

Part I

Getting Started

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Chapter 1

How to Make Millions on Google and Other Search Engines: My 10-Step Approach

What do you do?" People always ask that question when they first meet you. If you were to turn a movie camera on me and watch me as I go through a typical workday, it probably wouldn't seem like I'm doing much of *anything*, and that's just the way I like it. When I was first learning how to make money placing affiliate ads on Google and other search and content networks, I typically put in a solid eight-hour day, but now that I have the system up and running, things go much easier.

I have turned off the alarm that used to wake me up at 5 a.m. every morning. I sleep as late as I want, unless I take a turn driving my kids to school. Before I became an Affiliate Advertiser, I used to have a 90-minute commute to my job in Greater Boston. Now, all of my commuting time is spent on my pillow. I am my own boss and—I don't mind telling you—I am very easy to work for.

A typical morning now might find me rolling out of bed around eight or nine o'clock and stumbling over to the computer

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in my bedroom. I check the ad campaigns I have running on sites like Google and MSN adCenter. My formal performance-monitoring routine takes about an hour, but most mornings I simply perform a quick check on four things (don't worry if these terms don't make any sense to you right now; I'll explain them later):

1. *The click-through rate (CTR)*. I make sure the percentage of people who are clicking through the ads I place and going to the advertisers' web sites are broadly in the range I expect for the day of the week or the time of day.
2. *Volume*. I check to see whether the volume of traffic is roughly what I expect it to be at that time.
3. *Cost per click*. I make certain the cost per click for each of my campaigns is in the range I have come to expect for the day of the week or the time of day.
4. *Commissions*. I make certain that my commissions from the day before are roughly what I would expect for the traffic generated.

Most days, everything is working exactly as it should be. On these fine mornings, I may simply go back to sleep, or I may go downstairs to enjoy a leisurely breakfast. Just as often, I might give my wife a break by taking the kids to school so she won't have to. Whenever I happen to feel the most motivated, I will usually spend an hour (or even two) doing some basic monitoring and performance-tuning tasks. On rare days, I might spend hours or a whole day trying to start a new campaign in a particularly competitive advertising space, but most days I do very little real work. In exchange for these "burdensome" tasks, I regularly receive checks of over \$100,000 per month in my mailbox (okay, now that I've learned how to have them deposited directly into

my checking account, they don't show up in my mailbox anymore, but you get the point). I bought a beautiful new home in Florida with cash, and my family and I enjoy regular vacations wherever we like.

A LITTLE HISTORY

I'm not telling you my personal story because I especially like to talk about myself or because I'm boasting. I am telling you this because, when you know a little bit more about me, you'll realize that anyone, including yourself, can become a successful entrepreneur through paid search marketing and affiliate advertising.

As I mentioned in my introduction, I have managed some small web sites, but the few web sites I created never made much money, and maintaining them never appealed to me that much. This might seem surprising, because the best-known traditional model to make money through affiliate advertising is as follows:

- Create a content web site and publicize it in order to attract as many visitors as possible.
- Take advantage of the established traffic by placing text and banner affiliate ads that turn the site into a source of revenue.

I did assemble a couple of web sites that attempted to make money this way. They generated small amounts of revenue here and there, but the cost of driving traffic to my site exceeded the modest revenues I was able to generate. You see, very few of the visitors I paid for actually clicked on any of the ads on my own site. They had already clicked on an ad for my site, after all, and most were not willing to click through to yet another ad.

Why Send Anyone to My Own Site First?

Since I was having such a difficult time converting the traffic I generated from running ads for my web site on search and content networks like Google, the question eventually occurred to me, “Why not place the affiliate ads directly on Google instead?”

At the time, I thought the idea of placing affiliate ads on a search engine site was a great epiphany of my own. Since then, I’ve discovered that I wasn’t the first to come up with this idea—not by a long shot—but I may be one of the most successful. Initially, the idea appealed to me because it required no overhead, no inventory, and it seemed like something I could do in the spare hour or two I would have each day after I went back to full-time employment (which I was planning to do before long). Remember, my initial goal was to bring in only an extra \$200 or \$300 a month. I didn’t realize in the beginning that this could be my ticket to financial freedom.

Bitten by the Bug

At first, I signed up with a few affiliate programs and started placing ads for a small number of products. I began by losing a small amount of money—several cents per click. I adjusted the margins a bit, and I discovered a few products on which I could make a few dollars each day. Then, I made a couple of very expensive mistakes that cost me several thousand dollars in the space of just a few hours. Believe it or not, I almost gave up entirely and completely missed out on the fortune I eventually would make. A few thousand dollars was an enormous amount of money to me at that time, and if this was the kind of risk I would be taking, I reasoned, what chance did I have of making that kind of money back? For nearly a week, I swore off the entire idea.

Then I thought about it and decided to give it another try. After all, I had already found a couple of products on which I could make a few dollars a day, so why not at least leave those campaigns running?

Then the bug bit me: “If you can make money advertising these products, you can find other products that will make even more.” Of course, I proceeded much more carefully (as I will teach you to do) and avoided taking unnecessary risks on unproven campaigns. After putting together several campaigns that provided me with modest returns, I made my first big breakthrough. In December of 2004, I hit on one advertising campaign that generated more than \$7,000, which was well beyond my wildest dreams for the business at that time. This success lit a fire under me, and I set out to find other products and programs that would turn out to be big winners.

I resolved to tap into untapped market niches and to aggressively pursue establishing campaigns in competitive market spaces as well. My initial hard work paid off, and one by one I added established, successful campaigns to my portfolio, some of which brought in just a few dollars a day, while others made hundreds or even thousands. All these campaigns, meanwhile, required very little maintenance once they were up and running. I soon found myself spending less and less effort on the risky and time-consuming process of establishing new campaigns, and my focus shifted to the increasingly rewarding practice of monitoring and fine-tuning my existing campaigns.

Before long—even though I was now working an average of just two hours a day—I was earning more than I had ever thought possible. My monthly advertising revenue checks broke into six-figure territory and, needless to say, I never went back to my day job.

MY 10 STEPS TO BECOMING AN AFFILIATE MILLIONAIRE

The steps required to become a successful search marketer and affiliate advertiser are well within the reach of anyone, regardless of prior business experience. The building blocks you need to construct your new search marketing–based business are already online and waiting for you to take advantage of them. All you need is a bit of time, a computer connected to the Internet, and a little good advice.

Bookstore shelves are lined with dozens of volumes that promise to teach you how to go online and start your own business or open up a new revenue stream, but few offer you the potential that *Affiliate Millions* does. Books can take you only so far, however. It's up to you to take the first step. In fact, any process goes more easily if you break it into a series of discrete steps—tasks that you can tackle one at a time. In this section, you get a step-by-step overview of the entire process of becoming a successful search marketer, advertising a variety of affiliate programs on Google and other search and content networks.

Step 1. Set Your Sights on Success

I didn't start to make serious money until I had a modest amount of success on which to base my efforts. Then my imagination kicked in and I began to envision just how much money I could make if I stepped up my efforts. I'm asking you to begin by expanding your imagination and believing that you can be a success. In many ways, becoming a successful online entrepreneur is a matter of your mind-set and your attitude.

Step 2. Learn about Affiliate Advertising

In Chapter 2, I introduce you to the concept of affiliate advertising in detail. Affiliate advertising is the revenue side of this whole

process, so pay close attention. Once you have a handle on the concept of affiliate advertising, I introduce you to the second half of the equation: search marketing.

Step 3. Learn about Search Marketing

Search marketing is the process by which we drive traffic to the affiliate programs we promote. Chapter 3 introduces you to this concept and helps you understand just how you can use search marketing, instead of a web site of your own, to make affiliate advertising more profitable for you than you might ever have imagined.

Step 4. Join an Affiliate Network

Once you have identified your goals and done some initial thinking about the kinds of products you want to promote, you need to join an affiliate network. An *affiliate network* is a company that works with many different companies to manage and/or promote its affiliate programs and to track the number of clicks, commissions, and so forth that individual affiliates generate for the programs. These networks offer these affiliate programs to publishers and search marketers, giving them a central location to search for appropriate ad copy, consolidating commission checks, and guaranteeing accurate accounting of click traffic and commissions. Affiliate networks are indispensable resources; in Chapter 4, I introduce you to some and walk you step-by-step through the process of joining a few of them.

Step 5. Join Affiliate Programs

Once you have been accepted into one or more affiliate networks, you can start joining the affiliate programs you want to promote. In Chapter 5, I tell you what to look for in an affiliate program, and then I walk you through the process of joining some

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programs, taking you all the way to generating the tracking code you will need to set up your ads in the next step.

Step 6. Create Search Marketing Campaigns

Signing up with an affiliate network is only one piece of the puzzle. You also need to join one or more search and content networks on which to run your affiliate ads. Google AdWords is an excellent place to start. In Chapter 6, I show you how to join Google and other search and content networks, and I take you step-by-step through the process of creating your first ad campaign.

Step 7. Learn How to Manage Your Search Campaigns

Just getting your campaigns running isn't the end of the process. Not by a long shot. You'll need to learn how to evaluate your ad campaigns and monitor and improve them as well. Chapter 7 shows you how to use the reporting features you'll need to be familiar with—a simple process, by the way—and Chapter 9 teaches you how to monitor those results and improve existing campaigns.

Step 8. Don't Let Mistakes Get You Down

Every entrepreneur encounters problems early on, and most make mistakes from time to time. What separates those who go on to success from the ones who crash and burn? The winners learn from their mistakes and don't let setbacks deter them. In Chapter 10, I talk about some common, but sometimes costly, mistakes that I have made: what to watch for, how to catch mistakes early, and how to recover from those mistakes.

Step 9. Invest and Grow Your Ad Programs

Businesspeople who sell tangible products know that you have to plan ahead. You have to order in advance and assemble more of an inventory than you actually need in order to grow and prosper. In this business, your only inventory is your cash on hand,

but you still need to manage it as if it were a product on the shelves. After all, the ads you pay to run comprise your product, and you need to budget carefully to ensure you can keep that product available every day.

In Chapter 11, I talk about growing your business by searching for profitable new campaigns and by expanding successful existing ones, too. The sky is the limit, as they say, and if you keep pushing the limit, there's no telling how far you'll go.

Step 10. Manage Your Business Like a Business

Running your own business and being your own boss is fantastic, believe me, but it isn't always easy. You'll need to pay taxes on your profits, remember, and if you reach a certain level of success, you may find it necessary to hire an accountant and even a lawyer.

Chapter 12 addresses a number of these concerns and gets you thinking about some of the duller, but nonetheless important, aspects of running your own business.

MY MESSAGE TO YOU: HAVE FAITH IN YOURSELF

If you have a positive frame of mind, a good work ethic, and just a little intelligence you can market just about anything. If you plan ahead and stick with your marketing efforts for the long haul, you *will* be successful.

Making money online is a leap of faith for most people. To the overwhelming majority of the general public, the idea of selling tangible goods or services online is like learning an obscure foreign language. When you consider that in the case of affiliate marketing your product is a digital ad on a Web page, it can be an even bigger leap of faith. Take it step-by-step and read the chapters that follow, and you'll stand a good chance of becoming an Affiliate Millionaire yourself.

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