliate, a cookie is dropped to track the referral. By default, cookie durations are set to 30 days, although they may be significantly lower or higher. Once a cookie is dropped, you'll receive commission if they buy anything on the website for that duration.

For example, if a shopper visits a website but doesn't buy anything and returns in 10 days to make a purchase, thanks to the 30-day cookie, providing another referral didn't come from elsewhere afterwards, you'll still earn some dollar. A pretty sweet deal, right?

AOV: AOV refers to the average order value. While this can sometimes be a little difficult to find, it's worth looking out for. By determining the AOV for the brands you want to work with, you can figure out which ones will provide you with the best ROI (return on investment).

When you search for this kind of information, there will be plenty of other details to hand, but I'll cover those later. For now, I've introduced affiliate marketing in its simplest form. After all, that's what I'm here to do. You won't find any fancy marketing terms, buzzwords or confusing statistics here. I'm just sharing the knowledge that I've collected over the years to help you make some cash.

CHAPTER TWO

UNDERSTANDING AFFILIATE NETWORKS

Now we've reached the point where you're probably convinced that affiliate marketing is worthwhile. After all, isn't it just a matter of switching links? I hate to rain on your parade here, but it's not quite as straightforward as that. Fear not, I've got years of experience with affiliate networks on both the brand and publisher sides, so I most definitely know how to navigate them.

Full disclaimer here: I am by no means an expert in affiliate marketing platforms. There are so many out there I can barely keep up. Plus nowadays, I'm using them as a brand rather than a publisher so it would be wrong to claim I'm about to offer you up a step-by-step guide on how to use each and every platform. **HOWEVER**, you will find these on the wonderful thing that is the internet. Most platforms will offer guides; you'll also find guides on independent websites as well as video tutorials on YouTube. If you can't find the information you need on the internet, contact the network team and they'll usually have a guide that they can share with you.

Some sites, such as Amazon, eBay and Shopify, offer their own affiliate platforms which are super simple to sign up to. In fact, Amazon is an excellent place to start if you'd like to select just one affiliate network as it boasts such a vast array of products. If you're looking to work with particular brands, a quick online search will help you to determine which network they use for their affiliate program. Networks that are favoured

in the UK include AWIN, Webgains, Linkshare (Rakuten) and Affilinet. Remember, I'm not claiming to be a know it all here - there are plenty more out there so you'll just have to do some research.

In my experience of the networks I've mentioned, it takes a matter of minutes to initially sign up as a publisher. Generally speaking, doing so will incur no fees and you'll be good to go within a couple of hours. Signing up is the straight forward part; once you're a publisher, things get a little more difficult.

Once you're in and ready to get started, the first thing you should do is apply to some programs. In chapter 7, I'm going to cover everything you need to know to do this successfully. But for now, just know that applying for programs is one of your first ports of call once you've joined a platform of your choice.

Next up, you need to familiarise yourself with the platform. It's so important that the links (referred to as deep links or tracking links in the world of affiliate marketing) are tracking correctly. If they're not, all of your efforts will be a waste of time. While it can be tempting to just jump right in and get started, it's worth spending an hour or so learning how to navigate the site you're using correctly.

When it comes to creating deep links, a lot of affiliate networks offer

browser extensions that allow you to do so at the click of the button. Look out for these, as they will make your life a lot easier. All you'll need to do is visit the site you want to link to and use your extension to create the necessary link in a matter of seconds.

Beyond creating deep links, you can also find plenty of other tools on affiliate networks that contribute to your marketing efforts such as creative assets, information on the latest promotions and discount codes to share with your online following. If you take the time to select and use brand creatives as well as promoting the offers that are currently live on their affiliate channel, you're more likely to develop a long-term working relationship with the brand. These assets are there for you to use, so make the most of them!

If you're promoting outdated content, using old logos or promoting incorrect discount codes and offers, it can rock the boat with both the brands you're working with and your readers. You want to become a trusted publisher in both the eyes of the brand and your following, so keep your content up to date and promote the offers that you find on the affiliate channel.

CHAPTER THREE

**TYPES OF
PUBLISHERS**

Before you can understand the type of publisher that you are, or that you want to be, it's important that you fully understand them. Brands and networks will typically segment publishers into a handful of categories so it's good for you to know which one you fall into, especially when you're looking to form partnerships. For most bloggers and influencers, you'd be classed as a content affiliate – although this might not be the case for everyone. Fear not, I'm about to break it down for you.

CONTENT AFFILIATES

Magazine editorial sites: While a lot of magazine sites, especially the big publishers, already use affiliate links in their content, I've come across a lot that don't. If you're a smaller magazine site with a decent amount of loyal readers, you might be surprised how much commission you can actually earn. If you've produced evergreen content such as gift guides or reviews that get regular hits after they've been live for a little while, it's worth going back and inserting affiliate links where possible, as well using affiliate links moving forward.

Influencers and bloggers: Most influencers drive their traffic and sales through social media, whereas bloggers will use a combination of their blog and social media to do the same. As an influencer, sharing affiliate links can become a little tricky if you have a smaller following. For example on Instagram, you can only use swipe up links in your stories if

you're either verified or have 10,000 + followers. With that said, there are ways to overcome this. Of course for other platforms these limits don't exist, so you can share affiliate links in their simplest form to your heart's content.

Niche sites: In the world of affiliate marketing, niche sites can work wonders. Focusing on just one niche can allow you to target and reach readers with a keen interest in your chosen niche. Of course, the more niche the product or industry, the less competitive the space.

NON-CONTENT FOCUSED AFFILIATES

Voucher code sites: Voucher sites can dominate the top 10% of sales for a lot of brands in the UK, particularly fashion brands. These publishers work on volume, opposed to content. They'll have a team that will trawl the internet to the best verified codes to promote. They also work in partnerships with brands to promote exclusive discount codes in return for additional exposure.

Incentive publishers: The clues in the name with this one. Incentive publishers offer members rewards in return for shopping via their platform. This comes in the form of cashback, freebies or even donations to a charitable cause. Publishers such as Top Cashback and Quidco dominate the UK market, although there are a lot of smaller publishers

offering various incentives.

Closed networks: Closed networks are publishers that operate on a members-only basis. A lot of closed networks work exclusively for particular sectors, e.g. NHS workers or Teachers. Thanks to the level of exclusivity, brands are often inclined to offer these publishers higher discounts and commission as the offers can't be shared far and wide.

Tech affiliates: Last but certainly not least are tech affiliates. These kinds of publishers offer all types of overlays and services based around technology. From PPC to live chat services and email marketing campaigns, they can be a huge asset to brands without a comprehensive in-house marketing team. When it comes to using affiliate marketing to their advantage, brands can work with these publishers to outsource key marketing tactics without the high costs of running them in-house.

Price comparison: Long gone are the days of basic price comparison sites. As technology has evolved, price comparison has levelled up. From image searching items of clothing to find similar options for lower prices to marking items you've got your eye on and receiving a notification when they reduce in price, you name it - it's out there.

CHAPTER FOUR

**UNDERSTANDING
WHO YOU ARE AS A
PUBLISHER**

In Chapter 3, I touched on applying to programs so now it's time that I delve a little deeper into this process. While it might be tempting to apply to a whole load of affiliate programs, it can become hard to keep track of all of these. Instead of getting click-happy when you're applying, think about the brands that are right for you as a publisher. For example, if you run a blog that promotes fast-fashion brands with items retailing at around £20 a piece, suddenly starting to promote designer goods in an attempt to earn a higher commission is unlikely to resonate with your readers.

Affiliate marketing becomes a whole lot easier when you have two things; trust and attention. For this reason, when you're promoting products with the end goal of making some cash, you don't necessarily want your followers and readers to know this. The best form of affiliate marketing is when consumers aren't aware that you are marketing a brand. Instead, you want them to feel as if you're giving a recommendation on a product you love to a friend.

A big no-no of affiliate marketing is to promote a product you don't really like or you haven't actually tried. You want your audience to trust you, so it definitely helps if you have a genuine affinity with the product or brand you're shouting about.

How the hell am I supposed to do this and still make money, I hear you ask? I'll get to that in Chapter 7. For now, it's important that you

understand that you don't need to be signed up to every single affiliate program out there. Instead, choose the brands that you genuinely like and shop with and start from there. This way, you don't have to spend a penny to get off the ground. Of course, if you're running an established site with the capacity to generate multiple content pieces day in, day out, you can be a little more flexible with the products and brands that you promote. However for an influencer or a blogger, you should most definitely keep it simple as you learn the ropes. If you're already collaborating with brands on a gifting or paid basis, adding affiliate links can be the cherry on the top of your business with the potential to generate a healthy sum.

It's important to point out that you can promote brands and products across multiple niches and still do very well. While some influencers tend to stick to just one category, affiliate marketing offers a great opportunity to appeal to your audiences' wider interest. For example, if you're creating a blog post or a series of Instagram stories covering a holiday wardrobe, this could be the perfect opportunity to naturally include additional affiliate links. At this stage, you could link in travel publishers and skincare brands. Think finding cheap flights, taking care of your skin on a long-haul flight and tanning tips. The key to monetising your content is all about offering your audience value without the hard sell. When affiliate content is delivered naturally, it doesn't even feel like marketing. You don't necessarily have to stick to one category; you just need to be savvy.

CHAPTER FIVE

**HOW YOU CAN
DRIVE TRAFFIC
AND GENERATE
SALES**

A successful affiliate marketing strategy goes beyond simply sharing links with your audience. While they can go a long way, if you want to level up there are plenty of tactics you can try. More traffic = more sales. In this chapter, I'll cover some of the ways you can drive traffic and get more eyes on the content you're promoting. With that said, some brands will suspend you from their program if you're using PPC (pay per click) to drive traffic where it's against their rules, so make sure to do your due diligence first.

Social adverts: Using social ads to grow your following is an inexpensive way to reach your target audience. As an affiliate, you can use social ads in the exact same way as you would to promote any content. If you're working with particular brands, you can set up ads to target your desired audience. If you're growing your audience with followers that already have a genuine affinity with the brands and products you're promoting, you're off to a pretty good start.

Quality content: One thing that will keep your audience engaged is quality content. While it may not see immediate traffic, you're playing the long game here. If you're a blogger, you'll know that SEO (search engine optimisation) doesn't happen overnight. You need to be consistent with your content. The same goes for social media; the better your content, the more people will engage. More engagement equals more eyes on your posts. If you haven't got a huge budget to drive traffic through paid methods, you need to focus on organic methods. In this case, content

really is king.

Newsletter: A newsletter is a cost-effective way to reach your audience. While open rates aren't always great (particularly if you're buying your contacts), a super-engaged newsletter audience is worth its weight in gold. If you've already got a blog, it's likely you're sending out regular newsletters, so use this to promote your affiliate links. Even if you don't have a blog or website, you can get people to sign up to your newsletter via social media. Sure, it can take a while to grow, but it offers huge potential. Remember, once you build contacts, do not spam them! Only reach out when you're offering them something of value, else you're on a quick path to a whole load of unsubscribes.

Brand alerts: If your audience is engaging with your content, offer them some extra value so that they'll keep coming back. If you've been promoting a handful of brands, it's very simple to see which ones are earning you the most money. Right away, you can tell the kinds of brands your audience shop with. To drive sales further, use your platform to notify them of any sales, new collection launches and on-site discounts. Remember, as long as you're using an affiliate link (general or specific) it doesn't matter what they buy, you'll still earn a commission.

P.S. This type of content could be handy to grow your newsletter. By offering your audience an 'opt-in' to brand alerts, you can grow your

mailing list and have a clear idea of their interests.

Closed Facebook groups: Understanding algorithms and getting your posts seen on social media can feel like a little bit of an uphill battle. Thankfully, closed Facebook groups offer a decent solution. By simply creating a closed Facebook group, you can ensure your posts are getting seen by your target audience. What's more, this platform now qualifies you as a closed network. Remember what I said earlier about closed networks often getting better discounts and commissions from brands? Use this to your advantage. If you've got a decent-sized closed network with a hyper-engaged audience, you're off to a pretty good start when it comes to pitching partnerships to your favourite brands.

PPC: PPC most definitely isn't an area I'm familiar with. However, I do know it can be a great tool to drive traffic. With that said, with PPC you're not always getting the quality of traffic that you would using other methods. While bidding on brand terms such as "{insert brand name} discount codes" is a fast-track to suspension from an affiliate program, you can be clever with PPC to drive traffic to your site. For example, if you're promoting footwear brands, you could create an article such as '5 of the best boots for Autumn Winter 2020' and bid on terms related to this, as opposed to bidding on the brand name. Reviews and listicles are a great way to put out quality content and work PPC into your strategy. You just have to be a little bit clever about it.

CHAPTER SIX

**REACHING OUT
TO BRANDS YOU
WANT TO WORK
WITH**

When you're applying to programs, you need to consider things from the brand's point of view. While some brands will accept every publisher on their affiliate program and then begin to remove them over time, others will be much more selective from the start. Every week, I filter through hundreds of requests and every single day, new publishers join affiliate networks in the hope of getting accepted onto the leading programs.

If you want to stand out from the crowd, you need to do much more than just sending out hundreds of requests to all kinds of brands. Firstly, when you're choosing which affiliate networks to register on, do your research! A quick google search will allow you to find out which network your favourite brand hosts its program on.

When it comes to actually sending a request to join the program, take a minute to personalise the request. Give a brief overview of who you are as a publisher and how you plan to generate sales. Usually, you'll be able to find a contact email for the affiliate manager. Keep a note of this and follow up a couple of days later if you've not been accepted.

If an affiliate strategy isn't managed in house, you should be able to find the details of the agency that handles it pretty easily. Once you have, reach out to the agency and build a relationship with the account manager. This way, you'll be able to get onto the programs of all of the relevant brands they manage. Furthermore, you'll be on their radar for any opportunities

to work closely with the brands they represent.

If you're planning on simply sending out requests without offering some value to a brand, you won't get very far. You have to be savvy with this kind of stuff if you want to cash in.

Once you're on the program, if you want to enhance your partnership with gifting or paid promotion, you need to make sure you're contacting the right person. Have a quick search on LinkedIn, on the contact page on the brand's website or the affiliate platform rather than sending out unsolicited emails to irrelevant recipients.

For example, if you want to partner with a fashion brand, do a quick search on LinkedIn to find their influencer manager. Drop them a note explaining you're on their affiliate program and how they'd benefit from a partnership. Trust me, it works a lot better than spamming a random email address. You wouldn't believe how many times I've received emails that read something along the lines of "Hi there, I'd love to work with your brand on a gifting basis..." without even specifying which brand they are referring to or offering any value. People go straight into making demands of products they want before ending their email with a shipping address. It leaves me baffled every time. In a nutshell, if you want to build a lasting relationship with key decision-makers, be polite, don't spam them and demonstrate how you can add value.

Last but not least, in your initial contact email you should make your intentions for the partnership clear. To save any back and forth, be clear on your terms. Whether it be gifting, paid partnership or a unique discount code you're after, make it known straight away. Remember to be reasonable with your requests because you'll be earning a commission on top of any gifting or paid promotion. Of course, once you've proven your value to a brand and shown you can drive sales, they'll be more inclined to offer you more. This may be in the form of payment, increased gifting opportunities or an increased commission.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PRESENTING YOUR STATISTICS

When it comes to affiliate marketing, presenting statistics isn't the be-all and end-all. However, it becomes a lot more important if you want to partner directly with a brand. Whether it be through gifting, paid partnership or tenancy agreement (I've covered this more in chapter 10), you should have your key statistics to hand.

I'm not talking 6-page media decks filled with irrelevant information. A one-page PDF will do the trick. Here's what you really need to include:

- Clickable links to all of your channels (include blog and social). If I have to go and look for this information myself, more often than not I won't bother. Use icons; they look much better than text.
- An accurate overview of your social follower count, site traffic and readership.
- Your engagement rate across social channels. Make sure it's up to date and of course, accurate. There are plenty of tools that will tell your engagement rate. You can also calculate the approximate value of your following to a brand.
- A brief overview of who you are as a publisher.
- Key information about your audience. Be sure to include age, gender and location.
- Brands you've worked with before. There's no need for a super long list of outdated partnerships - just a couple of the brands that you've worked with and produced good results for.

- Up to date contact information.

Remember, brands and agency are presented with hundreds of media kits each month. Essentially, you want your media kit to summarise who you are as a publisher and how partnering with you will benefit them at a glance. If you want a brand to take notice of your media kit, make sure it has a clear purpose and offers them all the information at their finger-tips that they'll need to make a decision.

CHAPTER EIGHT

**CREATING
CONTENT
THAT DRIVES
CONVERSIONS**

You're now at the stage where you're eager to get going and earn some hard cash. I hear you! But you need to stay with me for just two more chapters here. Arguably, this is one of the most important chapters. If you're familiar with marketing, you will have heard the phrase 'content is king' chucked around a little bit. While you'd never actually hear me utter those words to a client, it certainly does apply in the world of affiliate marketing. Content undoubtedly contributes to the success of affiliate marketing. Regardless of affiliate marketing, you'll want to create content to keep your following engaged. Whether it be on your blog, an online publication or your social media, I'm on hand with some top tips for content. Content is my jam. I've been doing it for years. So, if you take just one thing from this guide, let it be my advice here.

Tell your truth: In my eyes, one of the cardinal sins in the world of affiliate marketing is to write about or promote a product that you haven't tried, or that you don't actually like. Not only is it as shady as shit, but it might come back to bite you one day. As a publisher, you should only feature products, places and practices that you've had first-hand experience with. If the content you're publishing is inauthentic, then you're off to a bad start. With that said, you may not get the chance to try every single product from a brand you love (we're not made of money, are we!). In that case, it's fine to promote a brand that you really love but make it clear if you haven't tried a product first hand. For example, if you're a fan of a certain skincare range, but you've not tried every product, make it known

to your audience.

Avoid hard-selling: Imagine clicking on someone's Instagram story to find 20 consecutive posts with 'swipe up to shop' links on each one. You'd switch off pretty damn quickly, right? No one likes hard selling. It doesn't work. Not every piece of content you post needs to include an affiliate link. Granted, you want to drive sales to earn a commission, but the secret to a successful campaign is to publish content that doesn't feel like you're selling to your audience.

In human terms, no one likes that friend that only ever talks about themselves. Don't let your blog, social channels or website become the online equivalent to that.

Choose quality over quantity: This goes hand in hand with my previous point. If you've just started inserting affiliate links into your posts and you've seen a healthy return, it might be tempting to produce more of the same content to up your commission. However, as with most things in life, you should opt for quality over quantity. If you've spent years building an engaged audience, the last thing you want to do is compromise the quality content that they know and love.

Find your niche: While you don't need to stick to one single niche, if you're just starting out, it can be handy to start with one focus. Of course, your interests certainly don't need to be limited to just one brand or topic

but it's a pretty good place to start. For example, if you've got 30,000 followers on Instagram and they love your makeup tutorials, promoting cosmetics is a sure-fire way to earn you a pretty penny. Finding your niche is all about identifying the kind of content your online audience is genuinely engaged in.

If you're planning to launch as an affiliate publisher, finding a niche can make growing your platform a whole lot easier. Stick to what you know. It's much easier to create content this way.

Mix it up: Oh, here she is again with another contradiction! This time, I'm not referring to the products and brands you feature in your content. I'm talking about the type of content that you create. Content that can include affiliate links comes in many different shapes and sizes, so be creative with formats. Think shopping guides, seasonal edits, memes (I love 'em), interactive posts, videos, reviews and personal essays. If you're constantly putting out the same type of content, your audience may grow tired of it pretty quickly. The thing with content; you'll never know what works and what doesn't until you actually try it. And when I say try it, I don't mean just once. Be consistent with your content strategies so that you can identify what appeals to your audience and drives traffic, conversions and sales over time.

I'm not ready to send you on your way just yet! I'm in a good mood

creating this guide, so I'll hit you with some content ideas to help you get started too. (Isn't this guide fantastic value for money, tell yo' friends).

If you're struggling to come up with a content strategy, here are some starting points for you to consider. Remember, I don't know your audience and their interests, so you'll have to figure that part out for yourself. Take some inspiration and craft these ideas to work for you.

Capitalise on key shopping dates and trends: We've all been sucked into the Black Friday or Cyber Monday sales before. One year, I bought coffee machines and wax mops for the entire family. The following year, I treated my dog to a chaise lounge among many other ridiculous purchases before my bank blocked my card. As someone that works in marketing, you'd think I'd know better. However everyone loves a bargain, so use this to your advantage. By incorporating key shopping dates and trends into your strategy, you're targeting your audience when they're ready and willing to part with their cash. For example, you could do a series of posts such as 10 of the best deals I've come across in the January sales.

Do a live Q&A: Live Q&A's are a great method of growing engagement and offering value to your audience. While it might not directly earn you money, you should remember that your network is your net worth (LOL). A Q&A will give you a chance to directly interact with your audience and build a relationship. Once they get to know you, they'll begin to trust you.

Remember the two things I said you need? Trust and attention. You'll get both.

Review multiple products: People like options, so give them just that. While honest product reviews offer value to your audience, numerous product reviews do too. For example, you could review 5 of the best fake tans you've tried. Also, when you're reviewing multiple products, you can get away with not trying them all. Instead, you can say something along the lines of "I've trawled the internet and researched hundreds of reviews to bring you an overview of the ten best {insert topic} on the market right now." In some cases, ten affiliate links are better than 1.

Create how-to tutorials: If you've even fallen down a rabbit hole of Instagram or YouTube tutorials, you'll know how valuable they can be. If you've got a skill, share it. You can google almost anything (within reason) nowadays, and you'll probably find a how-to tutorial. Not only are how-to tutorials good for engaging your audience and putting a face to your name, but they offer the perfect opportunity to drop in some affiliate links.

Talk about what you love, but also what you don't like: When you're constantly promoting products you like, it becomes quite easy to spot that you're trying to sell. Of course, driving sales is the aim of the game, but you should talk about the things you don't like too. Whether it's a product that didn't live up to your expectations, a place you weren't a fan of or of

a restaurant that you didn't like, sharing these experiences makes your content more authentic.

Call in the experts: This is one for small publications and online communities. If you want to cover a particular topic that will ultimately generate sales, you can call on the advice of an expert within your niche. Whether you choose a written interview, a live Q&A or a social media takeover, inviting an expert offers your audience something a little different. Bonus points if you choose an expert with a decent following, as they'll likely drive a lot of traffic to your platform.

Start a book club, a listening club or something similar: Building an engaged audience can sometimes feel like an uphill struggle. That's because it is; it's not something that happens overnight. Sometimes you need to think outside the box. Creating something that encourages regular discussion will lead to increased engagement. Opting for a tactic like this certainly isn't a quick fix, but when done correctly, it can work wonders.

Use videos: According to research carried out by HubSpot in 2018, 54% of consumers want to see more video content from a brand or business they support. Further research from Animoto in the same year found that videos are a consumer's favourite type of content to see on social media. Do you see where I'm going with this? If you're not already using video within your strategy, you should consider incorporating it. Whether it be

on your social media or website, it's a great way to engage your audience. According to Forbes, the average user will spend 88% more time on a website with a video.

Product comparison posts: If reviewing 5 or 10 products isn't for you, start small. A simple product comparison post that details key points provides a whole lot of value to your audience. Again, by comparing products, it offers the opportunity to include two affiliate links. More links = more chance of generating commission. For example, you could compare a high-end cosmetic product with a low-cost dupe.

How to guides: If you don't fancy getting in front of the camera, a how-to guide is a decent substitute. While a video might be more engaging in some cases, others will prefer to read a guide that they can easily refer back to. Similarly to tutorials, you'll find a guide for everything and anything on the internet. From guides to finding cheap flights to a guide on achieving the perfect top knot, the opportunities are endless when it comes to offering value and dropping in affiliate links.

Seasonal shopping guides: Last but not least are seasonal shopping guides. As I mentioned before, shopping guides are a great way to get around PPC limitations. So, if you've got a blog or editorial site, this is a perfect way to drive traffic to your content. From annual holidays like Valentines and Christmas to the best gifts for a football fan, guides are

evergreen content that can be relevant for years to come. With that said, you should keep guides up to date, ensuring that links are working as they should be and prices are accurate. If you don't have an editorial site, you can offer brief guides on social media too. They don't need to be in-depth; they simply need to offer value. P.S. don't be basic AF and list the obvious.

CHAPTER NINE

**OTHER WAYS
OF GENERATING
INCOME**

While generating income beyond affiliate links probably won't be on your radar straight away, it might be something you're in a position to consider down the line. Tenancy is one of the most lucrative ways to monetise your following without too much output required.

Tenancy placements: In simplest terms, tenancy is selling real estate. If you've got a lot of eyes on your content, brands are willing to pay for it. Whether it be social posts, website banners or inclusion into your newsletter, if a brand sees value they'll pay for it. If you're just starting out, it will take you some time to get to the stage that brands will pay for tenancy placement, but it's definitely possible. The top publishers in the affiliate marketing space offer tenancy placements priced anywhere between £500 to £10,000+. Food for thought.

Competition hosting: if you've got an engaged audience that a brand is targeting, you could host a competition on their behalf. While brands with a huge social following rarely do this kind of thing, it's a great way to build relationships with smaller brands. For example, if a start-up fashion brand has 7,000 followers and you have 50,000, they'll more than likely pay you to host a competition on their behalf and ultimately drive followers to their platform. Beyond social, there are freebie and competition sites that host competitions for all kinds of brands. They usually charge around £250 to host, not including the prize that brand has to offer. In return, they'll typically provide the brand leads or data.

SOME PARTING WORDS...

Don't even think about buying followers – it will add absolutely no value to you whatsoever. Long gone are the days that likes are used to judge the success of an influencer or platform. They're purely vanity metrics to a savvy marketer. Affiliate marketing is based mostly on engagement, so, buying followers won't do you any favours at all. Instead, remember that slow and steady wins the race. Work hard to put out quality content, be consistent and you'll see results eventually. If you stick at it, affiliate marketing will literally make you money as you sleep.

CHAPTER TEN

**THE TERMS YOU
NEED TO KNOW**

Welcome to the final chapter - the terms you need to know AKA a fancy phrase for a glossary. You don't need to read this chapter now, but it will be handy to refer back to as you navigate the world of affiliate marketing. If you get to the stage where you're communicating with affiliate managers, networks and agencies, you'll probably encounter most of these.

Affiliate agreement: this refers to the terms set out between a merchant and a publisher. This will clearly set out the terms of commission and payment.

Affiliate link: An affiliate link is the URL tracking link which can be used to identify which affiliate has sent traffic to a merchant's site. For reference, a tracking link should look something like `http:// {yourwebaddress} /AffiliateID=` followed by some numbers.

Affiliate network: this refers to the platform on which a brands affiliate program is hosted. Some brands use in-house affiliate programs, whereas networks such as AWIN and Webgains are popular choices in the UK.

Affiliate directory: once you're signed up to a network, you'll find a comprehensive list of brands with an overview of their affiliate programs. Most directories are categorised by their industry and should include the commission rates.

Affiliate software: some brands and agencies will use affiliate software to run and manage programs. Said software is usually good for signing up new publishers, tracking dates and paying out commission.

AOV: also known as average order value. AOV refers to the average amount a customer spends with a brand. As brands publish their AOV, you can use it as a guide to calculate the average commission rate you can expect when you drive sales.

Banner Ad: This is an electronic advert such as a JPEG or animated GIF that will advertise a brand on your site. A banner ad is a common offering when it comes to tenancy placements.

Commission rates: the income that an affiliate earns once they've generated a sale or a lead to a merchant's site. This is sometimes referred to as a referral or finder's fee.

Commission tiers: It's common for brands to offer varying levels of commission. For example, they may offer a commission rate of 5% for new customers, whereas they'll only pay out 3% for existing customers. Commission tiers vary from brand to brand, so it's worth taking the time to familiarise yourself with these.

Cookies: a cookie is a small text file which is stored on a visitor's

computer to record information that is of interest to the user. In affiliate terms, cookies are used to track which affiliate the visitor came from and the link they clicked. If a shopper isn't clearing their cookies regularly, you may earn a commission days after they first clicked your affiliate link.

Cookie period: once a cookie is planted on a web browser, it will include a date for when the cookie will expire. The cookie period is important because affiliate sales will only be recorded within that time frame. In affiliate marketing, a 30-day cookie period is usually set as standard.

Conversion rate: this is the percentage of clicks that result in a sale or lead. The higher the conversion rate, the better the quality of traffic that a publisher is driving to a site.

Chargeback: if a sale is deemed as invalid by a merchant, the affiliates commission will be forfeited. This is referred to as a chargeback.

CPA: cost per action is the amount of money it's cost a merchant for a conversion such as a lead or a sale.

CPC: cost per click is the cost of an individual click if a brand is paying for clicks rather than sales.

CPO: cost per order is the same as CPA but refers to sales only as

opposed to actions.

CTR: Click-through ratio/rate is the percentage of visitors who click on a link and follow through to visit a brand's website.

Deep-link: A deep link is another term for affiliate link or tracking link.

Engagement rate: engagement rate refers to the percentage of your social media followers who engage with your content. While some brands will select influencers based on follower count, savvy companies will check your engagement rate too.

HTML Code: in some cases, an affiliate will need to place lines of code onto their site, which will act as a unique identifier for the traffic that's coming from their site.

Micro-influencer: a micro-influencer is typically a publisher on social media with 30,000 followers or less. While some brands will overlook micro-influencers, they can be a proven asset when selected correctly. It's not uncommon for micro-influencers to have much more engaged audiences that truly trust their recommendations than larger influencers, hence why they make a great choice for affiliate partnerships.

Macro-influencer: A macro-influencer is commonly defined as a

publisher on social media with 1 million followers or more. While it can cost a brand a pretty penny to team up with these influencers, the ROI can be impressive.

Media deck: a media deck is a short document that details key statistics about a publisher or a brand.

Manual approval: while some brands with automatically approve sales driven by an affiliate, others will do it manually. Brands will have a term of 30 – 90 days set to approve sales before they payout. So, don't expect payouts immediately.

PPC: pay per click refers to the payment a brand will make per each click to their website. PPC methods are typically rare in affiliate marketing due to fake clicks, fraud and poor-quality traffic.

Publisher: publisher, affiliate and partner are all terms for the people (you) who drive sales, traffic, and clicks to a merchant's site.

Residual earnings: this refers to additional sales made on a brands website over the life of a customer. Some programs will pay affiliates residual earnings not just for the initial sale, but those thereafter.

ROAS: return on advertising spending is the same principle as ROI but

refers directly to ad spend.

ROI: return on investment is a measure of success for a marketing campaign. ROI refers to the percentage of sales in relation to the budget assigned to drive said sales. For example, if a brand invested £100 on marketing and the activity generated £1,000 in sales, the ROI would be 900%.

SEO: search engine optimisation refers to how well your content is optimised to rank organically through search engine results.

Tenancy placement: offering brand real estate on your website, newsletter or social media is referred to as a tenancy placement. In addition to paying out commission for sales, brands will also assign a budget for tenancy placements throughout the year.

Tracking method: various tracking methods can be used to record sales, leads or clicks. The most common method is to use a unique URL for each affiliate or embedding their ID into a link that is processed by software. Less commonly, brands will track performance using cookies.

Two-tier affiliate marketing: a two-tier model allows affiliates to sign up extra affiliates below themselves. As the affiliates on the second tier earn a commission, the affiliate above them will take a percentage of the

commission. In fashion, common two-tier platforms include 21 buttons and like to know it.

Unique click: tracking unique clicks allows merchants to identify clicks that are coming from unique IP addresses, rather than the total number of clicks.

Converzion Digital harnesses the power of digital partnerships to help our clients stand out online by implementing bespoke affiliate marketing strategies that deliver top-line growth. We work with global brands spanning fashion, technology, lifestyle and beauty to drive sales and establish lasting partnerships.

Affiliate marketing and influencer marketing go hand in hand, providing benefit to both brands and influencers. If you're a blogger, influencer or small publisher looking to use an affiliate strategy to earn some extra cash, this guide was curated for you.

Our straightforward guide offers an introduction to affiliate marketing, how it works and why you should use it. Beyond the technicalities, it covers brand partnerships, publisher types and crafting content that converts.

CURATED BY PRIYA FAITH

