

10 WAYS TO RECOGNIZE A GOOD AFFILIATE PROGRAM



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You Can Sell This Report Or Give It Away, But You Can NOT Alter This Report In Any Way

Here are Some Ideas of How You Can Use This Report:

- Email your list about it
- Give it to your list
- Tweet about it
- Tell your website or blog visitors about it
- Offer it as a bonus with another product
- Use it on your membership site

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<http://www.BuyHealthPLR.com>

<http://www.TheOnlineChick.com>

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If you have an online business, you have undoubtedly heard that you should create and sell your own products. Doing this increases your expert status, and attracts affiliates who may be interested in promoting **your** products.

However, in addition to creating your own products and affiliate program, it is wise to team up with others in your niche who have products that **you** can promote to your list. In this way, not only do you make money from your own products, but you also make an affiliate income when you promote other people's products!

With all the products and affiliate programs out there, it can be a daunting task to know where to begin!



So whether you are creating your own affiliate program, or looking for one to promote, **here's some things to keep in mind that will help you recognize whether the affiliate program is a good one:**

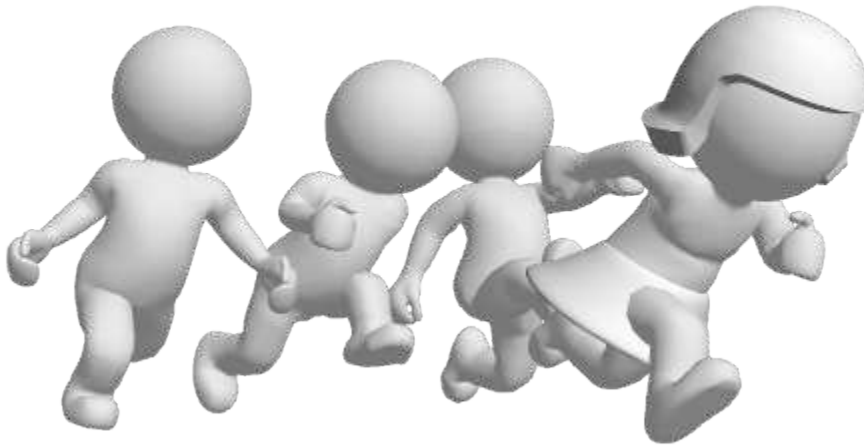
1. What is the reputation of the owner of the affiliate program?

I don't know about you, but I don't want to be associated with some of the so-called online business owners out there. My reputation is much more important than a quick sale.

This is something that you should always consider too. **Examples of ways of evaluating the reputation of the affiliate program owner include:**

- **Who does the affiliate program owner hang out with in the online world?**

Similar to when your mother told you that the friends you hang out with say a lot about you, it is the same in business.



- **What do others say about that person?**

Of course, you must remember that you can never make everyone happy, and there is a chance that some disgruntled customer or list subscriber will say something negative. Instead, what you are looking for is a general trend.

- **Are you comfortable with the way that affiliate program owner interacts with you and others?**

I bought several software products from a particular online business. I ran into some problems with updating the software, and when I tried to get help, the support was very rude and unprofessional. There is no way that I would ever promote that affiliate program, as I had had a bad experience with their support personnel, and I would not want my customers to experience the same thing.

2. Is it easy to promote the affiliate products?

The affiliate program owner should make it as easy as possible for you to make affiliate sales. This includes having things like text links, banners, email swipes, brandable reports, content that you can republish, and so on.

The easier it is to promote someone's product, the easier it is for an affiliate to make sales.

3. Are the products you will be promoting quality products?

This is definitely related to the reputation of the affiliate program owner. If you find a reputable program, you will feel good promoting those products, even if you cannot buy every single one of his/her products.

Before I promote, I do one of two things:

- **Buy the products first** – As a business owner, I invest in my business. This means that I also need to purchase products to run my own business, as well as to increase my knowledge on particular areas. When I come across high-quality products that I believe in, I will promote those. I do not see them as an added expense, because I need them for my own business anyway.

When that same person comes out with a new product in the future that I may not necessarily need, but I know that the person has a strong reputation for putting out high-quality products, I may promote. It all depends on what I feel my list is looking for at the time.

- **Ask for a sample** – Not all product owners will provide you with a sample when you ask them, but some will, so it never hurts to ask.

4. What sort of support will that affiliate program provide customers you refer to them?

Remember that your reputation is on the line. When you recommend a particular product or line of products to your list and customers, they trust you. You want them to have a good, satisfying experience when they buy from someone whom you have referred them. If they don't, it makes you look bad.

So what kinds of things am I talking about? Here's a few examples:

- Is there a customer support desk?
- How long does it take for a response?
- Is the response professional and courteous?
- Is there a satisfaction guarantee, and do they honor it?

5. What percentage of commission is offered?

I look for commissions of at least 50% when I'm promoting information products. However, if I'm promoting a coaching program or something where the product owner has to provide his/her time to deliver the product, then a 20% commission is quite common. After all, I'm not the one putting in the time, so it would not be fair for me to expect 50%.



6. How long do you have to wait before getting payment?

You should expect payment at least **once per month**. Often, this means that you are getting paid for commissions that you earned in the previous month.

Even more important than this, however, is that you want to find out if there is a **threshold** that you must reach before you get paid. Whenever possible, I will pick an affiliate program that does **not** have a threshold. After all, if you have done the work to introduce someone to a particular product, then I feel that you should get paid no matter how small that commission may be.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to avoid this threshold. A good example is Clickbank. Many people like to use it as a selling platform, because of all the available affiliates. Clickbank also handles all the payments, making it hands-off for many product owners.

Clickbank is a good fit for many people, but before you decide if Clickbank is for you, there are some things you need to consider. **I wrote a post on my blog here:** <http://www.theonlinechick.com/clickbank-is-it-right-for-you/>



7. Do you get credit for only one product or for any product that the customer purchases?

Again, many affiliate programs are set up differently. I look for programs where, no matter what product the customer purchases, I am rewarded as an affiliate. Therefore, even if I promote one product, but the customer decides to purchase an entirely different product, I still get credit for leading the customer there in the first place. That is one thing that I have always liked about the Amazon Associates program. Therefore, if someone clicked on my affiliate link for a book that is sold at Amazon, but went there and bought a lamp instead, I still earn an affiliate commission.

8. Are you rewarded for first click or last click?

Ask many top-notch marketers this question, and you are sure to get a variety of responses!

This is where the term, "**cookie**" is important to understand. Cookies are small pieces of data or files that get stored on your hard drive when you visit websites. Cookies can be thought of as your own personal online identification, for a particular website.

Cookies provide the website with information about what you are interested in, and what your past activity has been like on a site. If you are able to put something in an online cart, and then come back a few days later to find the items still in your cart, cookies have been involved in allowing this.

Let me give you some practical examples of how this works. When a customer visits Amazon, that customer gets cookied for 24 hours (i.e. the cookie lasts and expires after 24 hours). This means that if someone clicks on your affiliate link, and buys through that link within 24 hours, you will earn the affiliate commission. Furthermore, if that customer puts items in his cart and does not buy right away, if he returns within 90 days, you will earn the commission. As you can see, cookies are at play here.

Amazon uses first click with its affiliates. This means that the **first** affiliate link that the customer clicks on, will be rewarded the affiliate commission as long as purchase happens within 24 hours (or 90 days if items are added to the cart), even if that customer clicks on another affiliate link during this time frame.

A 24-hour cookie is a very short time frame, and one that I would avoid unless I'm dealing with Amazon (even though I wish Amazon's cookie was much longer).

Clickbank, on the other hand, uses last-click cookies. Clickbank does a better job with a longer cookie (60 days), but the **last** affiliate link that the customer clicks on before making a purchase, is the affiliate that will be rewarded.

The other thing to remember is that cookies can be cleared voluntarily on a customer's computer at any point in time, so cookies are not always a guarantee that you will earn a commission.

So what do proponents of first click and last click affiliate programs have to say?

Proponents of first-click cookies believe that if it was not for their introductions of customers to a site, that the potential customers would never have learned about that product/site at all.

Proponents of last-click cookies believe that this is fair, because they are the ones who actually converted the prospect into a buyer. You may recognize this kind of scenario when you see many people promoting the same offer, and they are offering extra bonuses if you purchase the product through their links. In this case, the more (and better) you promote, the better are your chances of getting the sale through last click. They may even tell you to clear your history/cache before purchasing to ensure that you buy through their link to get the bonuses.

The flaw of last-click cookies is that even if you introduced someone to a site, but they buy through someone else's link later, then you will not get credit.

To avoid last-click scenarios, it can be helpful to ensure that potential customers introduced to you by an affiliate, get into your **system database** (by creating a membership profile). This means that a potential customer is forever "tied" to that affiliate who introduced your site. This means it allows you to create a passive form of income. You do the work once, and you get paid in the future whenever that customer purchases more products.

This can work in your favor, as well as against you sometimes. In other words, if you are the affiliate that is tied to a customer, then you have potential to enjoy lifetime, passive earnings. **However**, if you promote a product, and the customer is already tied to another affiliate, then you will never earn a commission when that customer purchases something. However, I know this has happened to many of us, so it's not something that should discourage you, as there are a lot of other potential customers out there still.

Software programs that can offer potential customers to be saved in a database include [Amember](#) (this is what I use) and [Nanacast](#). This means then that any future purchases that that customer makes will be credited to the **first** affiliate who introduced him, and got that person into my database (usually as a customer).

9. How long are the cookies?

As you have probably already gathered from the information above, you want cookies to be as long as possible. I offer, and look for, lifetime cookies. Of course, you must remember that cookies last as long as the prospect does not clear his computer cookies, or doesn't use or buy another computer to do the transaction on. That is where getting people into the database (as discussed above) can be so important.

10. Does the affiliate program allow purchases to be made through one's own affiliate link?

Once again, I see this as a serious drawback of using Clickbank, in particular for internet-related products. Any internet marketer knows that Clickbank allows people to purchase through their own affiliate links (HopLinks), so what incentive is there to purchase through the HopLink of some other affiliate? If you are promoting products to people in niches other than the internet marketing field, you may experience less of this as the buyers may not realize that they can do this.

Most affiliate programs do not allow personal purchases through one's own affiliate link, and this is a good thing to look for in a program.

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Kim Phoenix is the owner of BuyHealthPLR.com (a Private Label Rights store with an affiliate program) and TheOnlineChick.com (blog).

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