



SHARK LABS
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AFFILIATE MARKETING STRATEGIES

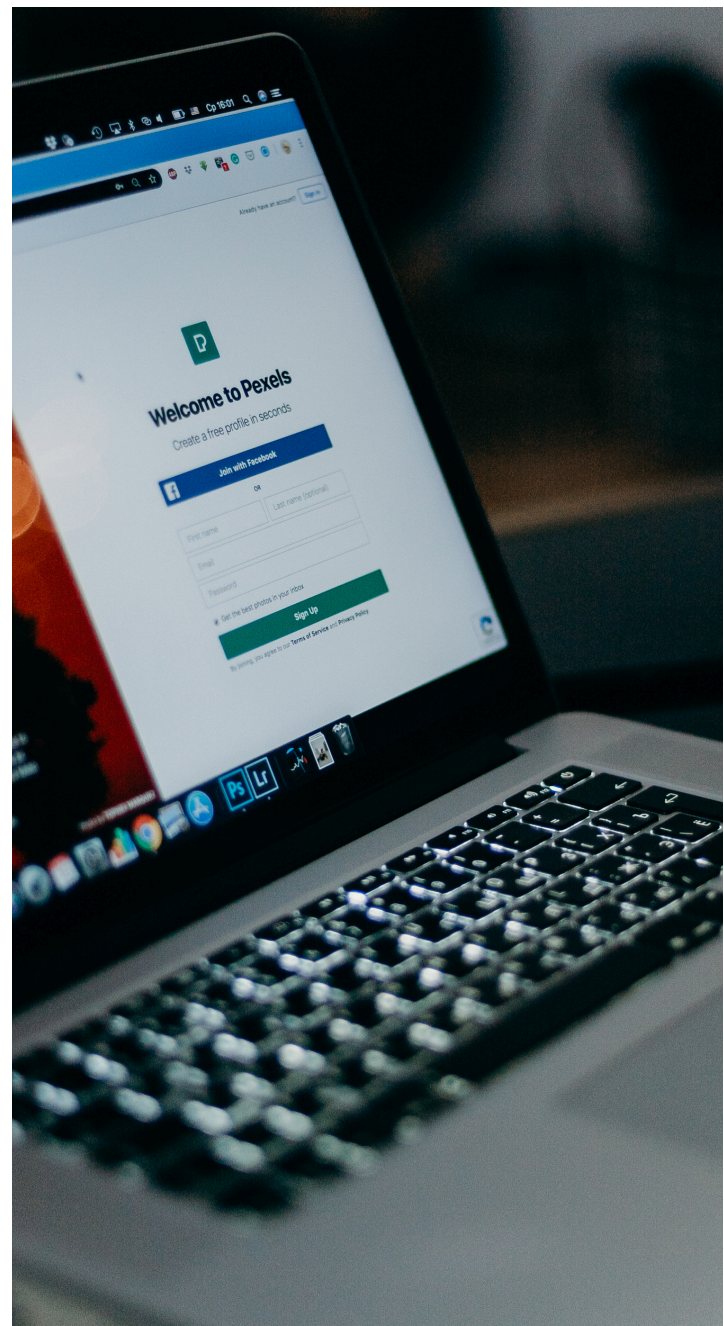
An effective affiliate marketing strategy should be efficient. One way to ensure this is by keeping the number of clicks between the traffic source and the affiliate marketing landing page as few as possible. The fewer clicks it requires to reach the affiliate marketing website, the higher your conversion rate will be.

If you post your affiliate link directly to Facebook for example, there will be only one click between the source and the affiliate landing page. This is the shortest route between the traffic source (Facebook) and the landing page.

The model looks something like this:

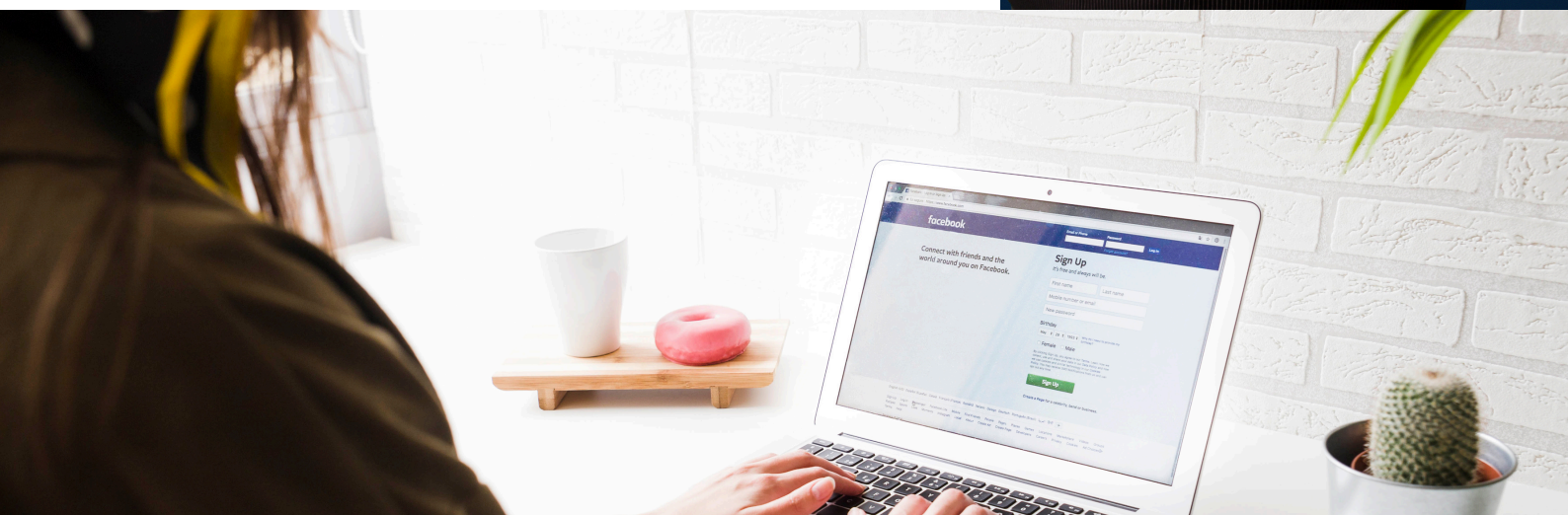
FACEBOOK > AFFILIATE MARKETING LANDING PAGE

In most cases however, this marketing model is not effective because most people are likely to avoid your content if it only contains an affiliate link. It may work to some degree in the beginning. Eventually though, your success rate will go down. Your audience will eventually catch on with what you are trying to do and they may avoid your post.



In addition, convincing people to move from a traffic source to the affiliate marketing landing page can be difficult. Most people do not want to move away from their social networks or their preferred websites. People only willingly click away from these websites or apps if they are motivated to do so. Most people would only move away from their Facebook or Twitter apps if there is an article they want to read or a video they want to watch.

The most successful content marketers use a different approach. They first send their traffic to their website content, where they can convince them to buy the product. They use the content marketing strategies, similar to the ones discussed in this book, to drive traffic from the traffic source to their websites. The model looks like this:



FACEBOOK (SAMPLE TRAFFIC SOURCE) > WEBSITE CONTENT > AFFILIATE MARKETING LANDING PAGE

In this model, the process is still somewhat efficient because there are only two clicks between the traffic source and the affiliate marketing landing page. With this model, it will be easier for you to lure your target audience from the traffic source with the use of the right types of contents.



TRACK THE MOVEMENT OF YOUR USERS

When you are successfully sending traffic to your website through the various traffic sources, you need to set up your analytic tools to track how people move in your website. In the beginning, a big portion of your traffic will bounce. Bouncing refers to the act of leaving a website after viewing just one page. People usually bounce when the content in the website did not pique their interest. This is common with news websites where the average bounce rate is just above 80%. This means that 80% of the traffic leaves the website after reading just one news story.



As an affiliate marketer, you want your viewers to keep reading your content, transferring from one page to another. If this happens, it means that your contents are effective in keeping the attention of your website users. With this method, you will be able to track the movements of the users and identify the types of content that they are likely to click on.

You could also track the total number of clicks that your affiliate links get. The most accurate number will be posted in the statistics portion of your affiliate marketing account. In affiliate programs like Amazon Affiliates and ClickBank, these clicks are shown directly in your account dashboard. You can get the total success rate of your website in sending people to the affiliate landing pages by dividing the total number of clicks on your affiliate links by the total number of unique visitors to your website in a given period. You could then multiply the quotient by 100% to get the percentage value.

Let's say that you want to get your website's success rate for an entire week. You should take the total number of clicks on your affiliate links (found in your affiliate account) and the total number of unique visitors for the week (found in your website analytics) for the said period. You could then use this formula to get the effectiveness of your website in converting users:



SUCCESS RATE = (NUMBER OF CLICKS/TOTAL NUMBER OF UNIQUE VISITORS) * 100%

Let's say that for that week 2,500 unique visitors went to your website. Of that number, 50 people clicked on your affiliate links. Using the formula above, we will get a success rate of 2%. With the success rate, you will be able to predict how well your website performs in sending people to an affiliate landing page in the future.

JUDGE EACH AFFILIATE PROGRAM BASED ON THEIR LANDING PAGES

The success rate metric alone however, is not enough to predict how much you will earn in the future. To get this prediction, you will need to get the average conversion rate of the landing page. The advertisers' landing pages are supposed to be designed to increase conversion. A 2-4% conversion rate is normal for a non-optimized affiliate landing page. These numbers can significantly increase to 10% and up if the advertisers test different pages and stick to the page layouts and designs that lead to the most conversions.

Online advertising professionals put a lot of time, working on increasing the conversion rates of their landing pages.

However, some landing pages just work better than others. If all other factors are equal, you will earn more if you promote an affiliate program with an excellent landing page. Because of this, you want to stick only with advertisers whose landing page performs well. Unfortunately, you can only check how well a landing page performs by sending leads to it and measuring the results.

The conversion rate of a landing page is usually shown in the analytics section of your affiliate marketing account. If this is not the case however, you could calculate this yourself. To do this, you first need to find the total number of leads (unique visitors) you sent to a particular landing page. This should be reflected in the number of clicks that a particular affiliate link gets. You will also need the total number of sales generated for that particular link. You can usually get this number in the sales report section of your affiliate account.

You can then divide the number of sales by the number of leads you sent and multiple the result by 100%. A higher percentage means that the landing page is effective in converting leads into customers. Sometimes, different websites will have completely different conversion rates even if they are sending traffic to the same landing page. This happens because many factors affect the success of a landing page. We will discuss them in the following section. You can check these factors whenever you are inspecting a new landing page of an advertiser



FACTORS THAT AFFECT LANDING PAGE CONVERSION RATE

THE DESIGN AND LAYOUT OF THE PAGE

You can choose advertisers based on the design and layout of their landing page. If a landing page has no published conversion rate, you may need to base your decision to use it based on these two superficial factors.

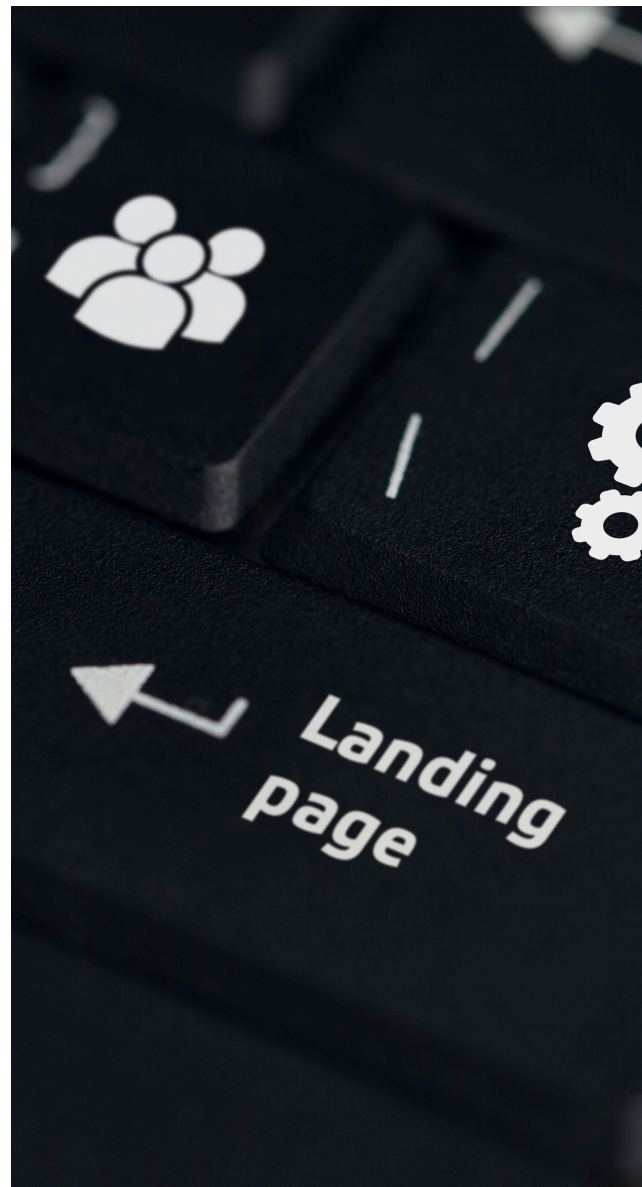
Ideally, the design should focus on the purchasing features of the page. The landing page's sole purpose is to convince the people viewing it to make a purchase. If the page has too many distractions or if the purchase buttons are too small to be seen, this may lead to a low conversion rate.

An effective way of checking the design and layout of an affiliate landing page is by using the help of your loved ones. Before you use a landing page, let the people you know check it out first. You could have a questionnaire ready when they check these landing pages. You will need to ask them the following questions:

- From a scale of 1-10, how likely are you to buy from this page?
- Do you see a purchase button or link immediately?
- How do you find the design?
- Distracting or too cluttered
- Helpful for buyers
- Unattractive or outdated
- Informative or educational
- If you like the product being promoted, are you going from this page or are you going to find another source of the same product? Why?



By letting the people you know check the landing page and answer the questions above, you will be able to get an idea of how an average person with no marketing background views the page. You will be able to get multiple opinions on the quality of the page. If you just base your judgment on your own opinion, you may have personal biases that may prevent you from choosing the best landing page. Knowing what other people think about the page will help make your decision of choosing a landing page objective.



THE QUALITY OF TRAFFIC THAT YOU SEND TO IT

At times, an affiliate marketer may get a lower conversion rate than the published rate of a landing page. The affiliate network metrics for example, may say that a landing page gets 7% conversion rate but it only converted 3% of the traffic you sent to it. This may happen when the quality of the traffic you send to the landing page is not at par with the industry standards .

HERE ARE THE QUALITIES OF THE VISITORS THAT YOU SHOULD SEND TO YOUR AFFILIATE MARKETING LANDING PAGES:



A. THEY SHOULD HAVE A BUYING INTENT

Landing pages work best if you send people to it who are already in the verge of buying the product. This factor is most important to people who are buying something pricey. Low-ticket items are open to impulse buys. A person with no buying intent may buy a \$5 shirt from an online retailer without thinking too much about it. Everything changes when more money is on the line. Consider your own personal process when buying something expensive. Do you research first or do you buy impulsively?

Before an average person buys a new laptop for example, they first look around for the newest models from different brands. They then, collect information on the features that are important for them. A person on a budget for example, may take note of the prices of the different models. A computer gaming enthusiast on the other hand, may not be as interested in the prices as he or she is in the performance specs of the laptop. Only after people have collected enough information are they likely to make a buying decision.

You can make sure that the people you refer to your affiliate links have buying intentions by adjusting the types of content in your website. If you already have a website with a lot of articles and other contents, check each of them. Assess your website contents and check whether they are important in the beginning, middle or end of the buying process. Plot the normal buying process for the products you promote. Then, you should create content that will capture more people who are towards the end of the process.



Let's say you are promoting action cameras in your website. You use a GoPro to record your activities like playing with your dog, playing sports, going on vacations, etc. With the content you share in social media, you are able to attract a lot of users from social networks.

The problem with this method of gaining traffic is that the people you attract do not necessarily have buying intentions. They are only there to view the photos and videos you took with your GoPro. Because they do not have a buying intent, they are less likely to click on your affiliate links. To convert these people from being passive audiences into buyers, you will need to create multiple contents (articles and videos) where you can naturally promote the action camera. For example, you can film your trip to a local vacation spot and make a how-to article and video about how to get there and what to do when you are there. In the process, you can write that their experience will be greatly enhanced if they bring an action camera with them. You could then include an affiliate link in your article. In the video you create, you can talk about the same thing and mention that you have link in the description of the video for the item you are recommending.





Aside from these types of contents, you can also create series of contents that are designed to highlight the product you are promoting. For example, you can write an article of record a vlog talking about your own buying decision when you bought the action camera. You can also make a comparison article or video, comparing the product you are promoting with competing brands. Lastly, you can talk about the prices of the product from different sources and the discount coupons they can use to save money when purchasing.

AS A RECAP, HERE ARE THE TYPES OF CONTENTS THAT YOU SHOULD CREATE:

- Articles and videos to a local tourist spot where you use the action camera
- Target Audience: Beginners and Social Media Users
- Article and video about your personal buying decision
- Target Audience: Beginners and Social Media Users
- Comparison article and video against competing brands
- Target Audience: People with buying intent, Google Searchers
- Article and video talking about the price and the best sources of the product
- Target Audience: People with buying intent, Google Searchers

These are only some ideas on the types of content you can create for this particular product. You can create all these articles and videos in a matter of weeks. You should also consider not stopping with these four contents. You can create more articles and videos about going to the different tourist attractions in your area. Aside from the action camera itself, you can also make product reviews about its different accessories. Just keep creating content about it and how to use it and people will eventually buy it.

B. THEY SHOULD BE CAPABLE OF BUYING THE PRODUCT

There is no use promoting your website in places where the majority of people are not capable of buying your product. If you are promoting products from Amazon.com for example, you should make sure that you are promoting to people from the US. Make sure that the tips and recommendations you post on your articles and videos are significant to US consumers. The same goes for the coupons and other promotions you offer.



Aside from ensuring that you are promoting to people from the right location, you should also make sure that the people you are promoting to have the necessary tools for purchasing. This means that they should have access to a credit card or any other method of payment allowed by the retailer you are promoting.

Promoting affiliate products towards children for example, is not just against that law but also ineffective. Children do not have the financial freedom to purchase the product themselves.

C. SHOPPING SEASONS AND THE LEVEL OF COMPETITION IN THE MARKET

The conversion rate of a landing page will also be affected by the season. A landing page that has a high conversion rate in regular days may experience a dip in its effectiveness during the holidays when there are many other competing offers in the market. In the US for example, the time around thanksgiving and Christmas is usually considered shopping season. People love the promotions in these days. If the products in the landing page that you are using are still offered at their regular prices in these times of the year, your visitors may choose to buy the competing brands or from others sources of the item where there are discounts.

