

UNIT 1

AFFILIATE MARKETING DEFINED

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For anyone who is totally new to affiliate marketing, let's just start by talking about what it is. The most simple way to explain it is, it's just a process that allows you to earn a commission for recommending another person or company's products to your readers. It's a really natural fit for blogs. Whether you're a fashion blogger, or a DIY blogger, or a home decor blogger, or a technology review blogger; the reason people are following you on social media and reading your blog is because they value your opinion and they like your taste.

So it's a natural thing to link them to certain products anyway, and before I monetized my blog, I did it all the time. If I was talking about my new couch, I linked to the couch. It wasn't an affiliate link, but I figured they'd want to know where I got it and I shared that information anyway. So the bottom line is, it's a natural thing to do anyway--your readers want to know.

How many times have you read a blog post and you see something fabulous and you think, "oh my gosh, I wish I knew where they got that." Everybody thinks that! So instead of just including the link that isn't going to earn you any money, you want to include affiliate links. All affiliate links do from a technical standpoint is they add a tracking code to the link so that when a reader clicks on it and it goes to the site, and then if a purchase is made, that sale can be tracked back to you so that you earn a commission.

What you're going to see on the screen next is just a graphic to help really drive this point home. As you can see on the graphic, if you blog about a new purchase that you've made, such as a lamp, you link to it, using an affiliate link. The next step is, your reader thinks, "hey, I want that lamp too." So they click on the link. Since it's an affiliate link, the sale is tracked using your unique ID that's embedded in the URL and you get a commission from the sale and your reader gets the new lamp that they love.

So let me just tell you a quick story. When I went to Haven Conference for the first time July of 2015. I was earning at least a thousand dollars per month through Amazon. Truly, I just assumed everyone was having similar success with affiliate marketing. I didn't even know it was that successful. I had no idea. So it wasn't until I got to Haven and started talking to other bloggers that I realized, oh, I think I'm earning more with affiliate sales than other people with similar traffic or even with a lot more traffic than I had. In talking to other bloggers about why they weren't really utilizing affiliate marketing, I got two common answers. One is they just really didn't know how to go about it, and the other was they just felt guilty about it, or they thought it was wrong, or that it would offend their readers.

So I just want to say—until you get over that mental hurdle, you will not succeed at affiliate marketing. So let me just put your mind at ease quickly. Affiliate marketing is really a win for everyone involved. It's a win for you, it's a win for your readers, it's a win for the retailer. Here's why, and this is the most important thing that you should take away from this particular video. When a reader clicks on an affiliate link that you've included in your blog or on social media and they make a purchase, they don't a penny more, they pay the exact same price that the retailer was going to ask anyway. So the commission that you earn is paid to you by the retailer. It does not affect the consumer in any way. The other thing to keep in mind is that it's a win for the retailer, because you've otherwise provided free advertising to put a new customer in touch with them. This is a customer who may not have found the product otherwise, or may not have found the retailer otherwise. You deserve something for that. They should pay you a commission, because otherwise, they're just getting free

publicity. Finally, it's a win for you because you're going to earn a commission for a link that you were probably going to include anyway. But you're finally going to earn a commission from it because you have that unique tracking code in it. So it's a win for everyone, it really is.

The overwhelming response I get from my readers are comments like this frequently: "thank you so much for including a source list, I wish every blogger did this." I'm not kidding, I've gotten that comment. People don't want to have to hunt things down. If they see something on your blog that they love, they just want to click on a link to it. They want to see how much it is. It doesn't necessarily mean they're going to purchase it, but they want access to that information. So don't feel bad about it, feel great about it! You're providing a service to your readers, you're providing a service to the retailers, and in the end, it's a win for you because it's another way you can earn money from doing what you love.

Next up, we're going to talk about how I feel like affiliate marketing is by far one of the most important revenue streams you can develop for your blog.

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