

# 10 Tips for Bloggers to Make Money with Affiliate Marketing

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A few weeks ago I published a [group interview with 26 different bloggers](#) talking about their favorite methods for monetizing a blog. Many of those blogging experts mentioned affiliate marketing as one of their favorite ways to make money from a blog, and so I thought it would be helpful to write a detailed article about why and how bloggers can make money through affiliate programs. If you're looking to make more from your own blog one of the best possibilities is to increase the amount you are making as an affiliate.

## Why Affiliate Marketing?

There are a lot of reasons for bloggers to love affiliate marketing. Here is a look at some of the most significant reasons.

### 1. No Need to Create Your Own Product

[Creating your own digital product](#) is also a great way to monetize a blog. However, creating your own product can take a lot of time, and that is something many bloggers don't have. Probably the number one benefit of affiliate marketing is that you **don't have to dedicate any time** at all to creating a product. *Someone else* dedicates countless hours into creating their product, and as an affiliate you can start promoting it right away, and you'll get a commission for every sale you refer.

And with digital products your commission as an affiliate is usually pretty substantial. For example, you may get a 50% commission for each sale you make. In this case you're making as much from each sale as the person who dedicated many hours to create the product! Without the need to dedicate the time to create the product it's possible for you to promote a greater variety and quantity of products as an affiliate than you would be able to create on your own.

**Related Reading:** [Affiliate Marketing vs. Selling Your Own Products: Which is Better?](#)

### 2. No Time Requirement for Customer Service

Not only will you not have to dedicate time up front to create the product, but as an affiliate you can also avoid the need to dedicate time on an **on-going basis** for customer service. The amount of time needed for customer service will vary depending on the type of the product, but some product creators/sellers need to dedicate serious amounts of time and/or money to be able to effectively support their product.

Some of the most popular, and potentially lucrative, products to create include software, WordPress themes, and

WordPress plugins. While it is possible for product creators to make plenty of money with these types of products, they tend to also require a *major* commitment to provide adequate support for customers. As an affiliate you won't be responsible to provide customer service or support, you'll just make the referral and **once the sale is made support will be the seller's responsibility**.

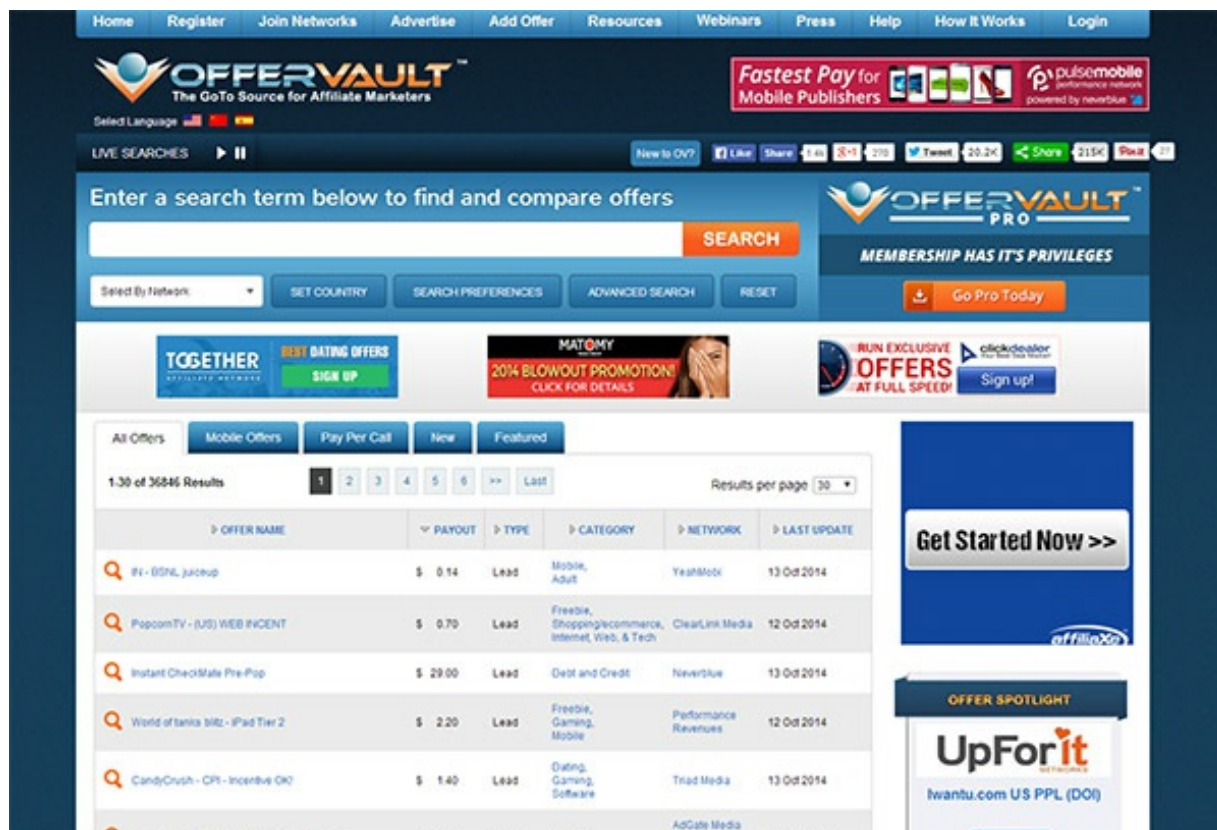
### 3. High Income Potential

Although the time requirements for affiliates is low, the income potential is very high. If you have an established reputation or a responsive base of readers, affiliate marketing has the potential to be extremely lucrative for you. Just look at Pat Flynn of [Smart Passive Income](#). Pat makes more than \$50,000 per month from affiliate programs because he has a large audience that trusts his recommendations, and he doesn't abuse that trust.

The amount of money that bloggers can make through affiliate marketing will vary greatly. If you have a new blog or a very small audience you can't realistically expect to make big money as an affiliate, but if you are consistently working to grow your blog audience affiliate marketing can be a great opportunity.

### 4. Plenty of Products to Promote

**Affiliate programs exist in just about any industry or niche you can imagine**. Regardless of what topics you blog about, chances are there are at least a few products that you could promote as an affiliate that would be a good fit for your audience. The more popular your niche or industry is, the more choices you will have. Industries with a lot of affiliate products often have great terms for affiliates (most notably, high commissions) because there is a lot of competition to get affiliates. To find products to promote you can browse through sites like [OfferVault](#), [CJ Affiliate](#), [Clickbank](#), [ShareASale](#), and other major networks and directories. You can also pay attention to other blogs in your industry and see what products they are promoting. It's also a good idea to visit the sites of products and services that you use to see if they offer an affiliate program.



The screenshot shows the OfferVault website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, Register, Join Networks, Advertise, Add Offer, Resources, Webinars, Press, Help, How It Works, and Login. The main header features the OfferVault logo and a search bar with a 'SEARCH' button. Below the search bar, there are filters for 'Select By Network', 'SET COUNTRY', 'SEARCH PREFERENCES', 'ADVANCED SEARCH', and 'RESET'. A 'Go Pro Today' button is also visible. The main content area displays a list of offers with columns for Offer Name, Payout, Type, Category, Network, and Last Update. The offers listed include:

OFFER NAME	PAYOUT	TYPE	CATEGORY	NETWORK	LAST UPDATE
It+ (SRL) Jackpot	\$ 0.14	Lead	Mobile, Adult	YeastMobi	13 Oct 2014
PopcornTV - (US) WEB INCENT	\$ 0.70	Lead	Freddie, Shopping/eCommerce, Internet, Web, & Tech	ClearLink Media	12 Oct 2014
Instant CheckMate Pre-Pop	\$ 29.00	Lead	Debt and Credit	Neverblue	13 Oct 2014
World of Tanks Blitz - iPad Tier 2	\$ 2.20	Lead	Freddie, Gaming, Mobile	Performance Revenues	12 Oct 2014
CandyCrush - CP1 - Incentive OK	\$ 1.40	Lead	Dating, Gaming, Software	Triad Media	13 Oct 2014

On the right side of the page, there are several promotional banners, including 'Fastest Pay for Mobile Publishers', 'pulsomobile performance network powered by neverblue', 'MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES', 'Go Pro Today', 'TOGETHER BEST DATING OFFERS SIGN UP', 'MAT@MY 2014 BLOWOUT PROMOTION! CLICK FOR DETAILS', 'RUN EXCLUSIVE OFFERS AT FULL SPEED! Sign up!', and 'Get Started Now >>'. At the bottom right, there is an 'OFFER SPOTLIGHT' for 'UpForit' with the URL 'Iwantu.com US PPL (DOI)'.

### 5. Benefit from Your Established Reputation

As an active blogger you are always working to expand your reach and establish your reputation with your audience. Promoting products as an affiliate allows you to make some money *as a result* of the reputation and trust that you have built. If your readers trust you they will be far more likely to buy a product as a result of your recommendation.

Of course, you need to **be very careful not to take advantage** of your readers because you can blow that trust in an instant. If you only promote quality products that you know your readers will like, you can manage to grow your income as an affiliate without compromising.

**Related Reading:** [7 Keys to Establishing Your Authority as a Blogger](#)

## 6. Can Be Used in Combination with Other Monetization Methods

One of the things I really love about affiliate marketing is that it can be easily used in combination with other monetization methods. In fact, I think it is possible for just about any blog to use affiliate marketing in one way or another. Being an affiliate doesn't require you to focus all of your monetization efforts on affiliate marketing.

For example, if your primary method of making money from your blog is to sell your own product, you can also promote a few select products as an affiliate. Ideally these products will complement your own product, or at least appeal to the same audience, but will not compete directly with your own product.

If you [make money at your blog through ad sales](#) you can use affiliate ads when you have unsold ad inventory, and you can also use affiliate links in your post content. If AdSense is your primary monetization method you can test your ad zones to see if it is possible to make more money by promoting a top selling affiliate product in those ad zones instead of using AdSense.

Regardless of what you are doing with your blog, affiliate marketing is a possibility.

## 7. Can Be Used to Gauge Interest Before Creating Your Own Product

If you are considering creating your own product but you're unsure about how much demand it will have from your readers, you can test this by promoting a comparable product as an affiliate. If your audience is very receptive to a particular product that you promote as an affiliate, chances are they will also be interested in a similar product created by you. And if a particular product generates very little interest from your audience you may decide against using a lot of your own time to create a similar product. Short-term affiliate promotions can be easily used like this to help you determine what types of products your readers are likely to buy.

## 8. You're Probably Promoting Products Anyway

As a blogger you are probably promoting some products whether you are an affiliate or not. It's only natural for you to mention, recommend, or link to products and services that you like so your readers can also benefit from them. As an affiliate you can **continue to do the same thing**, you'll just be using an affiliate link and you'll be compensated for the referrals that you make.

## How to Make Money with Affiliate Marketing Through Your Blog

Ok, so now that we've looked at some of the most convincing reasons why you may want to include affiliate marketing in your blog monetization plan, let's take a look at how you can have success with it.

**Related Reading:** [25 of the Best WordPress Plugins for Affiliate Marketing](#)

### 1. Choose a Few Main Products/Services to Focus On

Although you can promote countless products as an affiliate, it's usually best to have one or a few main products that

you promote the most aggressively. These products will serve as the cornerstone for you affiliate revenue, even if you make smaller amounts of money from many other affiliate programs as well.

Having a few products that you have designated as a priority will allow you to focus your efforts and **ensure your success** at promoting those products. You can keep these products in mind when you are deciding what types of content to publish at your blog, how to design or layout your blog, and what you should include in emails to your subscribers.

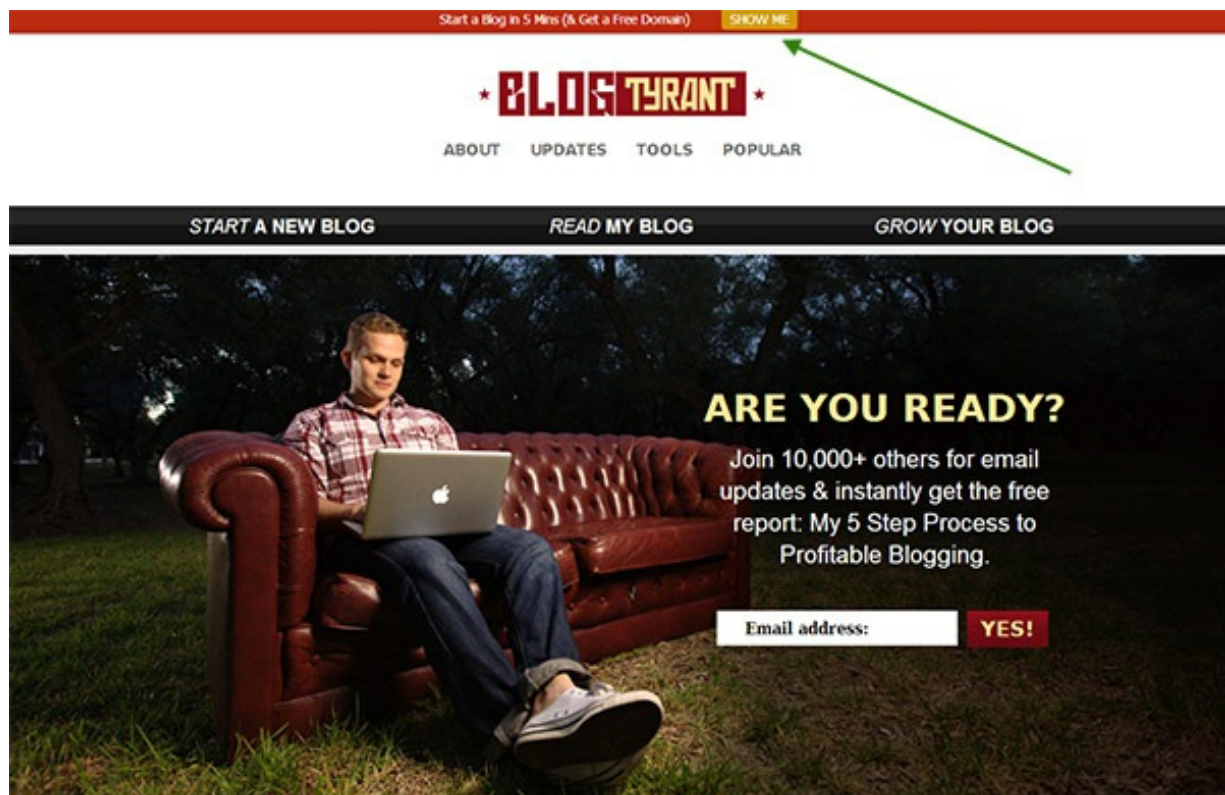
Ideally, these main products should:

- be a product/service that you use or have used in the past
- be of interest or relevant to a high percentage of your audience
- offer a high payout to affiliates (this is nice, but not absolutely necessary)

## 2. Promote These Main Products Prominently

The amount of success you have in promoting affiliate products through your blog will be greatly **impacted by how and where** you promote these products. If you want to maximize clicks on your affiliate links, sales, and ultimately your income, you will need to promote affiliate products where they will be seen. Prominent locations may include a header bar, within post content, at the end of posts, or even at the top of posts. Typically, sidebar promotions and banners will not get as much attention because most blog visitors tune out your sidebar and don't even really notice what is there.

An example of this comes from [Blog Tyrant](#). Ramsay uses a sticky header bar (as you scroll down the page the header bar will stick to the top of the browser) with a message that says "Start a Blog in 5 Mins (& Get a Free Domain)" and it includes a button that says "Show Me". That link leads to a page with a 4-step process for starting a blog, with affiliate links to [Bluehost](#) and [AWeber](#).



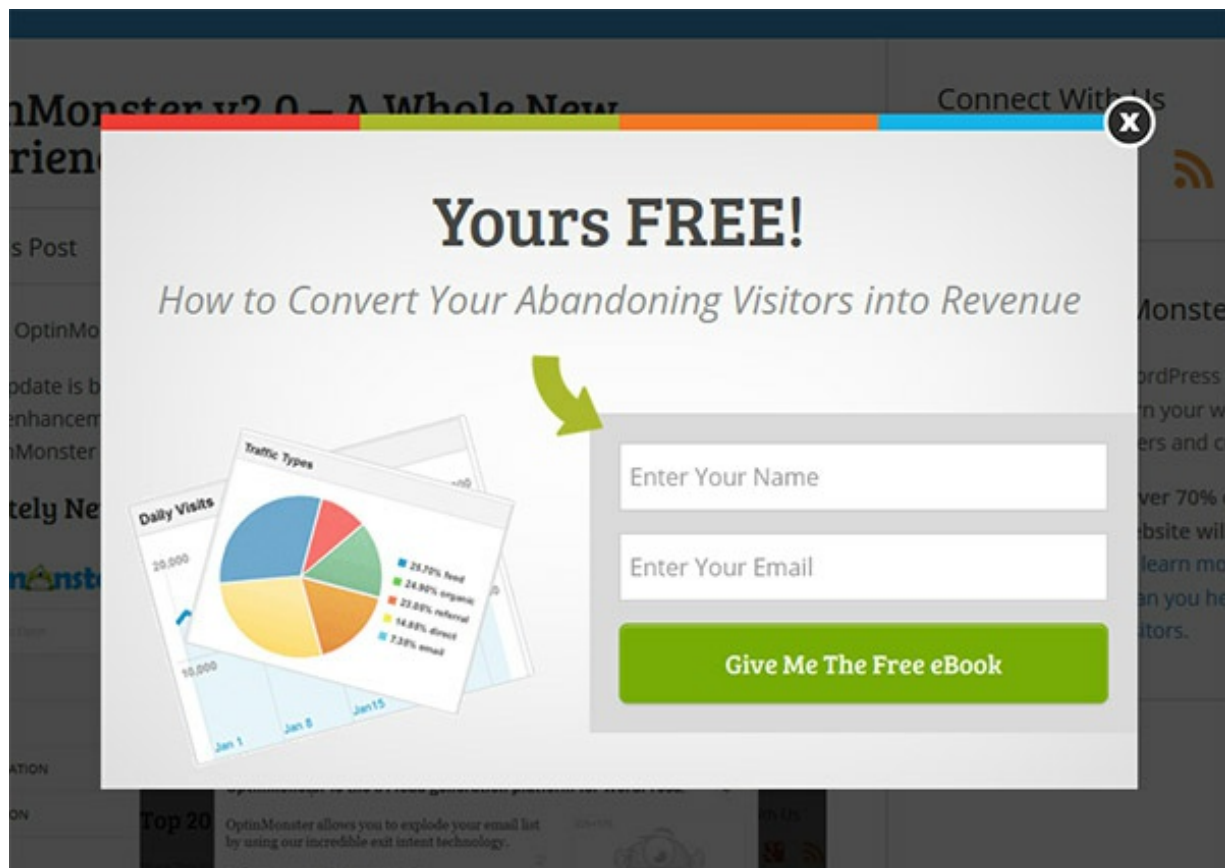
Once you have decided on the main products that you want to promote, think about how you can get the most

exposure for them on your blog. Promote them in a prominent location (or as Ramsay showed, promote other content on your site and use that content to funnel visitors through your affiliate link).

### 3. Collect Email Addresses Aggressively

One of the best ways to make money with affiliate marketing is through your email list. While it is certainly possible to make good money with affiliate links in your post content or at other locations on your blog, it's also possible to make a lot of sales through your email list. When someone subscribes to your email list you will be able to stay in contact with them and develop trust through your emails and the blog content that you promote in your emails. When you occasionally promote products your subscribers will be more likely to trust your recommendations because of that relationship that you have developed.


So you'll want to make list building one of the **main priorities** of your blog. This means you'll need to be more aggressive than simply including an optin form in your blog sidebar. I have a post that showcases [15 different WordPress plugins that you can use to grow your list quickly](#). Choose one, or a few, of these plugins to help you maximize your conversions.



### 4. Promote Through an Autoresponder Sequence

If you're using a email marketing provider like [GetResponse](#) or [AWeber](#) you will have access to an autoresponder (one of the reasons I don't recommend the free plan from [MailChimp](#) is because it does not include autoresponder functionality). With an autoresponder you can set up emails to be sent to your subscribers **automatically** at specific intervals based on when they subscribe. So you could have a series of 10 emails set to automatically go out to each person that subscribes. Each email would be set to go out a certain number of days after they subscribe.

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Setting up an autoresponder sequence is a great way to increase traffic to your site (assuming you include links to your blog content in at least some of the emails), and you can also use the autoresponder to help with your efforts as an affiliate. You could set up an email specifically to promote a certain product, or you could use it to link back to a blog post that includes affiliate links or a promotion of a specific product. Once you have the autoresponder set up it will continue to **work on autopilot** leading more visitors back to your site and getting more clicks on your affiliate links.

### 5. Don't Rely on Banner Ads

One mistake that many bloggers make is to rely on banner ads to generate income as an affiliate. Most affiliate programs that you sign up for will offer banners that you can use at your blog with your affiliate link. While banners can produce some clicks and sales, they will not be nearly as effective as other types of promotions. Affiliate links that you include in your blog post content (especially when you are specifically recommending a product) will almost always outperform banners. Links within emails or promotions that are set up through your autoresponder will also typically outperform banner ads.

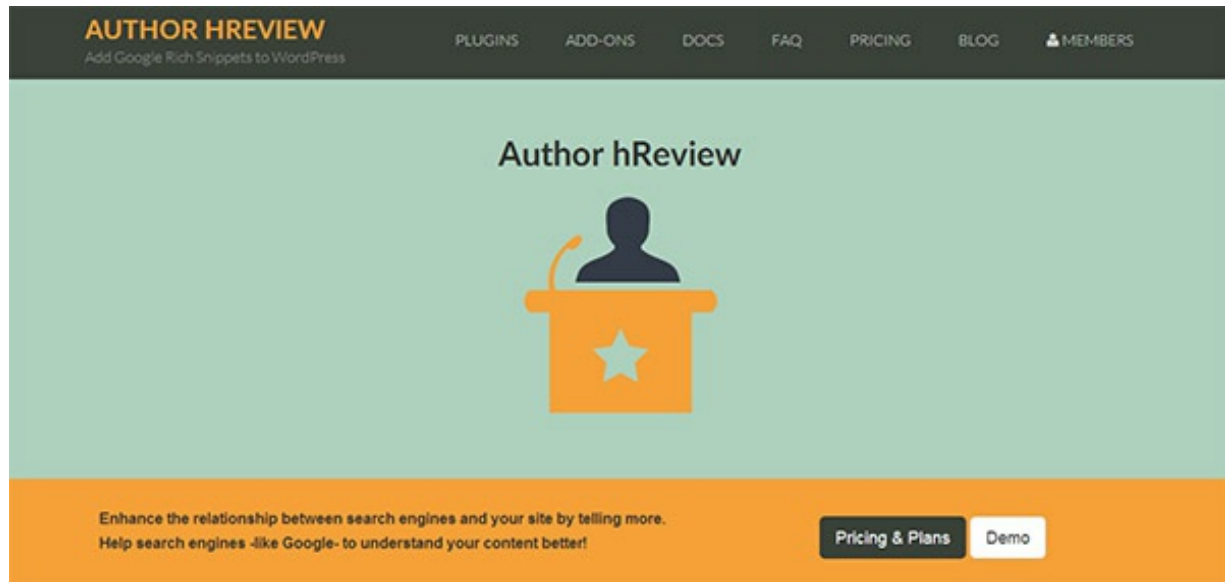
It's not a bad practice to use banners as an affiliate (in moderation), but **you don't want to rely on it exclusively**. Be sure that you are promoting affiliate products in other ways that tend to be more effective. One of the problems with banner ads for affiliates is that they tend to look just like paid banner ads, or even AdSense. Part of the reason that affiliate marketing can be so powerful for bloggers includes the aspect of a **personal recommendation**, and banner ads rarely have the feel of a personal recommendation.

### 6. Publish Product Reviews

If you want to use your blog content to promote specific products as an affiliate, one option is to write and publish product reviews. Through the review you'll share your own personal experience and opinions related to a product. You'll want to be honest and share the **pros and cons**, and if the product is high quality and you can honestly recommend it to your readers it may lead to some affiliate sales. You can see an example from my [SiteGround hosting review](#) that I wrote a couple of months ago. Reviews can also generate some search traffic as many people will search for reviews before buying a product.

There are several WordPress plugins that can help to make your reviews more user-friendly and effective. For my SiteGround hosting review I used the free version of [WP Review](#), which allows you to give a few different types of

ratings (stars, points, or percentages) and display the data attractively on your post/page. If reviews are a bigger part of your monetization plan you may want to invest in a more robust plugin like [Author hReview](#).



## 7. Publish Tutorials That Focus on Specific Products

This approach is somewhat similar to the previous point, except that instead of writing and publishing a product review you would write a tutorial that **shows your readers how to put the product into use** for themselves.

Matthew Woodward is a master at this and you can follow the example from his posts like [Revealing My Dirty Little Secret to Unlock Thousands of Social Media Shares](#). So in your post you will basically just introduce your readers to a certain product, explain how it can help them, and show them how to use it. This is a great way to promote a product and help your readers at the same time.

Like reviews, these posts can also be good for attracting search engine traffic when people are looking for info on a product that they are considering buying. These types of posts are also ideal for including in your autoresponder series because they can be very valuable for readers while still earning some money for you.

## 8. Work Affiliate Links into Your Posts

Affiliate links can also be used in your typical blog posts. You don't always need to specifically create a post to highlight a product in order to be able to work it into your post content. As you are writing and editing your posts look for opportunities to mention the products that you promote as an affiliate.

You can also go back through key posts in your **blog's archives** and look for opportunities to include some affiliate links where relevant. This is especially true if you are a part of Amazon's affiliate program. One of the main strategies to make money with Amazon is to simply get people to click on your affiliate links. With the massive variety of products that Amazon offers and with the number of people that buy from Amazon on a regular basis you may benefit from simply getting visitors to their site. Once they are there they may wind up buying something, even if it is not the product that you linked to, and you can get a commission.

## 9. Promote Your Key Posts That Include Affiliate Links

Once you have published a post or added affiliate links to old posts in your archives there is still more you can do. In some cases simply publishing the post and adding the links will be enough to get some results, but a little extra promotion can help a lot. There are several ways that you go about this, whether you are promoting new posts that

have just been published or older posts from your archives.

**Promote through your social profiles** – Of course, sharing your posts through your social profiles is a great way to get some exposure. Most bloggers promote their new posts, but not very many go to the trouble of also promoting older posts. If you have key posts in your archives that promote affiliate products, why not share these posts through your social profiles as well?

**Automate sharing for the future** – With the help of tools like [HootSuite](#) and [Socialloomph](#) you can easily promote your key posts **repeatedly** over a period of time. This is a great way to keep your posts with important affiliate links in front of your followers, and to keep getting clicks on those affiliate links within your post content.

**Get others to promote your posts** – You can use tools like [JustRetweet](#) and [Viral Content Buzz](#) to get more shares for your posts with your affiliate links. And again, you can promote older posts from your archives through these sites, not just your new posts. You can also use plugins like [Social Locker](#) to encourage your visitors to share a link to the post, which of course can lead to even more exposure.

**Include links in your new posts** – As you write and publish new blog posts take some time to read through the post and look for opportunities to link to your key posts that promote affiliate products.

**Include these posts in your autoresponder** – I mentioned this earlier, but it is worth mentioning again. Your email autoresponder is a great tool to keep your key content in front of targeted readers. If you have key posts on your blog that generate affiliate revenue for you, find ways to link to these posts through emails that are in your autoresponder sequence after someone subscribes to your list. If you are constantly gaining new subscribers you will also constantly have this important content in front of subscribers as they receive your autoresponder emails.

**Set up a “Start Here” page** – Many blogs, this one included, have a [start here](#) page that serves as a starting point for new visitors. At this page you can link to some key posts on your blog that not only provide helpful info for new visitors, but also promote certain products as an affiliate.

Get links – Acquiring links from other websites and blogs is a great way to get more exposure to your key content. Links can lead to more clickthrough traffic as well as improved search engine rankings. For ideas see [101 Massively Useful Link Building Approaches](#).

## 10. Ask for a Higher Commission

If you consistently have success with a particular affiliate program, consider contacting the affiliate manager to ask for a higher payout. It's very common for successful affiliates to be paid at a commission that is higher than the amount that is listed publicly. Affiliate managers will often approve this in order to reward and incentivize top performers, as well as to prevent losing those affiliates to a competitor that is willing to pay more.

In order to be able to justify a higher commission you'll probably need a **track record** that demonstrates you are more effective than most affiliates. If this is the case, getting an increase in your commission could make a big difference to your bottom line, and it could give you more incentive to promote that product.

## What's Your Experience?

Please feel free to share your own experience with affiliate marketing in the comments. If you have tips or advice that you would like to share with others please feel free.