

The background of the entire image is a soft-focus photograph of a laptop keyboard resting on a white lace surface. In the upper left corner, there are some pink and orange flowers. The overall color palette is muted and aesthetic, with a semi-transparent white box framing the central text.

UNIT 3

HOW TO MONETIZE ROUND-UP POSTS

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One type of post that can be really, really tricky to monetize are round-up posts, which are incredibly powerful traffic drivers to your site. My top ten, top fifteen, IKEA hack posts that are round-ups of other bloggers posts are some of my most popular ones. But there's no good way to monetize them because I don't have a material list for somebody else's idea hack, and that's not the purpose of the post. The purpose of the post is just to provide a round-up of inspiring ideas for my readers, and then they're supposed to go to the other blogs for the tutorials. I finally found a way to monetize those posts in some way, and that is by using Amazon native ads. I'm just going to quickly walk you through how to do it.

You're just going to start by logging in to your Amazon Associates dashboard and from there, under product linking, click on native shopping ads. If you have not explored native shopping ads before, they're pretty awesome. Theoretically, you can use them in any number of ways. You could set up a shop your home post this way, if most of the items can be found on Amazon. What I use them for is for monetizing those difficult to monetize round-up posts, and the way I do it most commonly is to use search ads.

So recommendation ads are a little bit different, I'll show you. You can create a recommendation ad, I'll show you. You just click right there, create recommendation ad, and you select whatever category within Amazon that you want to be included. So home and garden would be the most appropriate for my site, and you can include a search keyword. So I might include wreaths. The other thing I want to show you, so that would give me four products, but you can actually increase that if you click on 'advanced settings.' You could change it to a custom size and then you could select two rows if you wanted to show eight products. I'm going to keep it at one row. I'll show you what

happens if we embed that code into my wreath post. So I'm just going to go to the very end of the post, insert the code. It's not necessarily going to show up as a preview until you save the post. I'm going to click update and then view post. It may take a few minutes for it to populate the native shopping ads, so don't panic if you don't see it working right away. But we'll see how fast it is today. So I'm going to scroll all the way to the bottom and there they are: shop related products. All Amazon is basing this off of is the fact that I've told it to pull up home and garden items and I've searched for the word wreaths.

I think we can do even better than that, but at least it's something. At least it's something, and I think we can do better in two ways. One, the placement of the ads, and two, I think we can serve people better options, but that is how you would set up a related products shopping ad. So let me put it back on edit, we're going to head back over to Amazon associates, and instead of a recommendation ad, let's do something different. Let's create a search ad. So we're going to click search ads, create ad code, search ads. So again, you can select the category you want it to pull from; I'm still going to stick with home and garden and I'm going to type in fall wreath. I think I'm going to leave it at four products. You can actually see what items it's going to pull up, and you can have it show the search bar, which is my preference. Because then people can see, if they don't like these options, they can see that there's a search bar there and they can change the option. So let's grab this, we're just going to highlight the ad code, copy it, and paste it. So first, let's get rid of what we pasted before. Remember I said that I thought we could do better in terms of placement. So we're going to put this ad this time, let me pop over to this view and I'll show you. See how I talk about, if you enjoy this post, check out these other posts. I want to put it before that, so it says, I know my creative ideas are flowing. I'm going to say, "if making a DIY

wreath is not your idea of fun, check out these beautiful wreath options.” So that’s where I’m going to want to post it. So I’m just going to search for the word options, here it is. Take out that line break, paste it right there, update. I’ll take a look at the post and we’ll see how it does. You guys have to remember that Amazon is kind of like its own little search engine; sometimes it does a great job and sometimes it doesn’t. Oh, you guys, sorry. I accidentally selected, apparently, the eight show but I prefer this placement, because once they get down here, they see the other posts that I’m linking to and that may be distracting. I actually think that having it appear after the last DIY wreath idea is better placement and you can see how it works. You can see that people will be able to select a different category and enter their own search if they prefer to search for something else.

So now, let’s hop back over to Amazon and we’re going to look at the third option for native shopping ads, which is custom ads. These are definitely the best, they’re also the most time consuming. They can still be done fairly quickly, but let me just show you how this works. I’m going to go to home and garden, and I’m going to search for berry wreath, since I included a really pretty berry wreath and I see some options. I think that’s pretty, so I’m going to click that. It has been added. Now, how about I search for acorn wreath. So I’m basically just searching for things that are aesthetically similar to the wreaths that I included in the roundup posts. This is really pretty, so I’ll select that. Let me hop back and look at the post. Boxwood wreath, that would be a good one to include. That one looks pretty, and then let’s pick another one. How about moss wreath. We’ll see what pops up and if we like it. Not loving those options, so let’s see if we can draw inspiration from something else. I was really hoping to find something like that because it’s beautiful. Oh goodness sorry, I zoomed in. How about apple wreaths, and again, this is not like it’s taking a considerable amount of time, but you do have to work a little bit harder. Especially if you’re going to be particular about what your readers

see, and I tend to be; if I'm going to spend the time to do it, I really, really want to get it right for them. How about hydrangea wreath, that's what that first one was. Those are more summery colors. Oh, here's one, here's an autumn hydrangea and peony wreath. Alright, so I selected these four items, that's how they would show up. Actually, I don't like this last one. I really don't like the first one either, but you get the idea. You keep playing with it until you find—let's get rid of this one, I really don't like the dark background, I don't think it shows up well—but you play around with it until you are happy. Once you are, then you're just going to copy and paste the code. Oops, that's not what I meant to do, sorry about that. That's prettier, I'm just going to add that. I'm not loving the hydrangea wreath either. Again, even if you get picky like me—let's just type in fall wreath and see those options—it still doesn't take that awfully long and again, it could wind up paying off. So like I said, you just want to get it right for your readers. I'm happy enough with those choices.

If I weren't recording a video right now, to be honest with you, I would continue to play with it but once you're happy with your selections, you're going to go ahead and highlight and copy the code. Pop back over to your post and then remove or if you had any prior code there for native ads, remove it and then paste your new code, update the post, and we will take a look at it and see how it looks. The bottom line is that the custom ads give you the most control over what your readers see. So for a post like this, I feel like that is worthwhile, even if it does take a little bit longer.

So there are my Amazon picks. Again, your readers are welcome to search for something else on Amazon. That gives them some go-to options if they're not the DIY wreath kind of person. So that is a really, really great way to use Amazon native ads is to monetize your round-up posts. Again, round-up posts

can be huge traffic drivers for bloggers, and if I just pop over to my Google Analytics for a moment, I will show you. You can see how many of my top posts are round-up posts and then you will understand why I feel so strongly about monetizing those round-up posts. So let's see, again, let's just go back for a period of six months or around six months and click on behavior, site content, all pages, then click on page title. These are my top ten posts for the past six months; number four is a round-up post, number six is a round-up post, number seven is a round-up post. If we expand it to look at my top 20, I bet we see some more top-round up posts. Number 13, well that's a shopping guide post so we won't count 13 or 14. 24 and 25 are round-up posts, so again, it's important, at least for me, and I suspect that once other bloggers catch onto the power of curating round-up posts. Especially when you can include some of your posts within those round-ups; they can be some of your top traffic drivers, they can be some of your most popular posts. They can get new readers to your site and they are a huge, huge, huge opportunity to monetize. So I really, really recommend Amazon native ads for that, that's the quickest and easiest way certainly.

If you have something like RewardStyle or if you want to take the time to use the table function and add hand picked items from various other retailers that you're an affiliate of, you can absolutely do that. But the quickest and easiest way to monetize those round-up posts is through Amazon native ads.

Alright you guys, next up we are moving onto a new unit, where we're going to talk all about how to use affiliate marketing in your email newsletters, as well as on social media.