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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**



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# **ABOUT THIS BOOK**

**Making Money With Affiliate Programs** is written by a successful affiliate. It's a book for anybody wanting to learn how to be successful with affiliate programs.

David McKenzie takes the reader, step by step, through the necessary processes to work successfully with affiliate programs. He also shows the reader a number of novel techniques/strategies that will maximize any affiliate's income.

These affiliate success processes are universal. David knows the pitfalls, as well as the joys and rewards of working with affiliate programs.

# **Chapter 1 – What Is Affiliate Marketing?**

For those who don't know what an Affiliate Program is please read this chapter.

However, if you do know what Affiliate Programs are then skip this chapter and move straight onto the next chapter.

## **Affiliate Programs**

There are many ways to make money on the web. However, one of the quickest and easiest ways to start a web business is by working what are called Affiliate or Reseller Programs.

An Affiliate is essentially a commissioned agent for a product or service. What happens is that as a commissioned agent, you (the Affiliate) get a percentage of sales after you (the Affiliate) have made those sales.

Affiliates are also called Resellers, so you may come across this term as well.

You can easily find Affiliate programs by going to the numerous Affiliate Directories that are on the web. You'll find these directories by going to any Search Engine and typing in the phrase "Affiliate Directory." Alternatively, if you're surfing the web and come across a site that you like with a product or service you believe is valuable or useful then take a closer look at the site for links to their "Affiliate or Reseller Program."

Affiliate programs are usually free to join, and good affiliate programs will always have all the necessary tools for you to sell the site's products or services.

## **Affiliate Marketing**

Affiliate marketing is the way that you market the affiliate programs in which you're involved. It is the main subject of this book.

## **Chapter 2 - Choosing Your Affiliate Program**

There are many affiliate programs available to you on the net. However, to improve your profitability as an affiliate you need to choose the programs you market wisely, as not all affiliate programs are created equal.

## **Tips For Joining Affiliate Programs**

Before you merrily join any affiliate program it pays to consider which affiliate programs are the best to join.

These are the crucial program features that I consider necessary inclusions in any affiliate program.

- □ The affiliate program must have a generous payment structure. For me, this means a high commission payment, which is a high percentage of the purchase price *nothing under a 25% commission*.
- Make sure the affiliate program you're about to join has a professional looking site. You don't want to send visitors to a site that looks unprofessional.
- Make sure that the affiliate program has a comprehensive affiliate statistics page, which lists the number of click-throughs, the number of sales, and the amount you've earned to date. This should be broken down by month.
- Make sure that these affiliate statistics are "real time". This means statistics which are updated automatically and immediately. You do not want to find out today about a sale you made a week ago.

- Ensure that the affiliate program provides you with a wide variety of text links, banners and graphics to put on your web page. Personally I prefer to use text links. However, certain other types of banners and graphics still work well.
- Know how often you are going to be paid. If you're tossing up between 2 programs and one pays monthly and the other pays quarterly, the one which pays monthly is a better arrangement. You don't want to wait months before you get paid for your hard work.
- See if the affiliate program gives \$ examples of how their top affiliates are doing. This can be a great indicator as to whether or not it is a good affiliate program. If some affiliates are earning many thousands per month, then it is a good affiliate program.
- If the affiliate program has examples of which marketing methods these successful affiliates are using to get their results, then this information is also most beneficial.
- An affiliate program, which offers a special monthly newsletter just for its affiliates is also great. Here, you'll also get extra tips and information on techniques that are working well.
- See if the program notifies you by email when you make a sale, or you have an affiliate sign up under you (if it is a 2-tier program). It motivates you when you see 'You've made another sale, or another Affiliate has signed up' in your email inbox.
- Ensure that the program provides top-level support for its affiliates. If they cannot answer your query immediately make sure they respond within 48 hours. Good, timely support is critical to your success.

There is a huge selection of Affiliate Programs available to you on the web. Choosing the right one for you to market is never an easy task. However these features (described above) are necessary components of a professionally managed affiliate program.

Remember Affiliate Programs are a "buyers market." So choose programs which have these preferred features, and a product or service you believe in.

Make sure you do plenty of research before joining any affiliate program.

## **Commissions - The Higher the Better**

A good way to identify if the management of an affiliate program you're thinking of joining is serious about their affiliate program is by the commissions (percentage of sales) they're willing to pay you for your effort.

If someone is offering you 10% commission and they are keeping the rest, then you need to ask yourself this... "Should I really be in this affiliate program?"

An affiliate program I recently joined called 'E-Book Marketing Explained' pays out 45% commission to their affiliates and another 10% on the 2nd tier.

That's 55% of the sale price!

The owners of the program only keep 45% of the sale price, and it's from this percentage that they also take out their costs. Now, either they've gone completely mad, or they are very smart.

I suspect they're very smart.

Why?

Well, by paying out such high commissions they're attracting many serious affiliates into their program. This means that they'll sell in much higher volumes. With these higher volumes of sales they can afford to give away such a high commission.

AND... because they give so much away to their affiliates with their high commission rate it shows that they're supremely confident about the worth of their own product or service, and its ability to sell itself. Their product or service is that good, and this is why they offer these high percentages to their affiliates.

Affiliates do all the pre-selling and all the hard work to get the prospect to view the program's web sites pages. Therefore, they want to be paid well for their effort. So, as an affiliate, do not accept miserly 10% commission rate payments. Set yourself a standard of nothing less than 25% and make sure that this 25% represents more than just a few dollars in payment.

It is with the bigger percentage payers that you'll make decent commissions, the 40%-plus hitters. These BIG affiliate program commissions are the ones that will create an income burst to your bank account balance each and every month. *Focus on these to get a better return for your effort.* 

## **Chapter 3 - Affiliate Marketing Principles**

## **Spend 75% of Your Time Marketing Programs**

How important do you think it is to market your Affiliate

programs? Well, most people would probably say that it's quite important.

I would say that this is the main difference between success and failure for anybody marketing Affiliate programs. The more time you spend marketing your affiliate programs the more successful you'll be... and the more money you'll make.

'Super Affiliates' spend 75% of their time marketing their affiliate programs. This means that they only spend 25% of their time working on their affiliate programs. The bulk of their time is spent in promoting them.

Now, compare this with most affiliates who spend about 10% to 20% of their time marketing their affiliate programs, and the rest of their time "fiddling."

You may have read the statistics that indicate that between 80% and 90% of all affiliates make little or no money each month from their affiliate programs.

A big reason for their lack of success is...

### LACK OF MARKETING.

Just because it's an affiliate program does not mean that you do not have to spend time marketing it.

Treat each affiliate program you belong to as if it were your own product. This will force you to concentrate more of your efforts on marketing. By thinking like the "owner" rather than the "affiliate" you'll automatically focus on what is important to make those sales.

In fact, you could say that you have to spend MORE TIME marketing your affiliate programs than if you were the owner of the product, because not only are you trying to get people to buy a product, you are also competing with other affiliates marketing the same product.

Spend more time marketing your programs than your fellow affiliates and you'll earn more money. If others spend more time than you marketing their programs who do you think is going to succeed?

However, when I talk about marketing affiliate programs this doesn't mean that you have to go out and spend a whole lot of money doing this.

There are numerous, effective, low cost and free marketing methods that work very well.

Try the following free marketing methods to improve your affiliate program results.

- Write your own articles
- □ Use ezine ad swaps
- Use sig files in your emails

To be successful with affiliate programs you need to be disciplined and consistent with your marketing. Set aside a couple of hours each day for the marketing of your affiliate programs, and I guarantee you that your monthly affiliate check will begin to increase.

You may even become a Super Affiliate one day!

## **Affiliate Marketing Techniques That Get Results**

These are techniques that (when used consistently) bring good results.

- Spend time trying to get a higher ranking in the various search engines for your web sites. Learn as much as you can about search engines and make it a weekly task to try to improve your rankings in them.
- The word "free" and especially when written "FREE" is over used. Use it only occasionally on your site. For example you could use it to give away a free E-Book or free article you have written.
- Spend 75% of your time marketing your web site and affiliate programs and 25% of your time working on them. Most people spend about 10% to 20% marketing their web site and affiliate programs. Then again, most people online do not make any money.
- Use text links rather than banners for your affiliate programs. Text links have a much higher click through ratio. People have trained themselves to ignore banners.
- Write you own articles and post them on a separate page on your site. Then submit them to the following article resource sites:

http://www.ezinearticles.com/add\_url.htm http://www.ideamarketers.com http://www.marketing-seek.com/articles/submit.shtml http://www.web-source.net/articlesub.htm

Check your clicks and sales regularly at your affiliate web site. If you see a slowdown in clicks and/or sales then alter your marketing tactics. Try

something different. Do not continue using the same techniques if they're are not working.

- Use Newsgroups, but do this in a clever way. Stand out from the crowd. Use Newsgroups to announce new articles that you've written. However, make sure that you read the rules of each newsgroup before you post to it, and never, ever spam.
- Do not use graphics that will slow down the loading of your web page. If your selling or pre-selling information is predominantly text, your site will load much faster. My site has one graphic on it. That's right, just ONE.
- Subscribe to a number of newsletters, which are related to the theme of your web site. You can always get a lot of valuable affiliate tips from good newsletters.
- Post articles that other webmasters have written on your site, but ask them first.
  You can even do your own review of other people's articles.
- Find out whether any affiliate programs you belong to have articles on their site, and find out if you can post them on your site. Then include your affiliate link back to the affiliate site at the end of the each article.

## Be an Affiliate Site AND a Sales Site

Are you just a sales site reselling affiliate products and services?

You've probably seen sites that sell a product or service and noticed that they also have an affiliate program, which you can join. There is often a link at the top left or at the bottom of the site, which says "Affiliate Program".

Not only can you buy the product or service, but you can also sell it and earn a commission.

Well, how about using this very same concept for the affiliate programs you're promoting. How about setting up your site like this but not actually developing the product or service yourself.

You can use this technique with 2 tier programs!

Not only will you directly earn commissions through the sale of products or services at your site, you can also sign up second tier affiliates to earn commissions for you as well.

Many of the best affiliate programs are 'Two Tier' systems. In fact, it is advised that you join affiliate programs that have two tiers.

So, how should you design your site to accommodate sales and promote affiliate signups? There are 2 ways to do this:

If you have a number of products or services that you are selling at your site, then underneath the "To Buy" affiliate link place a "To join affiliate program" link. Most likely your affiliate program will provide you with 2 different affiliate links, a "Buy" link and a "join program" link..

Chances are, people you sign up on the 2nd tier via your affiliate program link will also end up buying the product themselves. So, not only do you get a direct commission from the sale to this person you'll also get 2nd tier commissions from any sales they make in the future.

### Affiliate mini-sites

Set up a mini-site for each one of your main affiliate programs, so that you're only reselling this one product or service on that site.

This would be a site with only two pages. On the first page place the link to the product itself. On the second page include a description of the affiliate program, and place the link to the affiliate program sign up page.

Your main goal is to actually direct visitors to the second page where they can sign up for the affiliate program.

Why?

You'll get more commissions from signing up affiliates in your 2nd tier than from visitors directly buying the product through your affiliate link. This is because more people will be interested in the affiliate program rather than the product. However, when they join the affiliate program, many of them will actually buy the product or service.

In summary, think about using your site as an affiliate program site AND a sales site. It gives you two bites at the cherry, and having 2nd tier affiliates means you can be earning commissions for many years to come.

## **Fewer Links = More Profits**

Have you got too many links on your site?

I saw a site today that had only four visible links on its home page. Three of those links were text links and linked to other pages within the same web site. Therefore there was actually only one link to a different site.

Is this site operating profitably?

I'm really not sure but the information on the site was very good, and this got me thinking.

Everyone is talking these days about link popularity and

getting as many people to link to your site. Often this means you have to give reciprocal links back to them. The theory goes that the better your link popularity the better you'll rank with the search engines.

Well some people appear to be taking this idea to extremes. Suddenly you've got 473 links to other sites all sprayed across your web pages. Your visitors are bombarded with banners and text links on totally different subjects.

So, visitors do not know what to click on next... Arrrrggggghhhh !

Sure, you might jump up a couple of places in the search engine results but is it really worth it?

Also, there is a real possibility that the Search Engines will actually dump your site. It's theme-focused links which actually improve rankings with the Search Engines, not random, unrelated links from Link farms and link exchanges.

With so many links these sites are not focused.

So, what's the answer here?

### Fewer links might mean more profits.

When your visitors come to your site and see only a few links there will only be a few places for them to click on. This means that they'll spend more time reading the actual content on your site.

This will mean they'll actually stay longer at your site.

The 'stickiness' of your site will improve. They may even come back because they've learnt a bit more about you and your web site.

They may even bookmark your site for future reference.

Now, this is what you're really trying to do ... get the visitor to come back, because people rarely buy on their first visit.

Now, compare this with a site that has lots of links. The visitor sees dozens of links to dozens of different sites. They quickly scan the home page and see a link that takes their interest and click on that link.

Now, they're on someone else's web site, and they've completely forgotten the name of your web site, the one they were just on. You've not only lost a visitor, but you've also lost a potential customer.

These people are less likely to come back to your site, because they cannot even remember its name.

### Here's a method to focus your web site.

Use fewer links on your home page.

Put some of the links that were on your home page on your other pages. This will make people click from your home page to one of the other pages of your web site. Then make sure each link is related to what you are discussing on that particular page.

### Be more focused.

People will stay longer at your site. They will not be inclined to click off your site on the first link they see. Get them interested in what YOU are offering, not what someone else is offering.

### Less links means more profits.

## **Scatter Gun or Targeted Approach?**

Here's an affiliate marketing question. Should you join every affiliate program you can find, or just a few?

There are many thousands of affiliate programs on the net that you can join. Every man and his dog have one. But how do you decide which programs to join?

There are two schools of thought here. First you can take the scatter gun approach, which is quite popular on the net, and join as many programs as possible. This ensures that at least SOME of them will pay off. Well, that's the theory at least.

The alternative is to take the targeted approach. Join some leading affiliate programs in just a few areas and put more effort into promoting each one. First, do some affiliate marketing research by reading as many articles as possible. This way you'll narrow down the options.

There are pros and cons to both the scatter gun and targeted approaches, but why not do what everyone else is *not* doing. It seems to me most sites are taking the scatter gun approach. For example: *We have 3,000 affiliate programs listed on our site. We have the largest selection of affiliate programs.* 

Focus? Find your own niche. Find a particular area that you're interested in. If (for example) your interest is in selling rare papyrus from Egypt and you find that there is only one affiliate program dedicated to this, join it. Focus your affiliate marketing

strategies on this one product. You're not thinking about selling papyrus from Egypt one minute and then how to sell long distance phone calls the next.

With fewer products and services you are able to focus more energy and effort on the products and services

that you have a genuine interest in. You may even become regarded as an expert in this particular area because of your specialist knowledge.

There are many webmasters doing fine promoting their hundreds or even thousands of affiliate programs, but the market for the scattergun approach now appears to be very cluttered.

This is where the specialists enter - the new breed of Webmaster who focuses only on particular products or services.

Alternatively, your focus may be on one area, and you select only the best-selling, highest-paying commissions for that field. Then you target customers with your high-level affiliate marketing techniques.

### There is room for the specialist to succeed.

Target your affiliate programs. Pick just a few.

Concentrate all of your time on marketing these programs, and because you're so passionate about the product or service that you're selling, you will drive more targeted traffic to your affiliate program.

### It's called focusing.

## **Take Affiliate Links off your Home Page**

Do not put your affiliate program links on your home page.

Why?

Well you've slaved hard to get your home page ranked at spot number 5 on one of the major search engines for a popular term.

Your visitor arrives at your site, which loads quickly, only taking a few seconds.

### And whammo!

They see a nice little affiliate link right at the top of the

page and click on it. If the link interests them they soon forget which site they came from.

You may make a commission on a sale from this person but you've also have just missed an even bigger opportunity.

### You've just made a big mistake.

By not letting your visitor get to know you first, you did not develop any type of relationship with them. It is unlikely that they will ever come back to your site. Why should they? They found what they wanted on your site, so there's no need for them to come back.

#### In fact they do not even remember who you are.

A way around this problem is to take the links to the affiliate programs OFF your home page. *Put them on your subsidiary pages instead*.

This way a visitor has to click through a few pages on your site to get to these affiliate links. And, while they're doing this they're getting to know you better.

They might find out that you offer a newsletter at your site, or that you have some great articles that you or others have written.

They may like what they see, and when they do *they're more likely to return to your site again at a later date.* You see what's happened here by making this small change? Your visitor got to learn a bit more about you and your web site, and they're much more likely to return again.

Now, they'll still end up getting to the affiliate link that they wanted to get to. It just took them a little bit more time. And in the meantime, you've left some sort of positive impression on your visitor in the process

There are just so many web sites out there and so many people promoting affiliate links. You have just one opportunity to develop a relationship with your visitor. By placing affiliate links on your sites' subsidiary pages you'll have a better chance of doing this.

## The Secrets of a higher "Conversion Ratio"

As an affiliate promoting programs, you need to know the conversion ratio of each program to which you belong.

It is something you have control over.

But... what exactly is a conversion ratio?

For affiliate programs, the conversion ratio (or CR) is the number of visitors who click through on your affiliate link compared to the number of sales you make.

For instance if you had 100 visitors to one of your affiliate programs you were promoting and got 1 sale from these visits then your CR would be 1%.

One sale for every 50 visitors would be a CR of 2% and one sale for every 200 visitors would be a CR of 0.5%.

So what would be a good conversion ratio for an affiliate program?

Well after much research I've found that a 1% CR is quite acceptable. A CR of 0.5% would be a little low, and if you have a CR of 3% then you've got a winning affiliate program.

Depending on what you're promoting your goal should be to achieve a CR of 1% - 2%.

But how do you do this?

To get a higher CR you need to concentrate on the following things:

 Join quality affiliate programs that have products or services that are proven sellers on the Internet. Become an affiliate of HOT selling products or services (including marketing, travel, health & fitness and ebooks.)

The more focused your web site is the better your conversion ratio. If you're promoting 100 different products or services your CR's will be low. If you promote one product or service at your site your CR will be MUCH higher.

#### How often do you promote your affiliate programs?

The more often you promote each program the higher your CR will be.

#### How many links on your site?

Remember, "less is more." However the more affiliate links you have for the same program then the higher your CR will be. Do not get carried away here. Don't let your web site look like a flea market, because your CR will drop dramatically. Monitor your CR stats to see what's working and what's not. When a program is a poor performer, experiment with your marketing and placement on the page strategies until you get an improvement. If the program still doesn't perform, drop it and find a program that does.

By concentrating on these factors you should be able to achieve a CR of 1%. By doing these things even better you may be able to increase it to 2%, or better.

#### Do not expect the CR to rise overnight.

A visitor to your site today may only turn into a sale in 6 months time. So make sure that you have 12 months of data before properly assessing the conversion ratio.

**The most important thing is marketing your affiliate programs.** *More marketing means a higher CR, which means more money for you.* So monitor your conversion ratio and make it your goal to continually improve it.

# Chapter 4 – AFFILIATE MARKETING STRATEGIES

## **Does A High Traffic Site Convert Into Sales?**

If you are already an affiliate, or are thinking of becoming an affiliate of a program, you've probably seen some statistics like these included with the affiliate sign-up information:

Low traffic sites can earn \$500 - \$1,000 per month,

Medium traffic sites can earn \$1,000 to \$2,000 per month

High traffic sites can earn \$3,000 + per month."

Wow!! Sounds pretty good.

From one affiliate program it seems you could be making over \$3,000 a month just because you're a high traffic site.

Are you a high, medium or low traffic site?

Who knows? Different people have different views on what constitutes high, medium or low traffic.

You're probably a medium traffic site, or a low traffic site at the absolute worst.

So, the theory is that just by joining this fantastic affiliate program you'll be earning at least \$500 a month, and more likely somewhere between \$1,000 and \$2,000 a month.

Gee, (you think to yourself) if I can find another couple of affiliate programs like this I'll be banking in excess of \$100,000 a year.

Yippee!! Man, lets go for it. Let's sign up NOW!

But what they didn't tell you (and it's not their

obligation to tell you this either) is that *these statistics only apply to those affiliates* who are marketing their affiliate programs every day.

This is the standard promotional procedure for the average performing affiliate.

- Stick a couple of banners on their site.
- □ Wait a few weeks.
- □ No sales come.
- □ *Join another affiliate program.*
- Stick these banners on their site.
- □ Wait a few more weeks.
- □ No sales!
- **•** Then they sit back and think affiliate programs are a joke.

But it's not the affiliate program that's the problem. It's the affiliate.

If you use the right marketing methods that bring results, and spend many hours a week marketing your affiliate programs, then you too can also be part of the affiliate success 'statistics'.

But, if you expect things to just magically happen with a couple of flashing banners on your site then you're going to be sorely disappointed.

Do not assume that these enticing statistics apply to all

Affiliates. Sadly, they do not. Affiliate programs are not the Holy Grail, however they can be an excellent way to obtain a decent monthly check.

The most amazing statistic is that it is estimated that 90% of all affiliates earn little or no money at all from affiliate programs.

Now this is a statistic you do not want to be part of. Change the way you do things and you too can become a success statistic.

## Are you in Auto-responder Heaven?

If not, then you should be. Auto-responders can save you time and put your web site on automatic pilot.

Do you have original content on your site?

Have you written articles or bits of information that are interesting to your visitors?

As well as listing your information and/or articles on your site you can let your visitors have their OWN copy of this information sent to them by auto-responder.

An auto-responder is an automated email delivery system. It that sends requested information directly to the person whose asked for it.

For instance, the articles I have written at my site each have a separate auto-responder at the bottom of the article. If you want a copy of these articles for yourself you just send an email to the auto-responder address.

Viola!

The requested article is sent to you immediately by email.

Your own copy of my article is now on your computer, and you'll have it there for future reference.

But why would your visitors want copies of your articles?

Well, there are many reasons. Here are just a few.

- First they can re-read the article at any time in the future. They do not have to re-visit the web site to read the article again if they forgot some of the information in it.
- They may like the article or information so much that they want to include it in their newsletter or on their web site. *If they have a copy, then this is simple to do*. They do not have to go back to the web site and copy, paste, and re-format the article. It's already done for them.
- Another reason to give your information to people by auto-responder is that they now have your email address so that they can easily contact you in the future.

- They may want to do business with you down the road, and instead of forgetting about you in the maze of web sites they now have your details on file.
- They may just want to compliment you on a well-written article.

Whatever the reason, they can easily contact you.

Of course you can also use auto-responders to deliver information on a particular affiliate program with which you're involved. This is a powerful way to promote to people when they visit your site. Also, it's all automatic.

So join the revolution and come up to auto-responder heaven. You'll be glad you did.

To find an auto-responder for your purposes just go to one of the search engines and type in 'autoresponder'.

However, be aware that different auto-responders have different features and capabilities. Examine these very closely before you choose a system.

If you choose to use a free auto-responder (which is not recommended) then you'll end up promoting that auto-responder on every message that's sent out on "your" system.

If you're serious about marketing your affiliate programs what's the point of promoting someone else's site or system, unless there's the potential for you to earn affiliate income by doing so?

I strongly recommend that you only use a professional auto-responder system. Different auto-responder systems have different features, and prices. Compare their features before choose the system that's right for you.

As there are so many auto-responder systems available on the web, any list I could provide here would not be comprehensive, so I choose not to do this. However, as a starting point choose a system that doesn't limit the number of messages that you send. You'll be able to get a robust auto-responder system for under \$25.00 a month.

## Web Design Tips for Affiliate Web Sites

For affiliates running their own web site, or those thinking of starting their own web site, the following web design tips should help convert more visitors into sales.

1. Your main goal as an affiliate is to get people to click

your affiliate links, so make it very easy for visitors to do so. You have to actually tell them to click the link. Have a 'click here' for every affiliate link on your site.

2. **Content. Content. Content.** Give visitors what they want. They want good quality content and lots of it. Articles, tips, newsletter archives and details of each product or service on your site.

3. The fewer pictures the better. Lots of graphics slow sites down, and as you are an affiliate you want the visitor to click your affiliate link. If your web site takes a long time to load your visitor may just leave and not even get a chance to click the affiliate link.

4. Use a simple layout with a prominent, easy to find link to each major page on your site. Complicated sites with lots of graphics and the latest design features are great in theory, but the keep-it-simple strategy works best for affiliates.

5. If you offer a newsletter, make it very easy for people to sign up by having your subscribe details on every page of your site. Also, include a newsletter archive section on your site.

6. For lots of great content use other people's articles on your site. Ensure these articles fit the theme of your site and include your affiliate links at the bottom of the page that these articles appear on.

7. Make sure you have a 'Contact Us' page. When you tell people who you are and how to contact you they will instantly be more likely to trust you. If they trust you they will be more likely to click on your affiliate links!

8. Be constantly looking for ways to improve the design of your affiliate web site. Your design should be focused on getting visitors to click your affiliate links. A clean, no fuss, style of web design usually gets better results for affiliate web sites.

## A Thousand Words... Worth More Than One Picture!

In fact 10 words are better than one picture on the Internet.

In the offline world pictures often sell much better than

words. But in the online world words often sell much better than pictures. Especially when they're promoting your web site or affiliate programs.

### **Text Sells!**

When you're marketing your affiliate programs on the Internet try using text instead of pictures.

To prove the sales benefits of text over pictures do a little test. If you currently have a picture link at the top of your web site, monitor the click-throughs you're currently getting. Do this for two weeks.

Then change the picture link to a clever text link and monitor these click-throughs for another two weeks.

I would be very surprised if the results were not much better for the text link. I know from my own testing that text links always perform MUCH better than the graphic/picture links. Other successful affiliates tell me that they have also have had similar results.

You see people have trained themselves to ignore banners, and since most banners are pictures the banner click through rates have fallen through the floor.

### But guess what?

Some banners are actually doing really well. Cleverly designed interactive text banners are getting very high click-through rates.

#### Why?

Online it's words that sell best. Words prompt the person to find out more information. They'll take further action, and click on the text link, where they won't do this with a graphic link.

People are extremely resistant to being *sold* to. They want to get to know someone first. They want to be able to trust someone.

Someone who's *selling* something with flashy pictures could be seen as untrustworthy. Text links however are more believable. Let me give you an example.

Often when I receive an email there's information at the end of the email in the form of a text link. The text link could read something like 'For more great ideas click here'.

Well if the information in the email was interesting to me then I'll want to know what other great ideas the sender of the email has to tell me about. I want to see what other content they have at their site.

As affiliates you need to give your visitors great content. So, why divert their attention away from your great content with pictures?

### Give them more content.

#### Give them quality content.

To get them to read your valuable content..

- □ Use text links.
- Use interactive text banners,
- Use text links in your emails,
- □ Use text links on your web site.

#### For affiliates, text links work!

## Are You Using Classified Ads in Ezines?

If not, then you should be. They are much more effective than traditional online classifieds. This is mainly because they're more targeted.

How many ezines do you think there are on the Internet.

No one really knows. However there are some estimates of between 160,000 - 300,000.

And, guess what? Most of these ezines have a subscriber base of fewer than 2,000 subscribers. Few people target these low subscriber base ezines. The big boys just target the large subscriber base ezines.

So, there's a huge overlooked market here that can get your targeted ezine ad in front of tens of thousands of people. Don't overlook the smaller ezines.

These are three ways you can negotiate deals with ezine publishers for mutual profitability.

1. Ezine Ad Swaps.

You can swap ezine ads with other ezine editors. The cost to you – ZERO! You just approach another ezine editor and ask them to swap 6 ads in their next 6 issues. And you will feature their ezine ad in your next 6 issues.

2. Paid Ezine Ads

You could negotiate a deal to pay for your ezine ads. If someone has a subscriber base of 1,000 subscribers and they currently run little or no ezine ads ask them if they would like to receive some money to run your ezine ad. I bet they won't say no.

3. Swap Ezine Ads for Articles

Instead of swapping ezine ads why not feature another editor's article in your ezine and they feature your ezine ad in their ezine. Both sides benefit.

What about receiving money for running ezine ads in your own ezine?

Once you get to 1,000 subscribers you can run paid ezine ads. However, don't run any more than 3 per issue. You do not want to clutter your ezine with a whole lot of ads. Readers will "tune out."

Ad rates vary tremendously, but let's assume you negotiate a deal of \$10 per thousand subscribers for each ezine ad. You run 3 ads per ezine.

If your ezine is a weekly publication then that's an extra \$30 per week, or \$1,560 per year... *a nice little bonus earner for little effort*.

When you get to 2,000 subscribers this would be over \$3,000 per year. Can you see the potential here?

So if you've never tried ezine classified ads, then give them a shot. Compared to online classified ads they're more focused and it's been proven by independent studies that they get a higher response rate.

You can find numerous ezines to advertise in at the granddaddy of ezine directories; <u>http://www.directoryofezines.com</u>. The DOE team have a variety of advertising

packages you can purchase, and in addition to this it's an excellent resource for placing your articles. Many of the Ezines listed also accept articles. However, to access this resource you need to pay a very modest annual membership fee

# **Does Your Headline "Grab" Their Attention?**

The sole objective of a headline is to get the reader to keep reading.

Whether it's an article, a sales letter, an ezine ad or just

the subject heading in an email, the objective of the headline is to get the reader to read more than just the headline. Its purpose is to get them to read the next 'bit'.

Your headline is a sales tool that *sells* the rest of the article to the reader.

#### So what makes a headline an attention grabber?

Let's look at 4 elements within a headline that will "grab" the reader's attention, and keep them reading.

1. Ask the reader a question

If you ask a question in your headline the reader will be more inclined to get an answer to the question by continuing to read. The reader becomes intrigued. This prompts them to read on. Asking a question is one of the best ways to 'grab' the reader's attention.

2. Use Inverted Commas

Use inverted commas around a single word, such as I have done with the word "grab"... or around a group of words...or even the whole headline. The inverted commas themselves actually highlight something that the reader can latch on to. If you had ten headlines and one used inverted commas in it, then it's more likely it would be the most read headline.

There is another benefit in using inverted commas around the whole heading. It often means that in an alphabetical listing of headlines you will be near the top. This is because inverted commas come before the letter "A".

3. Capitalize the First Letter of Each Major Word in the Headline

Capitalizing each 'major' word in the headline grabs the

reader's attention. However do not capitalize every word, such as 'a', 'the', 'of', 'to', 'on', 'in' and 'an' unless they're the first word of the headline. It's unnecessary.

Take a look at the 'headline' above (Point 3.) The words 'the', 'of' and 'in' are not capitalized. Let's see what this headline would look like if they were:

Capitalize The First Letter Of Each Major Word In The Headline

See how capitalizing each word reduces the impact of the headline. It just does not impress as much. There is no distinction between the words. The 'major' words do not stand out as much.

However, in the headline (Point 3) the main (selling) words stand out more because they're separated by the not so important words:

## Capitalize

## **First Letter**

**Each Major Word** 

## Headline

4. Use powerful words

"Grab" is a powerful word. So is "Free". Even "Powerful" is a powerful word for that matter. Use at least one or two powerful words in your headline. These powerful words will draw in the reader's attention and prompt them to keep on reading.

These 4 techniques will help you to write better headlines. When you get the headline wrong there is no use in writing the article, the ezine ad or the sales letter. However, get the headline right and you're half way to making the sale or obtaining a new ezine subscriber.

# A Guide to Creating Your Own Affiliate Newsletter

Want to publish your own affiliate newsletter?

It is something that you should think about doing. This is not something you need to publish every day or even every week. Publish it once a month if you want.

And it is so easy to do, as it's all done by email.

Publishing your own affiliate newsletter is a great way to get your message across and to keep people informed about your web site. You can update people on your affiliate programs, any changes that have taken place at your site, and any new ideas or articles.

Also you can do ad swaps with other newsletters. This is actually a really good way of marketing your affiliate

programs. You do an ad swap with another newsletter and place an ad for one of your affiliate programs in their newsletter. I have had very good results using this technique.

But isn't it a lot of work to publish a newsletter?

Not really.

Let's say you publish your affiliate newsletter

once a month. You could have a couple of articles that you or someone else has written as well as some information about any changes made to your web site. You could also include information on a new affiliate program that you've recently joined and offer your opinion about it.

Then as an additional marketing tool you can publish each of your newsletters on a separate page of your web site. This enables people to have a look at your newsletter before they decide to sign up.

To get people to sign up to your newsletter need not be

difficult task either. You could just ask them to send you a blank email or an email, which includes the word 'Subscribe' in the subject heading.

Some of the most important things to consider here is to make sure that your newsletter is professional, that it invokes trust with your subscribers and that it has NO SPELLING MISTAKES. I've received newsletters in the past that were riddled with spelling mistakes and the first thing I did was unsubscribe. Poor spelling means poor attitude.

And, that's another thing. Make sure it's easy for subscribers to UNsubscribe. Put a message at the bottom of each newsletter giving them the option to unsubscribe. The

message could be to simply send an email to you with 'Unsubscribe' included in the subject heading. Of course, if you're using an automated mailing system this will handle these unsubscribes automatically.

One final thing...TRUST.

If you can build trust at your site then you will get more subscribers. People want to be able to trust you before they give you their email address.

Tell your visitors before they subscribe that their email

address will never be sold or given away to anybody, under any circumstances. People are very concerned about spam and the last thing they want is a whole lot of junk email because you gave their email address away.

So think seriously about starting your own affiliate newsletter. You can publish it as frequently or as infrequently as you like. It is a great marketing tool for your affiliate programs.

# Put Your "Resource Box" on Autopilot

If you write articles then you'll also need to include a resource box. Have you thought much about what to put in your resource box?

If not, then you should. It is probably the most important part of your article!

Here are three different techniques to use with your resource box to maximize its selling potential. *Remember, a resource box is a call to action*. You want your reader to take some action. That action should be to either to send you an email or to visit a specified web site.

Your resource box can prompt a reader of your article to...

## 1. Subscribe to your Newsletter

Write a couple of different resource boxes that promote subscription to your newsletter. Make sure you have sign up instructions, a link back to your web site (so they can sign up there if they want to) and try to give something away for free as an incentive for signing up. Telling your visitor that they're going to get something for free when they sign up is a great way of encouraging people to subscribe. All this information needs to go in your resource box, so make it concise and catchy.

## 2. Sell Something

Got something to sell?

Tell everyone about it in your resource box. Make sure you include a link back to the particular page on your site where you sell the product or service. Make it as easy as possible for them to purchase. Also make sure you include your email address in the resource box so people can contact you for further information.

## 3. Promote Your Affiliate Program

If you are in an affiliate program, you can promote it in your resource box. Have a link to the product or service itself, or better still, provide a link back to your web site that then redirects to the affiliate program site. You will need to set up a separate page to do this.

However, make sure the affiliate program site you are promoting ties in with the content of your article.

The resource box is a powerful, yet under-used marketing tool. By using a number of pre-written resource boxes in these three key areas you can put your resource box on autopilot, and market yourself in three different ways.

This will mean more traffic, more subscribers, and more sales and affiliate commissions.

# Chapter 5 – AFFILIATE MARKETING TECHNIQUES

# **Tips for Writing Articles To Promote Yourself**

Writing articles is an excellent way to promote yourself, your web site and your affiliate programs. Here are some helpful tips for writing articles on the Internet.

**1. Use lots of white space in your articles**. People like to read on screen information in 'chunks', so always use lots of space.

**2. Use short paragraphs.** Following on from tip 1 keep it short and let your visitor read little pieces of information at a time.

**3. Use the occasional exclamation mark** (!) to get your readers attention. But please do not overuse this, as many people now appear to be doing.

**4. Ask a question** so that your visitor will read on to find the answer. This focuses the attention of the reader.

**5.** Put a lot of thought and effort into your heading. If the heading does not get the visitors attention straight away then they will just move on and not even read your article. Here's an example:

Try 'The 7 success secrets of breeding Cane Toads' rather than 'How to breed cane toads'.

**6. Use bullets** to quickly outline a number of points that may be important in your article. Readers can scan through these.

**7. Use numbers**, if this is appropriate in the article. For example the way I am writing this article.

**8. Outline the benefits to your reader.** They want to know what they can get out of reading the article so portray the benefits of what you are writing about.

**9. Do not waffle.** This is never more important than on the Internet. People get bored quickly and there are a million other articles they could be reading instead of yours. Get to the point quickly, in the very first line!

**10. Target your article.** Make it on one topic only and stick to the topic. Do not try to write about 2 or 3 things in the same article. Keep your focus on one topic to keep the interest of your reader.

**11. Conclude with a strong message.** A message that summarizes your article or gets your reader to take further action.

**12. Be humble.** People admire people who are humble. And, never talk down to your readers.

Learn as much as you can about writing on the Internet. It's a different form of writing than that used in the offline world. Read as many articles as you can. Study those that you find easier to read. Find out why, and then duplicate the techniques used.

## How to Market Your Free Articles with No Money

What? You mean that you've written these great, informative, valuable articles and now you have to market them! Surely if they're free, people will just come and read them.

Ah, the Internet.

Thou shalt market, market again... and then market some more on the Internet. It does not matter if you're selling a product or service, or giving your information away for free. You still have to market your stuff.

Otherwise no one will find you to read your excellent articles or content.

These twp free marketing techniques will help increase the readership of your articles.

1. Newsgroups.

With google groups, newsgroups are suddenly easier to use and easier to post to. Google groups are basically newsgroups in html form.

Here's a quick action plan for getting your article read by people in newsgroups.

#### Go to <u>http://www.groups.google.com</u>

and search for groups related to your topic. Either search using the search box or by manually scrolling through the newsgroups. If you're familiar with newsgroups there may already be some groups you know you can post to.

Select about 12 groups related to your topic and monitor these groups for the next 2 weeks to get a feel for the group. Then after this time, if appropriate, post a message offering your free article.

Include a link back to your web site where your free article is located.

2. Signature Files

A signature file or 'sig file' is a message that you include at the bottom of your email. For example one of my simple sig files is:

Regards David McKenzie http://www.brisney.com

The sig file does one important thing. It tells people who receive an email from me who I am, and how to find out more about me. By having a link back to my web site people are inclined to click on that link.

You can also use your sig file to give away your free articles.

For example:

Regards

David McKenzie

For a free article on writing articles on the Internet go to

http://www.brisney.com/internet-writing.htm

This way people can go to your web site and read your free article.

These are just two of many free marketing techniques available to you to market your free articles. Use them and you will increase the readership of your articles.

## How To Sell Through Other People's Articles

When you join a high quality affiliate program the affiliate program operator will provide you with many different promotional tools.

As well as traditional banners, these might include text links, ezine ads, interactive banners, buttons, sig files, and others.

Sometimes they will even give you their own articles.

The best thing about using THEIR articles is that you can have an affiliate link in the resource box at the end of the article.

A smart way to use the affiliate link in the resource box is to "hide" your affiliate link code.

How do you do this?

There are two ways to do this, the 2nd way is the more advanced.

(Note: The example uses the current information from the <u>http://www.1sthomebasedbusiness.com</u> affiliate program)

These two examples assume that the affiliate program operator has not put your affiliate code in place.

1. Partially hidden affiliate link

http://hop.clickbank.net/?xxxxx/brisney"> http://www.1sthomebasedbusiness.com

For this affiliate program you would replace "xxxxx" with your own affiliate link code.

What this link will now show is

http://www.1sthomebasedbusiness.com on your web page AND the affiliate link 'behind it'. You cannot see the affiliate link directly but place your mouse over it and it will show up.

This is a partially hidden affiliate link.

2. Fully hidden affiliate link

Here, I will put in some additional code, which prevents the visitor from viewing the code when the mouse is placed over the affiliate link. Your code will now look like this:

<u>http://hop.clickbank.net/?xxxxx/brisney/</u>" OnMouseOver=

"window.status='<u>http://www.1sthomebasedbusiness.com</u>';

return true" OnMouseOut="window.status="" title=

"http://www.1sthomebasedbusiness.com">

http://www.1sthomebasedbusiness.com

Now when you place the mouse over the affiliate link you cannot see the code.

Why is this so important?

Well, when your visitor is reading the article (including the resource box), it just looks neater and more professional. There is nothing worse than looking at a long affiliate link. In the example the affiliate code is still there, it's just 'underneath'.

Using other people's articles to sell products and services through affiliate programs means you are using one of the most powerful marketing tools that are available to affiliates.

I know. I do it and it works!!

# How to Create Redirect Pages for Affiliate Links

As an affiliate I use affiliate links throughout my web site, in emails and in other online promotions. These affiliate links are usually long and have numbers or words to identify the affiliate.

As well as using these 'direct' affiliate links I have also

used redirect pages (or what I might call 'indirect' affiliate links) on my web site as well. These are blank web pages with the sole purpose of redirecting the visitor to the affiliate page.

I recently did a comparison between direct affiliate links and redirect pages and the results were astounding!

The redirect pages outperformed direct affiliate links about 2 to 1 when placed in the same position on my web site. This meant twice as many people were clicking the indirect affiliate link as were clicking the direct affiliate link.

Why?

I have no idea about the logic behind this but it appears that visitors are less inclined to click a link when they know it is an affiliate link. It seems that they would rather "buy direct."

I must admit I do not think like this. Many times I've bought via affiliate links but I guess I'm an affiliate, so perhaps I think differently to people who are not affiliates.

So if redirect pages work so well, how do you create one?

It's simpler than you may think.

First, create a new web page on your site. Just leave it as a blank page.

Then just put the following piece of code between the header tags: <u>http://www.myaffiliatelink.com</u>"

You will need to replace the URL "myaffiliatelink.com" with your own affiliate program link.

If you are promoting five different affiliate programs you'll need to set up five separate pages...one page for each affiliate link.

Now you can use each redirect page link in your promotions instead of an elongated affiliate link.

When someone clicks on your redirect page link the following two things happen:

1. They'll be taken to your redirect page, which is a blank page. This lasts a few seconds.

2. The command in your header tag then forwards the visitor directly to the affiliate site.

The best thing about redirect pages is they do not look like affiliate links. They just look like normal pages. For those people who DO have a problem buying through affiliate links, they are unaware that the redirect page is actually an affiliate link.

So, try using re-direct pages for your affiliate own links. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised with the results.

# **Secrets of Using Popup Pages**

Many affiliates run their own newsletters, often producing them either once a week, or once or twice a month. And, if you don't already run a newsletter, you should.

The constant struggle is to increase subscriber numbers. I know, because this is my constant struggle.

You're probably already are very familiar with Popup Pages. But for those who aren't, Pop-ups are separate pages that (literally) POP up when you either enter a site or exit a site.

I have been reluctant to use pop-ups in the past for fear of the backlash that they might create.

I know many people hate them. In fact some people hate them so much they install software on their computer to prevent these pop-ups, popping up!

So I struggled on, gaining new subscribers each month and building my ezine. But it just didn't seem that I was gaining as many subscribers as I should have?

I had read how some people really lived for pop-ups. They stated they increased their subscriber numbers and/or sales dramatically.

Anyway, a few months ago I thought, "Oh heck, I'll give these pop-ups a shot."

WOW !! [Is a complete understatement of my reaction to the results.]

I set up a simple popup on my home page for subscribers to subscribe to my free twice-monthly newsletter for affiliates.

The first month my subscriber uptake increased 366%. The second month my subscriber uptake increased a whopping 600%!

And all this was because I'd put a very simple popup on my home page, which only pops up when people leave my site.

But guess what else happened?

Since I've put up the popup page I have not received one single complaint. Not one!

Now, this doesn't mean that I'm going to put dozens of pop-ups all over my site.

On the contrary. From my own research it seems that people generally do not mind one simple popup page about a quarter to a third of the size of a normal page. It's when these pop-ups get out of control that people get angry. You have all probably seen those pages where another three full pages popup immediately behind the site you've just landed on. Quite frankly these types of sites would annoy just about anybody.

However, one simple popup page working off the home page to get visitors to subscribe to my newsletter has worked like "magic" for me.

# "Don't just Get Sales. Get Affiliates in the 2nd Tier!"

Most affiliates get sales from the respective affiliate programs they belong to by selling directly to their visitors.

# But, what about the 2nd Tier?

Many affiliates programs allow you to sign up affiliates under you so you can earn commissions from the sales that YOUR affiliates are making. This is commonly referred to as the 2nd tier.

However, this tier is often ignored.

Many of the most successful affiliates have built a huge  $2^{nd}$  tier with the programs they promote. They have hundreds of other people all earning commissions for them.

This means they earn a lot of their commissions from these indirect (2<sup>nd</sup> Tier) sales. It also means they don't have to concentrate so much on direct sales. This frees up more of their time to work on promoting some of their other affiliate programs.

## Think about the power of the $2^{nd}$ tier.

You do one piece of work... getting an affiliate signed up under you in one of your affiliate programs.

Then each of these affiliates sell the particular product or service separately themselves. On any sales that they make, you also make a commission.

The commission you make for the  $2^{nd}$  tier is much less than the direct commission. However, if you have hundreds of affiliates under you, these many small amounts dwarf the  $1^{st}$  tier (larger) commission amount.

With a 2<sup>nd</sup> tier system... If they sell this week. You get paid. If they sell next week. You get paid again. And if they sell next month. You STILL get paid.

## You get paid each time they get paid.

Some affiliate programs allow you to earn commissions from your affiliates for many years. So by doing a little work today you can be earning commissions for years to come from these  $2^{nd}$  tier affiliates.

So do not just sell direct to your visitors. Get your visitors to become your  $2^{nd}$  tier affiliates as well.

Show them the benefits of joining an affiliate program. Tell them how much money they could make. Motivate them to sign up as an affiliate under you.

In the long run this strategy will prove to be very successful, and most lucrative for you.

Don't forget the 2nd tier. It can be more valuable to you than you think.

## **Honesty is Lucrative**

What is the biggest fear for people on the Internet?

It is probably the fear of losing money, or being taken in by some scam. It is the fear of having to deal with, or lose their money to dishonest people.

As an affiliate with your own web site you need to take this fear away from your visitors. You need to be up front and honest with your visitors at all times. You need to give them a feeling of trust and security whenever they deal with you.

It's a virtual certainty that most of your visitors will never

buy from you on their first visit. So your objective should be to give them a reason to come back. A good place to start is by ensuring that your site is honest.

If you are honest and are not telling tall tales on your site, then people will find your story much more believable. This will mean they're more likely to return.

When they return they'll already know that you have an honest site as they established this on their first visit. On this first visit they're more likely to dig a little deeper into your site. They are more likely to become more pro-active.

When they return they might even subscribe to your newsletter if you have one. Then you have established a relationship.

If you offer a newsletter make sure you tell them you will not give their email address away to anyone. Then after they have received a few issues of your newsletter they'll trust you a bit more.

Now they're ready to become a sub-affiliate of one of your affiliate programs. Now you are making money for every sale that they make. Isn't this the objective for affiliates? Of course!

By being honest at the very beginning in your first paragraph on your home page, you're starting to build a long-term relationship with your visitors.

Another advantage of being honest is that people will recommend your site to others. And those people will in turn recommend your site to even more people. Suddenly you have a web site that people feel safe and secure about.

They're happy to buy from your site.

They're happy to join affiliate programs from your site, because you're honest.

Other webmasters will put a link to your site on their site because they believe that you are a trustworthy online business to deal with. This in turn will bring more traffic.

So next time you think about writing that headline "\$30,000 in 30 days Guaranteed" stop and think. Am I being honest? Will my visitors believe me?

If the answer is no, then start being HONEST. Many dollars over many years is better than one quick dollar today!

# Conclusion

Thank you

Well, that's about it.

These are just some of the things I've learned on my journey to becoming a successful affiliate.

However, as with all learning, the journey to knowledge never truly ends. I'm constantly learning.

I sincerely hope that you've found the information here beneficial. Drop by <u>http://www.brisney.com</u> and "say hello" some time.

I wish you success in your ventures.

David McKenzie.

## **Glossary Of terms**

Affiliate Program	An Affiliate program is a commission-based program run by a web site to generate more sales for their products or services.
Affiliate	A person who works on a percentage of sales for an affiliate program.
Super Affiliate	An affiliate who is making large amounts of money promoting affiliate programs.

Click throughs	A click through is when a visitor to your site clicks on an affiliate link/web site address that takes them through to the destination URL.
Two Tier	Some affiliate systems have payment systems that pay out over a number of "tiers" or levels. You may get x% of the sale from the person who clicked through and bought the product or service, and then (if they become an affiliate) you get x% of the sales they make. This is the $2^{nd}$ tier.
Sig File	This is short for signature file. It's a message that you place at the end of your email to promote something.
Text Links	Links which use text (usually an affiliate site URL.)
Graphic Links	Linking to an affiliate site URL through an image, graphic or banner ad.
SPAM	Email that is not requested.
Affiliate Mini-Site	This is a site that's set up to sell one affiliate product or service.
Newsgroups	Web based groups of individuals who have a similar interest in a specific topic.
Sign-Ups	People who subscribe to an affiliate program or ezine that you're promoting.
<b>Conversion Ration (CR)</b> The conversion ratio is the amount of clickthroughs that convert to sales.	
Autoresponder	An autoresponder is a web-based email technology, which "automatically responds" to a request for information. Pre- written email messages can be pre-set to be delivered in a pre- determined sequence.

Ezine	An electronic newsletter.
<b>Resource Box</b>	Information that is attached to the end of a web-based article to identify and promote the writer, their products and services.
POP-Ups	A page that pops up on entry to or exit from a web site. Usually used to gather email addresses.

# LEGAL STATEMENT

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