

Is Your Affiliate Program Hijacking Your Customers?

By Lewis Leake, JR.

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What a crazy question, right! Why would an affiliate owner set up their affiliate program to hijack your customers?

Is it deliberate or do they just not understand?

Well, I don't know the answer to that question, but it definitely does happen. And when it happens to you it doesn't really make any difference one way or the other. You just missed a sale.

Let me give you an example. Six months or so ago, I bought an ebook and joined their affiliate program. The program was managed through ClickBank so it was easy to sign up and get started.

I set up some keywords on Overture and FindWhat and started making sales. Now I wasn't getting rich but I was getting a check from ClickBank for \$140 to \$160 every two weeks.

Then one week, I only received two notifications from ClickBank that I had made a sale. I checked my ClickBank account - everything was fine there. I checked my Overture and FindWhat accounts, the click-thrus were in line with prior weeks. Then I checked the link to the affiliate sales page.

Well, the link worked fine. So what's the problem here? I looked a little closer at the sales page and guess what, the owner had added a few things.

First of all, he added a sign-up form for his newsletter. Now I don't know about you, but I'm not going to pay to get subscribers to his newsletter. If he wants subscribers then

let him get them.

Then he added a "Click Here If You Are In A Hurry" link. This link sent my customer an autoresponder message telling them all about the product, the affiliate program and how to order. Hey, how do I get my cut?

Finally, he added a "Join Our Affiliate Program" link. This link took my customer to another page where the affiliate program was described in detail. He described how to sign up with ClickBank. He described how to get paid through ClickBank. He told my customer how to get a 50% discount and cut me out of the picture. Nice job, huh!

I was furious. I sent the owner an email explaining my findings and my concerns that I and his other affiliates were being cut out of the sales picture by his additions to the sales page.

I received a reply from him a few days later. The reply was rather long but the bottom line was that his sales were up and I was the only one who had complained so he wasn't going to change anything.

Sure his sales were up, everybody figured out that they could now get the product at half price. Thanks a lot!

My only recourse was to stop promoting the product.

If you are a member of an affiliate program that assigns you a unique id, there might be a good reason to have newsletter sign-up forms, autoresponder links and affiliate links on the sales page. That reason would be if your affiliate id is included so that you get credit if a sale is made later.

Otherwise you will lose customers and sales. So be careful out there. Do your homework.

Take a close look at the sales pages - notice I said pages - of every affiliate program that you are a member of or are thinking about joining. Look for anything that will take your customer away from the sales page.

If you find these links then look for another affiliate program to join.

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