

How I Use Search Engine to Promote Affiliate Program?

By Jim Lui

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In last year, I did an experiment and see whether I can make some decent money through affiliate program.

My result: Made a profit of US\$4,180 with 1 web page (not web site) within 2 months. I think that it is not bad.

I would like to reveal how I earned the money.

First, I joined 3 affiliate programs with similar theme. I chose the affiliate programs based on 2 criteria: 1) Those affiliate programs was paying good commission (15%-30% of each sale), 2) the demand of the products are high.

Why I chose affiliate programs with similar theme? First, I did not need to rely on one affiliate program, and I could build a web page focused on one topic. It could improve the readability and allow me to build a search engine friendly page easier.

Next, I planned for my Internet marketing effort. I decided go for search engine marketing because I believed that it was still the most effective way to drive targeted traffic. Besides, I did article submission. Apart from this, I considered promoting the web page via email.

To build my web page, my first step is performing keyword research. Selecting the right keywords is most important step. However, keyword selection is tricky. Selecting keywords with very narrow focus may not drive enough traffic but a very common keyword is very competitive in search engines. What do I mean? E.g. select keyword like "laser printer" is very board and can drive you more traffic than the term "HP laser printer" and "HP Jet6000 laser printer". However, it is more difficult to rank high with the term "laser printer". Also, I suspected that people using common term was more likely

still shopping around and not ready to buy. Therefore, I decided go for more relevant and specific search terms. After making the decision, I used search engine tool to find out specific and relevant keywords for my web page. (PS: Interested in the tools? Click the link in Author's profile at the end of this article)

I did not want to optimize for too many keywords because it was difficult to, if not impossible to target many keywords in one web page. Finally, I selected 5 keyword phrases. They are very specific and narrow focused keywords.

Then, I started to write my article with the selected keywords in mind. The article was around 750 words separated in 5 paragraphs. Then, I built my web page using a simple layout and added 2-3 graphics. I used an optimization software to help me optimized the Title, meta tags, and tuned my keyword ratio and proximity.

From my past experience, using search engine submission services to submit web page to 100,000 search engines are useless. Hence, I would rather focus on several major search engines. Since I decided that this web page will become one part of my web site, I just uploaded the page to my web server. In my sitemap, I added a link to this web page. The link text reflects the web page content, however. Then, I submitted the web page to alltheweb, hotbot and Altavista using the free route. However, I did not submit to Google because my web site was already registered in it and Google can crawl and index the web page itself.

To gain additional traffic, I submitted the article to several targeted email newsletters. Luckily, 2 well-known newsletters accepted my article. I earned some traffic from them.

Originally, I also wanted to try advertising in e-newsletters. Finally, I abandoned because I could not find a qualified e-newsletter. My criteria were: 1) at least has 5,000 active readers, 2) only a limited number of ads in each issue, 3) Quality content, 4) Top spot ad preferred, and 5) within US\$150 budget.

My results:

Made a profit of US\$4,180 within 2 months. It doesn't make me very rich but not bad.

My web page ranked from No. 4 to No. 13 across several major search engines including Google, Altavista, Alltheweb, AOL, Yahoo, and MSN.

Normally, I got an average of 15 visitors coming from search engines per day. The first 15 days had no search engine traffic at all because search engines did not update it.

On the first 3 days my article was published, it could drive me around 350-460 visitors.

With a simple analysis and estimation, search engines helped me to make around 85% profit while the remaining was earned from article submission.

Lessons Learnt:

Although specific keyword phrases can only drive small amount of search engine traffic, the traffic got is extremely targeted. Hence, around 6.7% of my visitors finally made a purchase from the product owners. To generate income, you don't need to have thousands visitors per day but you must make sure that you can attract pre-qualified visitors. If traffic cannot generate money, why do we need it?

Selecting affiliate program correctly is very essential. You must ensure 3 things: 1) The product has great demand 2) Walk-through the site and ask yourself "Are you willing to buy here if you need the product?" 3) The commission per sale is attractive. Don't just see the commission rate but also consider the actual dollar amount of commission.

Submitting article is an art. If your article can be published in reputable web sites or newsletter, you are not only make money from it but also increase your web site's reputation. Their visitors or subscribers are loyal to them and trust them. Therefore, people also have confidence about your article and products. The lesson is: Write quality articles and seek publication opportunities in high quality web sites.

Email marketing may be useful. However, I never get a positive result from it. In the very past, I once spent US\$100 to recruit a renowned advertising copywriter to write me e-zine advertisement, and then spent around US\$300 to buy a top spot in an e-zine. My product should fit the e-zine readers. However, I did not generate any sale. This time, therefore, I set stringent criteria in selecting the right ezine to advertise. Unfortunately, I did not find a quality one. However, I had no regret as I generated income from search engines and article submission.

Jim Lui is an Internet marketing consultant, he operated Search Engine Submit URL Company at <http://www.submit-register-yahoo.com> and he is a co-owner of Addto Ecommerce and Internet Marketing Directory at <http://www.addto.com> . Tool mentioned in the article can be found at: <http://www.submit-register-yahoo.com/tool.htm>

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