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Affiliate Marketing



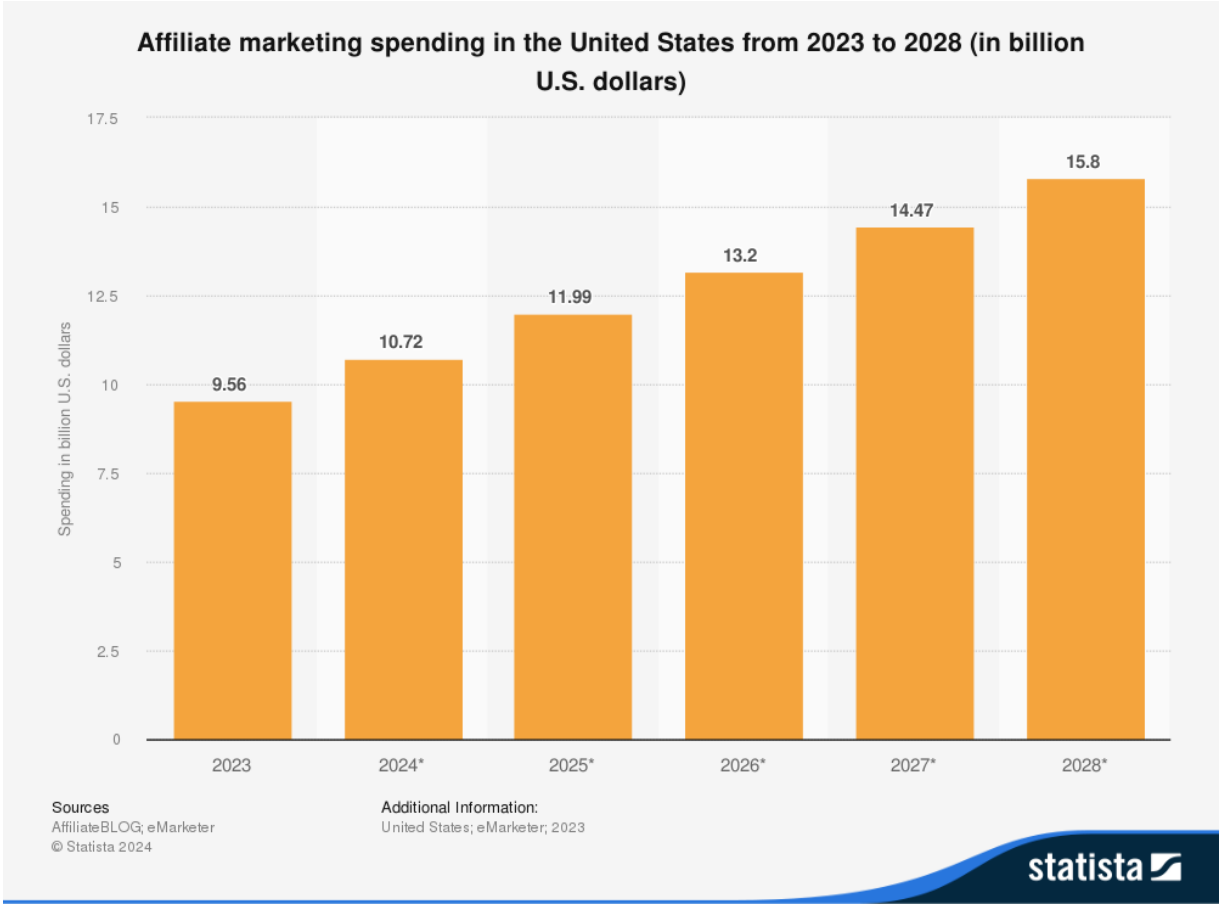
What if you could make money at any time, from anywhere — even while you sleep?

This is the concept behind affiliate marketing.

Affiliate marketing is the process by which an affiliate earns a commission for marketing another person's or company's products. The affiliate simply searches for a product they enjoy, then promotes that product and earns a piece of the profit from each sale they make. The sales are tracked via affiliate links from one website to another.

Affiliate marketing is a great way to drive sales and generate significant online revenue. Extremely beneficial to both brands and affiliate marketers, the new push toward less traditional marketing tactics has certainly paid off.

In 2023, affiliate marketing spending in the United States reached $9.56 billion, with projections estimating it will grow to $10.72 billion in 2024 and approximately $12 billion by 2025. — which means there's plenty of room for those looking to get a piece of the pie.

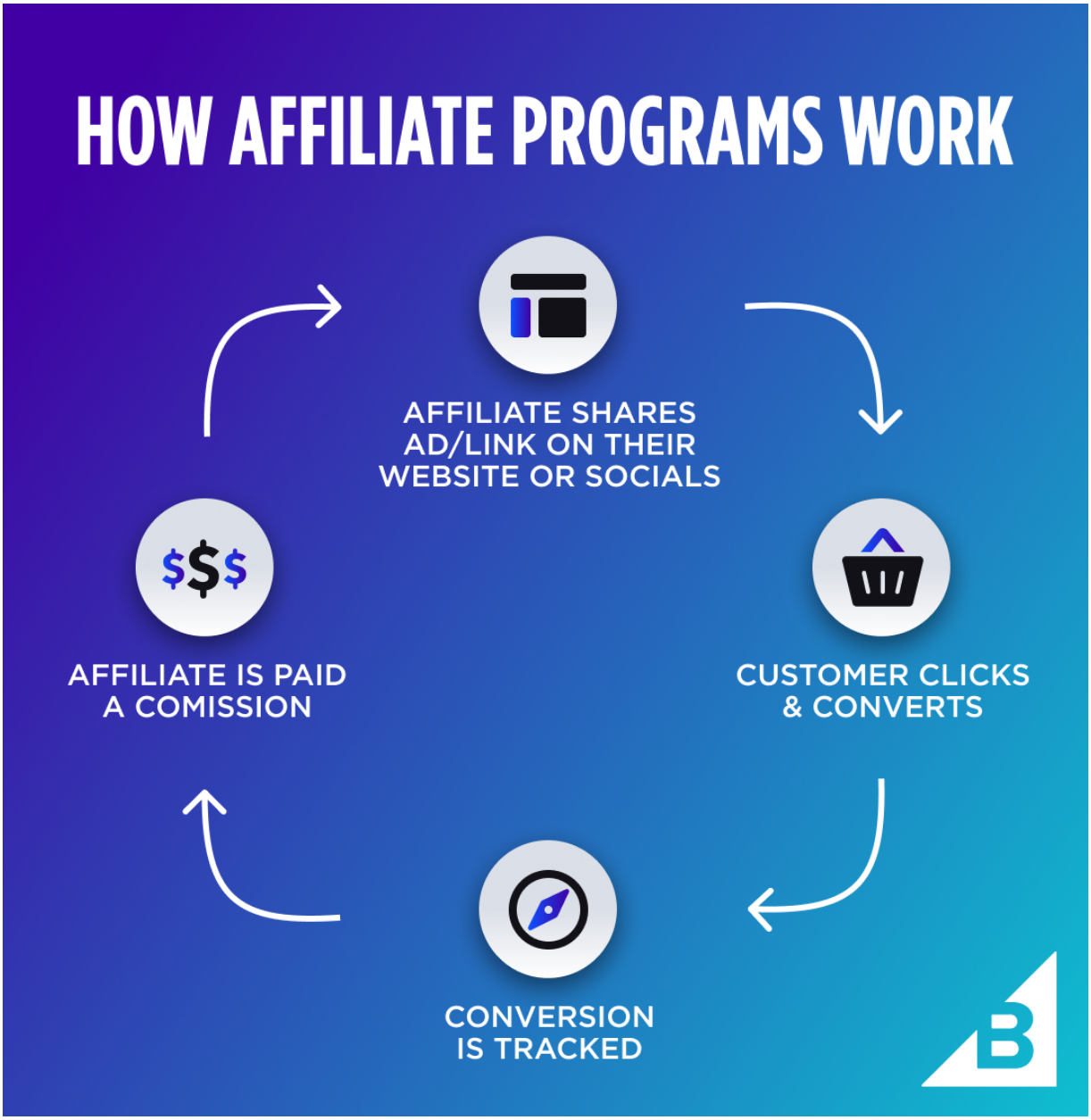


This step-by-step beginner's guide will walk you through how to launch your affiliating marketing business and what benefits you can expect.

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How Does Affiliate Marketing Work?



Because affiliate marketing works by spreading the responsibilities of product marketing and creation across parties, it leverages the abilities of a variety of individuals for a more effective marketing strategy while providing contributors with a share of the profit. To make this work, three different

parties must be involved:

1. Seller and product creators.

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2. The affiliate or advertiser.

3. The consumer.

Let's delve into the complex relationship these three parties share to ensure affiliate marketing is a success:

Seller and product creators.

The seller, whether a solo entrepreneur or large enterprise, is a vendor, merchant, product creator or retailer with a product to market. The product can be a physical object, like household goods, or a service, like makeup tutorials.

Also known as the brand, the seller does not need to be actively involved in the marketing, but they may also be the advertiser and profit from the revenue sharing associated with affiliate marketing.

For example, the seller could be an ecommerce merchant that started a dropshipping business and wants to reach a new audience by paying affiliate sites to promote their products. Or the seller could be a SaaS company that leverages affiliates to help sell their marketing software.

The affiliate or publisher.

Also known as a publisher, the affiliate can be either an individual or a company that markets the seller's product in an appealing way to potential consumers. In other words, the affiliate promotes the product to persuade consumers that it is valuable or beneficial to them and convince them to purchase the product. If the consumer does end up buying the product, the affiliate receives a portion of the revenue made.

Affiliates often have a very specific audience to whom they market, generally adhering to that audience's interests. This creates a defined niche or personal brand that helps the affiliate attract consumers who will be most likely to act on the promotion.

The consumer.

Of course, for the affiliate system to work, there needs to be sales — and the consumer or customer is the one who makes them happen.

The affiliate will market the product/service to consumers through the necessary channel(s), whether it be social media, a blog or a YouTube video, and if the consumer deems the product as valuable or beneficial to them, then they can follow the affiliate link and checkout on the merchant's website. If the customer does purchase the item, then the affiliate receives a portion of the revenue made.

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However, keep in mind that the customer *must* be aware that you, the affiliate, are receiving a commission off the product.

According to the Federal Trade Commission, an affiliate marketer must clearly and conspicuously disclose their relationship to the retailer, thus allowing the consumer to decide how much weight to give your endorsement.

A disclaimer such as “The products I’m going to use in this video were given to me by Company X” gives your viewers the information they need and allows them to make an informed decision about whether or not to buy the affiliate product.

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Types of Affiliate Marketing

It's often unclear whether an affiliate marketer has *actually* used the product they're promoting or if they're simply in it for the money — sometimes it may not matter to the customer one way or the other.

But other times, such as with diet services or skincare products, the customer may not trust an affiliate unless they know that he/she has tested and approved the product themselves.

In 2009, renowned affiliate marketer Pat Flynn categorized affiliate marketing into three types — unattached, related and involved — to help differentiate between affiliate marketers who are closely tied to a product versus those who are not.

Here we'll break down each category to help you decide which route to take.

Unattached.

In the unattached business model, the affiliate marketer has no connection to the product or service they are promoting. They have no expertise or authority in the niche of the product, nor can they make claims about its use.

Typically, an unattached affiliate will run PPC (pay-per-click) marketing campaigns, using an affiliate link in hopes that shoppers will click it and make a purchase on their own.

While unattached affiliate marketing may be attractive due to its lack of commitment, it's generally for those who simply want to generate an income without investing in the product or customer relationship.

Related.

A happy medium between unattached and involved, related affiliate marketing is for those who don't necessarily use the product or service, but who are somehow related to the niche audience. These affiliates often have some sort of influence in the niche and an established following, and can therefore offer some authority.

For example, perhaps you're promoting a clothing brand you've never used before, but you have an audience through a fashion blog or YouTube channel. In this case, you would be considered a related affiliate marketer.

The advantage of this type of affiliate marketing is that the affiliate has the expertise to generate traffic, however they may risk recommending a bad product or service if they've never actually

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used it before, potentially costing them the trust of their audience.

Involved.

As the name suggests, involved affiliate marketing describes those who are closely tied to the product or service they're promoting. The affiliate has tried the product themselves, trusts that it will provide a good experience and has the authority to make claims about its use.

Rather than relying on pays per click, involved affiliate marketers use their personal experiences with the product in their marketing efforts, and customers can trust them as reliable sources of information.

Of course, this type of affiliate marketing requires more legwork and time to build credibility, but it will likely result in greater payoffs down the road.

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How Do Affiliate Marketers Get Paid?

A quick and inexpensive method of making money without the hassle of actually selling a product, affiliate marketing has an undeniable draw for those looking to increase their income online. But how does an affiliate get paid after linking the seller to the consumer?

The answer can get complicated.

The consumer doesn't always need to buy the product for the affiliate to get a kickback. Depending on the program, the affiliate's contribution to the seller's sales will be measured differently.

The affiliate may get paid in various ways:

Pay per sale.

This is the standard affiliate marketing structure. In this program, the merchant pays the affiliate a percentage of the sale price of the product after the consumer purchases the product as a result of affiliate marketing strategies. In other words, the affiliate must actually get the investor to invest in the affiliate product before they are compensated.

Pay per lead.

A more complex system, pay per lead affiliate marketing programs compensates the affiliate based on the conversion of leads. The affiliate must persuade the consumer to visit the merchant's website and complete the desired action — whether it's filling out a contact form, signing up for a trial of a product, subscribing to a newsletter or downloading software or files.

Pay per click.

Affiliate marketing is largely about generating traffic to websites and trying to get customers to click and take action. So, the myth that affiliate marketing is all about SEO (search engine optimization) is no surprise.

However, while organic traffic is free, SEO simply can't sustain affiliate marketers in such a saturated market — which is why some affiliate marketers utilize PPC.

PPC (pay per click) programs focus on incentivizing the affiliate to redirect consumers from their marketing platform to the merchant's website. This means the affiliate must engage the consumer to the extent that they will move from the affiliate's site to the merchant's site. The affiliate is paid based on the increase in web traffic.

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There are two common concepts in PPC:

- **CPA (cost-per-acquisition)**: With this model, the affiliate gets paid each time the seller or retailer acquires a lead, which is when an affiliate link takes the customer to the merchant's online store and they take an action, such as subscribing to an email list or filling out a "Contact Us" form.
- **EPC (earnings-per-click)**: This is the measure for the average earnings per 100 clicks for all affiliates in a retailer's affiliate program.

Pay per install.

In this payout system, the affiliate gets paid each time they direct a user to the merchant's website and installs a product, generally a mobile app or software.

So, if a retailer budgets for a $0.10 bid for each install generated via an affiliate program, and the campaign results in 1,000 installs, then the retailer will pay ($0.10 x 1,000) = $100.

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Why Be an Affiliate Marketer?

Passive income.

While any “regular” job requires you to be at work to make money, affiliate marketing offers you the ability to make money while you sleep. By investing an initial amount of time into a campaign, you will see continuous returns on that time as consumers purchase the product over the following days and weeks. You receive money for your work long after you’ve finished it. Even when you’re not in front of your computer, your marketing skills will be earning you a steady flow of income.

No customer support.

Individual sellers and companies offering products or services have to deal with their consumers and ensure they are satisfied with what they have purchased.

Thanks to the affiliate marketing structure, you’ll never have to be concerned with customer support or customer satisfaction. The entire job of the affiliate marketer is to link the seller with the consumer. The seller deals with any consumer complaints after you receive your commission from the sale.

Work from home.

If you’re someone who hates going to the office, affiliate marketing is the perfect solution. You’ll be able to launch campaigns and receive revenue from the products that sellers create while working from the comfort of your own home. This is a job you can do without ever getting out of your pajamas.

Cost-effective.

Most businesses require upfront startup fees as well as a cash flow to finance the products being sold. However, affiliate marketing can be done at a low cost, meaning you can get started quickly and without much hassle. There are no unexpected fees to worry about and no need to create a product. Beginning this line of work is relatively straightforward.

Convenient and flexible.

Since you’re essentially becoming a freelancer, you get ultimate independence in setting your own goals, redirecting your path when you feel so inclined, choosing the products that interest you and even determining your own hours. This convenience means you can diversify your

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portfolio if you like or focus solely on simple and straightforward campaigns. You'll also be free from company restrictions and regulations as well as ill-performing teams.

Performance-based rewards.

With other jobs, you could work an 80-hour week and still earn the same salary. The good thing about affiliate marketing is that it is purely based on your performance. You'll get from it what you put into it. Honing your reviewing skills and writing engaging campaigns will translate to direct improvements in your revenue. You'll finally get paid for the outstanding work you do!

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Common Types of Affiliate Marketing Channels

Most affiliates share common practices to ensure that their target audience is engaged and receptive to purchasing promoted products. But not all affiliates advertise the products in the same way. In fact, there are several different marketing channels they may leverage.

Influencers.

An influencer is a content creator who holds the power to impact the purchasing decisions of a large segment of the population.

This person is in a great position to benefit from affiliate marketing. They already boast an impressive following, so it's easy for them to direct consumers to the seller's products through social media posts, blogs and other interactions with their followers. The influencers then receive a share of the profits they helped to create.

Influencer marketing campaigns are particularly popular on Instagram and TikTok, where brands form partnerships with influencers who are seen as experts or authorities in their specific niches. Depending on the deal, a campaign could consist of a series of product reviews with photos, account takeovers or live videos.

While an influencer might have their own branding and aesthetic, it's important to add elements that tie up with your brand to ensure brand recall and recognition. This can be achieved by using apps like Instasize, where you can quickly edit and customize your campaign's creatives in a tap.

Bloggers.

With the ability to rank organically in search engine queries, bloggers excel at increasing a seller's conversions through content marketing. The blogger samples the product or service and then writes a comprehensive review that promotes the brand in a compelling way, driving traffic back to the seller's site.

The blogger is awarded for his or her influence spreading the word about the value of the product, helping to improve the seller's sales.

Paid search-focused microsites.

Developing and monetizing microsites can also garner a serious amount of affiliate sales. These sites are advertised within a partner site or on the sponsored listings of a search engine. They are distinct and separate from the organization's main site. By offering more focused, relevant

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content to a specific audience, microsites lead to increased conversions due to their simple and straightforward call to action.

Email lists.

Despite its older origins, email marketing is still a viable source of affiliate marketing income. Some affiliates have email lists they can use to promote the seller's products. Others may leverage email newsletters that include hyperlinks to products, earning a commission after the consumer purchases the product.

Another method is for the affiliate to build an email list over time. They use their various campaigns to collect emails en masse, then send out emails regarding the products they are promoting.

Large media websites.

Designed to create a huge amount of traffic at all times, these sites focus on building an audience of millions.

These websites promote products to their massive audience through the use of banners and contextual affiliate links. This method offers superior exposure and improves conversion rates, resulting in a top-notch revenue for both the seller and the affiliate.

One of the most well known sites is the Amazon affiliate program, Amazon Associates, which boasts the largest market share of affiliate networks (46.15%).

Other big-name affiliate marketing programs include:

- AvantLink.
- LinkConnector.
- CJ Affiliate.
- Affiliate Future.
- ClickBank.
- ShareASale.
- FlexOffers.

Or, if you prefer, you can even reach out to retailers directly and see if they offer an affiliate program. If not, they may still be willing to offer you a special coupon or discount code to share

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with your audience to help drive traffic to their online shop.

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Tips to Help You Become A Successful Affiliate Marketer

Ready to try your hand at affiliate marketing? Here are our top online marketing tips to help you get started.

Develop a rapport with your audience.

When beginning your affiliate marketing career, you'll want to cultivate an audience that has very specific interests. This allows you to tailor your affiliate campaigns to that niche, increasing the likelihood that you'll convert. By establishing yourself as an expert in one area instead of promoting a large array of products, you'll be able to market to the people most likely to buy the product.

Make it personal.

There is no shortage of products you'll be able to promote.

You'll have the ability to pick and choose products that you personally believe in, or even products from your favorite brands, so make sure that your campaigns center around truly valuable products that consumers will enjoy. You'll achieve an impressive conversion rate while simultaneously establishing the reliability of your personal brand.

You'll also want to get really good at email outreach to work with other bloggers and influencers. Use a tool like ContactOut or Voila Norbert to gather people's contact information and send personalized emails to garner guest blogging and affiliate opportunities.

Start reviewing products and services.

Focus on reviewing products and services that fall within your niche. Then, leveraging the rapport you have created with your audience and your stance as an expert, tell your readers why they would benefit from purchasing the product or service you are promoting.

Almost anything sold online can be reviewed if there is an affiliate program — you can review physical products, digital software or even services booked online, like ride-sharing or travel resort booking.

It is especially effective to compare this product to others in the same category. Most importantly, make sure you are generating detailed, articulate content to improve conversions.

Use several sources.

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Instead of focusing on just an email campaign, also spend time making money with a blog, creating landing pages, posting on review sites, reaching out to your audience on social media and even looking into cross-channel promotions.

Test a variety of digital marketing strategies to see which one your audience responds to the most. Make frequent use of this technique.

Choose campaigns with care.

No matter how good your online marketing skills are, you'll make less money on a bad product than you will on a valuable one. Take the time to study the demand for a new product before promoting it.

Make sure to research the seller with care before teaming up. Your time is worth a lot, and you want to be sure you're spending it on a product that is profitable and a seller you can believe in.

Stay current with trends.

There is serious competition in the affiliate marketing sphere. You'll want to make sure you stay on top of any new trends to ensure you remain competitive.

Additionally, you'll likely be able to benefit from at least a few of the new marketing techniques that are constantly being created.

Be sure you're keeping up to date on all these new strategies to guarantee that your conversion rates, and therefore revenue, will be as high as possible.

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Benefits To Joining the BigCommerce Affiliate Program

Industry-leading commissions.

In the BigCommerce affiliate program, you receive a 200% bounty per referral and $1,500 per Enterprise referral, with no cap on commissions.

Plus, the more referrals you drive through the program, the higher your commission tier will go.

Also, there are no obligations or minimum commitments to join the program.

Strategic growth.

BigCommerce provides unique strategies to help you grow, increase your website's visibility and drive more sales. You'll be able to save time and money on content creation by linking to WordPress blogs, webinars and more with quality content developed by BigCommerce for your audience.

Powerful tracking.

Our affiliate dashboard offers a comprehensive look at your clicks, trials, sales and commissions. You can view your earnings, track metrics and performance and get paid at the same time every month.

A dedicated account manager.

You will have direct access to an affiliate manager who understands your business and your goals. BigCommerce will work with your team and our conversion rate experts to maximize your commissions and earnings per click.

Promotion made easy.

In your dashboard, you will have easy access to our pre-made text links, banners and content. Promote BigCommerce anywhere on your site by simply inserting our affiliate links on your pages.

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How to Join The BigCommerce Affiliate Program

If your audience is looking to launch an online business, migrate their ecommerce platform or simply interested in ecommerce content, we encourage you to apply for the BigCommerce affiliate marketing program. Our team will carefully review your application.

Once approved, you will receive access to support, tracking, reporting, payments and have your own unique affiliate link to track every referral you generate. BigCommerce is committed to the success of our affiliate partners.

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The Final Word

An elegantly straightforward process, affiliate marketing via reviews, blogs, social media, webinar software and other platforms is a new frontier in marketing that's just waiting to be utilized.

Follow the tips included in this article, and you'll be able to engage your audience, convert passive readers into active consumers and enhance your paycheck one click at a time.

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FAQs About Affiliate Marketing

Is affiliate marketing legal?

Yes, affiliate marketing is legal as long as the affiliate discloses their relationship with the merchant and informs their audience that they are receiving a commission of sales. According to the FTC, an affiliate marketer must clearly and conspicuously disclose their relationship to the retailer, thus allowing the consumer to decide how much weight to give your endorsement. A disclaimer such as "The products I'm going to use in this video were given to me by Company X" gives your viewers the information they need and allows them to make an informed decision about whether or not to buy the affiliate product.

What are the best affiliate marketing products?

There are endless options for affiliate marketing products. But especially if you're looking to be a related or involved affiliate marketer, try choosing a product that is of interest to you or that you are somewhat knowledgeable about. For example, if you're an athlete, maybe try promoting health and wellness products such as diet and fitness services or sports equipment. Or, if you're interested in how to make money, you can be an affiliate for loans and investment services, credit card companies or BNPL providers like Affirm or Zip. But regardless of whether you decide to be an involved or unattached affiliate marketer, make sure to choose a niche industry with products and services that are in high demand and have monetization potential. Of course, this will also mean that these niches are highly competitive, but you need to make sure there is actually an audience for the products you're promoting.

How much money can I make as an affiliate?

In the U.S. alone, affiliate marketing spend is projected to reach $8.2 billion in 2022, up from $5.4 billion in 2017 — which means there's huge potential for those seeking to earn affiliate income. Long answer short: There is no limit to how much money you can make as an affiliate marketer, but it largely depends on your niche market and how much time and effort you put into it. For example, Ryan Robinson, a renowned affiliate marketer, reported over $19,000 in affiliate commissions in 2019, while The Wirecutter, another affiliate website, earned $10 million in revenue and later was sold to the New York Times for $30 million. But of course, this kind of success does not happen overnight. In reality, affiliate income can range from a few hundred bucks per month to six figures per year. The more time you put into your work and the more followers you have, the more money-making potential you have.

What industries are best suited for affiliate marketing?

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Affiliate marketing thrives in industries like health and wellness, technology, beauty, fashion, and digital products. These sectors often feature high demand and a wide range of established affiliate programs, making them ideal for marketers to find opportunities that resonate with their audience. Additionally, niche markets can be highly rewarding. With a clearly defined target audience and less competition, niche affiliates can achieve significant success by addressing specific customer needs.Affiliate marketing thrives in industries like health and wellness, technology, beauty, fashion, and digital products. These sectors often feature high demand and a wide range of established affiliate programs, making them ideal for marketers to find opportunities that resonate with their audience. Additionally, niche markets can be highly rewarding. With a clearly defined target audience and less competition, niche affiliates can achieve significant success by addressing specific customer needs.

What is the difference between referral and affiliate marketing?

The main difference is that affiliate marketing involves third-party brand advocates promoting products for a merchant for a flat fee, whereas referral marketing incentivizes existing customers for inviting their friends/family to purchase a brand's product or service.

How can I effectively use affiliate links in my content?

To use affiliate links effectively: Integrate links naturally into high-quality, relevant content. Focus on creating value for your audience by recommending products or services that align with their interests. Use a mix of text links within articles, banners, or product reviews. Always disclose your affiliate relationship to maintain transparency and trust with your audience. Additionally, tracking the performance of different links can help optimize your strategy for better results.

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