

Affiliate Income Optimization

By Sean Burns

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In my time researching the search engines, I've noticed something rather strange. Literally millions of searches are made each month for "brand names" and actual site names. For example, on Overture alone, last month, there were millions of queries made for the term "internet explorer". Having been on the internet for around seven years (running sites for over five), I've naturally assumed that people use it the same way I do. So, I know that internet explorer is a Microsoft product so I just type <http://www.microsoft.com> into my browser.

Apparently, that's not what everyone does. Here are some other examples from Overture: eBay - over 7 million searches, Google - over 9 million searches, Amazon - Over 800 thousand searches (OK, lots will be for the river or the forest but still ...), PayPal over 340 thousand searches and so on. Considering that Overture has only about 5% of the search engine market, you can see that there are millions and millions of people who actually use search engines to find sites when they could just type the name in their browser and slap a .com on the end.

Now, on to the good stuff. Of those companies that I mentioned, all but Google have an affiliate program. For example, PayPal pays \$5.00 for every person who signs up. $340\,000 \times \$5.00 = \$1\,700\,000$. Interesting!

So, what can we do to make the most of this opportunity? Well, it's easier than you would think. Obviously, trying to get traffic from people searching for eBay or PayPal would be very difficult but there are literally thousands of other companies that people search for. For example, I just checked the three best known British sports betting companies - about 20 000 searches are made each month on Overture for these companies.

I have noticed that without any effort whatsoever, I am actually getting a lot of traffic from people searching for company names and script names. This is because they are listed in my Affiliate and Script directories. An example of the process is - people search for a particular merchant, come to my affiliate directory and click on the link to get to the merchant. Therefore, even though they have no interest in the affiliate program, I'm making money just by linking to merchants who's content is completely unrelated to mine.

Remember, this is without even trying. When I do try, I'm getting even more traffic.

So, what do you need to do? Well, you probably already use affiliate programs in some form on your site - either as a major source of revenue or to make "backend" sales. I went for years just linking to them with banners, buttons and text links. The odd short recommendation here and there

proved to be the best way to get the most out of them.

The problem, from a search engine perspective, is that just linking to them from your site will generally not get your page up high in the search engine rankings. A link to merchant "Acme Corp." just blends in to the text on your page and is assigned no real relevance. Therefore, you should put up an individual page on your site for each merchant that you are an affiliate of. This page could just be a review of the products or services that they offer.

Just the fact that you have a content rich page about a specific merchant will almost automatically get you traffic from the search engines (once you are listed). The main point is "content rich". Also, write it yourself, do not copy content from the merchants site. Why? Well, even if they let you copy their content (lots do), Google has ways of finding duplicate content. In fact, they will usually ban the page that they believe is less important if two have the same information on them. So, write it yourself.

Remember that if the merchant sells products that have gained recognition from the public, make sure you list their products.

If you already have a successful site, the search engines will actually view your "review" of a merchant as being important and it is no harder to get that page in to the top 10 listings than it is for any other page on your site.

Often, the difference between doing well and being truly successful online is just the ability to grab opportunities when they appear. You could find that spending just 10 minutes to set up a couple of new pages on your site could actually result in thousands of dollars in extra income each year.

Remember, there are close to 600 million queries made on search engines each day - this is an opportunity! Don't let it pass you by.

Sean Burns is the author of the Rankings Revealed eBook which gives you a step by step guide to obtaining top 10 rankings on the major search engines -

http://www.webmastersreference.com/rankings_revealed

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