

AFFSTAT 2005 SPECIAL REPORT // AFFILIATE SUMMIT 2005 EDITION

Affiliates Speak Out on the Issues



**Register for Affiliate Summit 2005 at
<http://www.affiliatesummit.com>**

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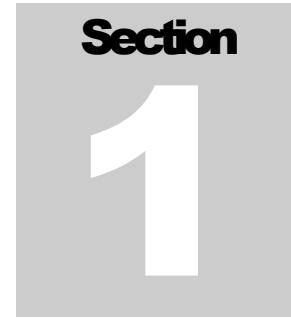
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What Affiliates Want, Like, Hate, Need, and Think

Do you know what affiliates have to say about the issues?

Much of the strategy of an affiliate manager is based on industry standards and best practices that have worked for other affiliate programs in the past. But has anybody ever stopped to ask their affiliates what they want, like, hate, need, and think?

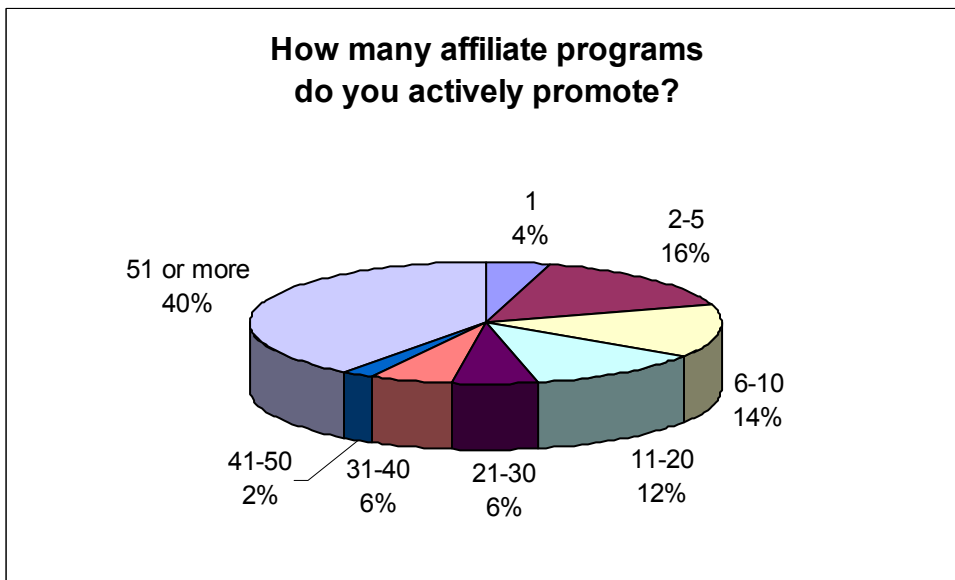
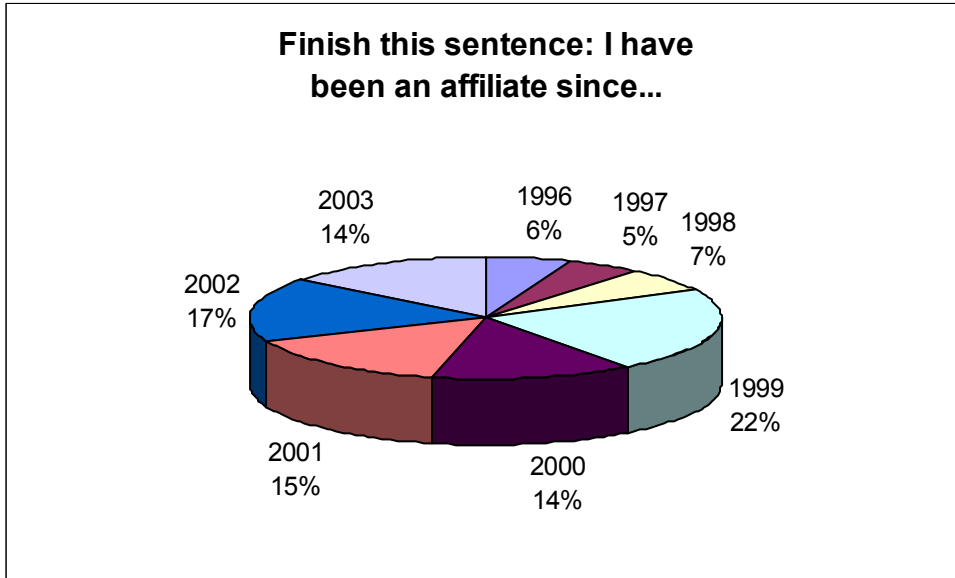
The short answer is no. Affiliate managers assume and speculate why affiliates join programs, how they promote them, and what they think of the policies baked into affiliate agreements.

The data in the AffStat 2005 Special Report was originally published in the AffStat 2004 report and is based on surveys from more than one hundred and forty affiliates, from “mom & pops” to “super affiliates” were surveyed on their opinions, preferences, and ideas.

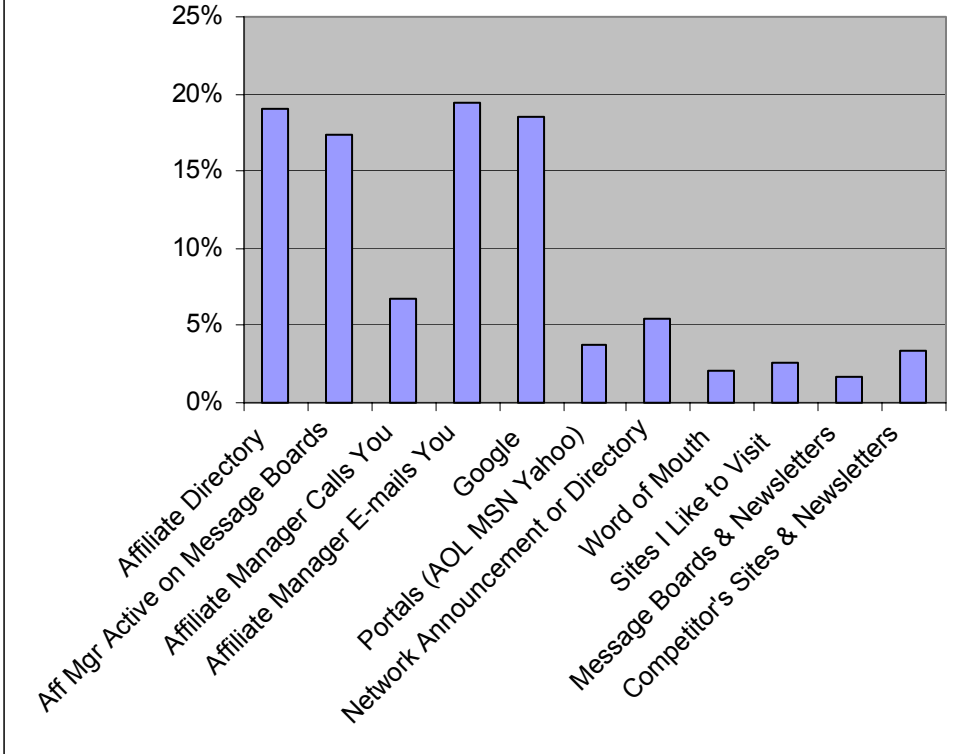
The *What Affiliates Want, Like, Hate, Need, and Think* section features the results of these surveys to assist your affiliate marketing insight and strategy. Take a look at the following results. Are you in touch with your affiliates, or is it time to make some changes in your program?

The Basic Stats

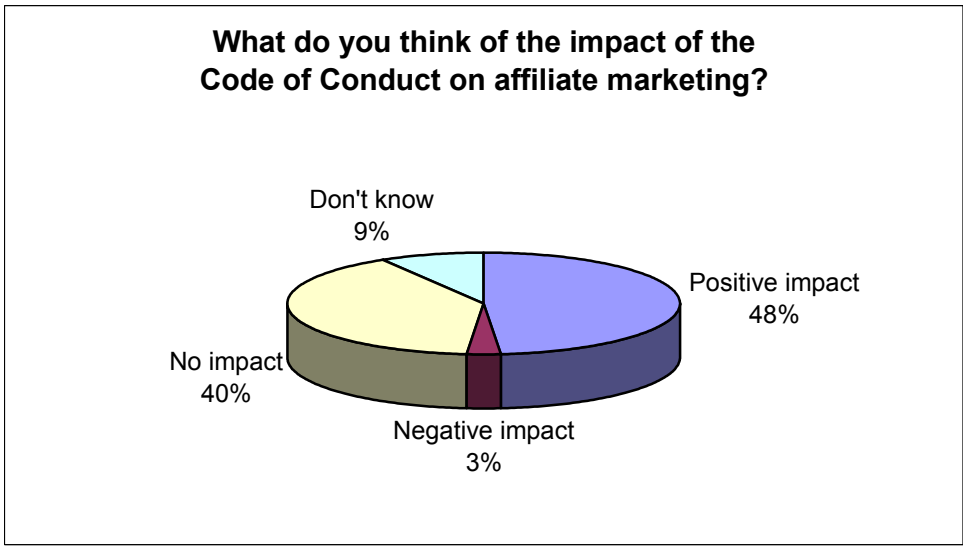
What do you know about your affiliates... how long have they been affiliates, the number of programs they've joined, and whether they care if your program is in a network?



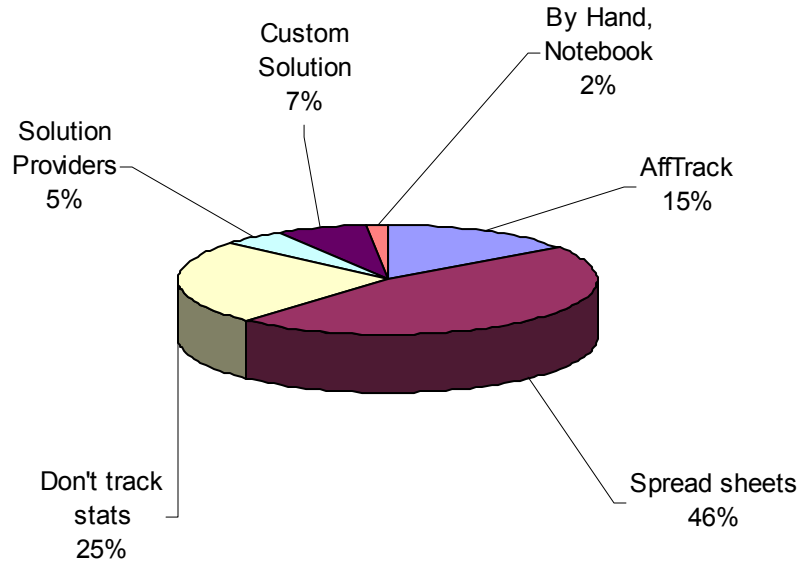
How you do most often find out about an affiliate program and then join?



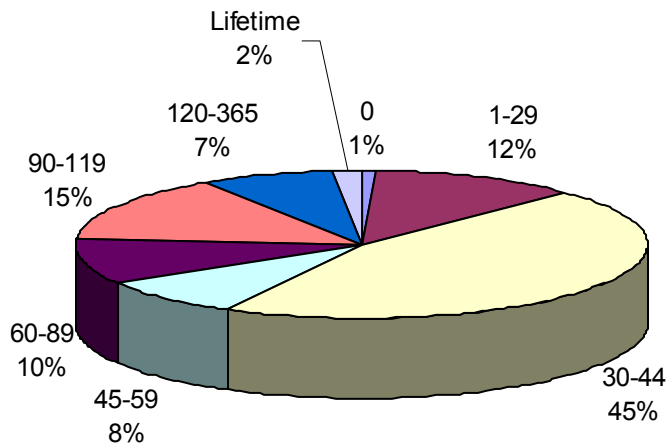
What do you think of the impact of the Code of Conduct on affiliate marketing?



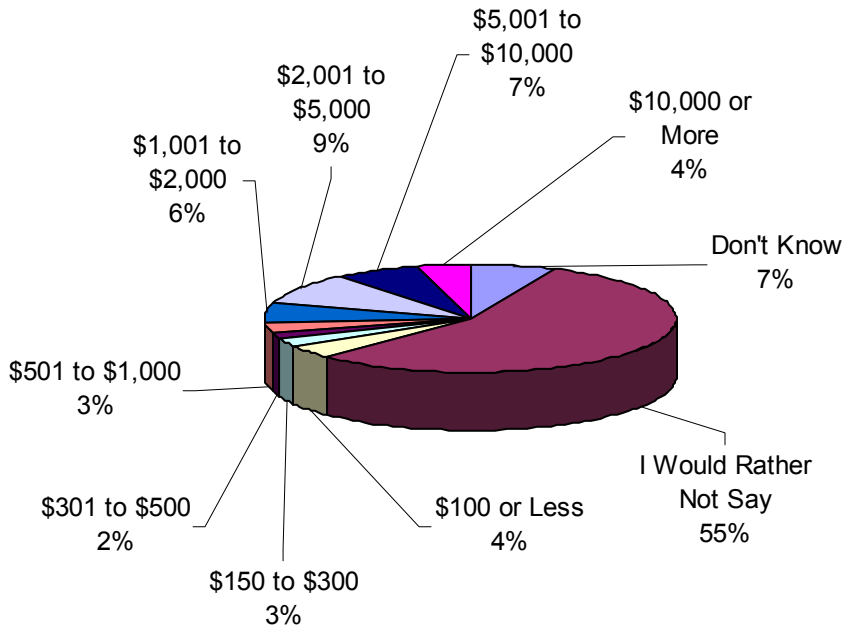
How do you manage/track your affiliate statistics?



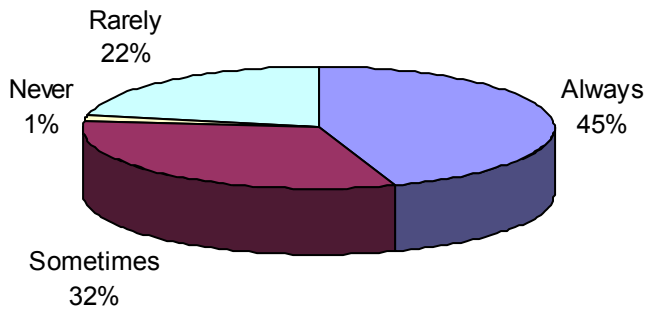
How many return days for cookies would you consider to be fair?

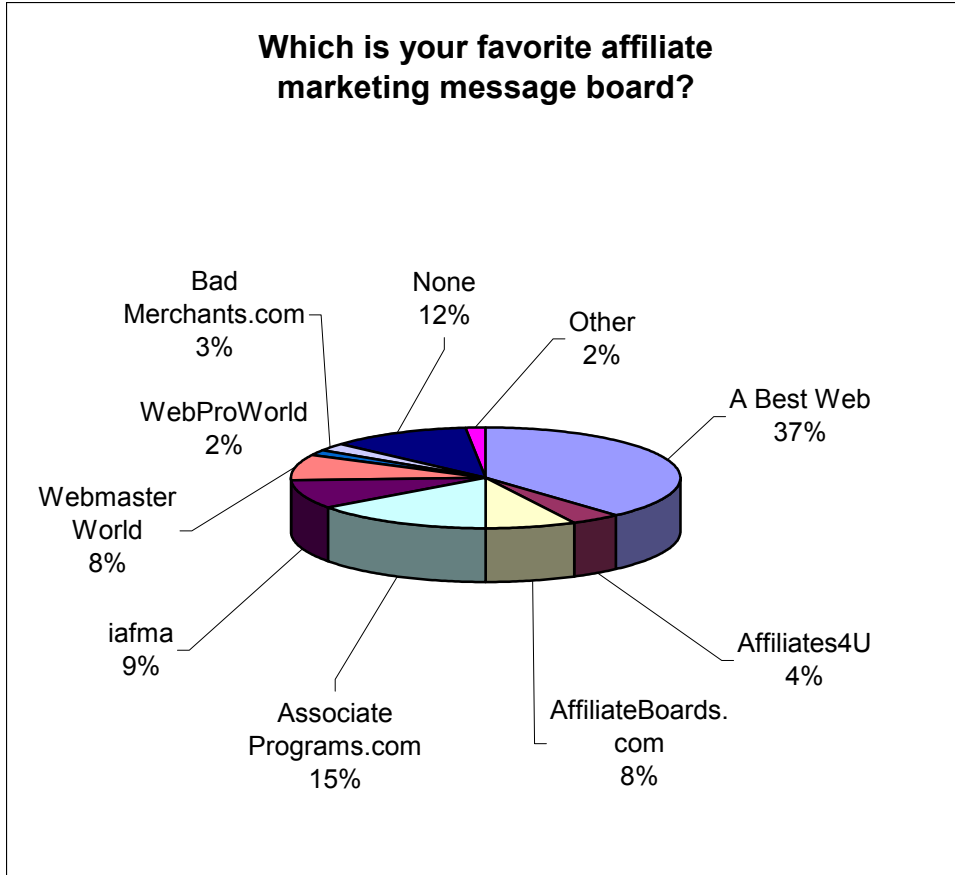


What is your average gross monthly income with affiliate programs?



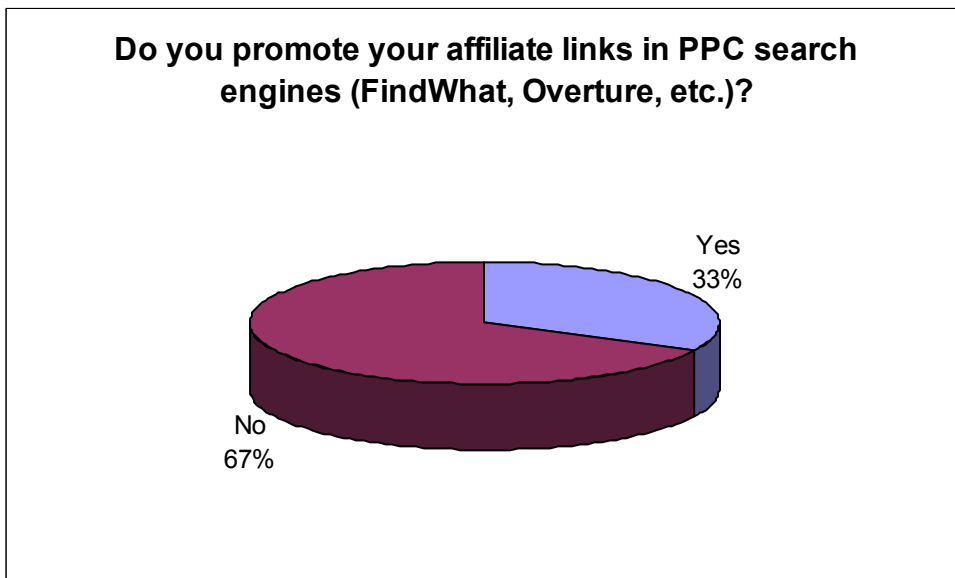
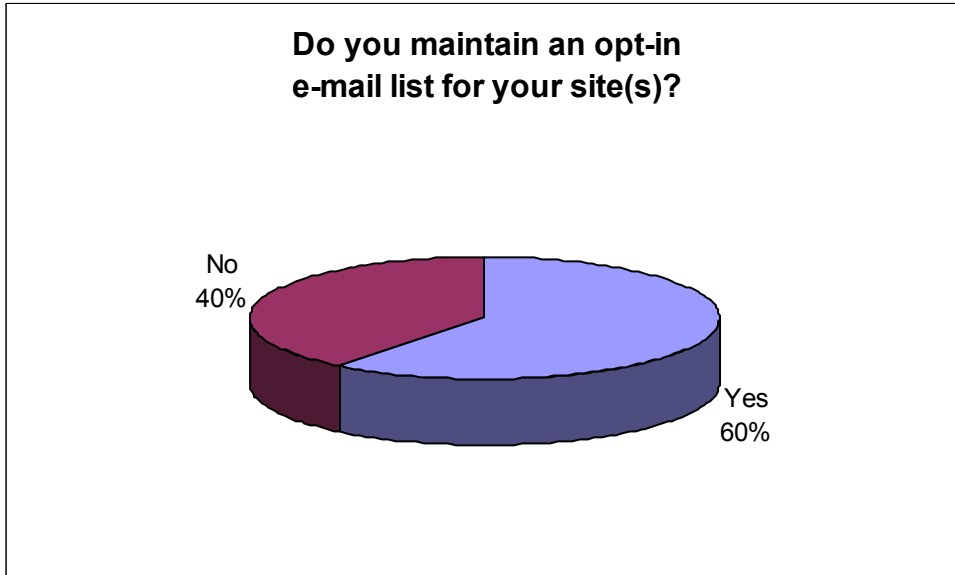
When signing up for an affiliate program, do you read the affiliate agreement?



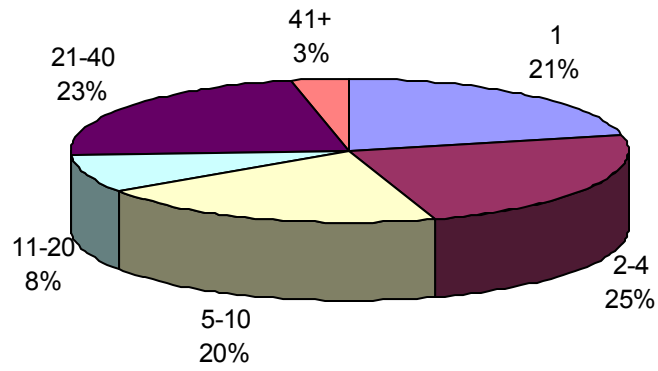


Promotion Methods

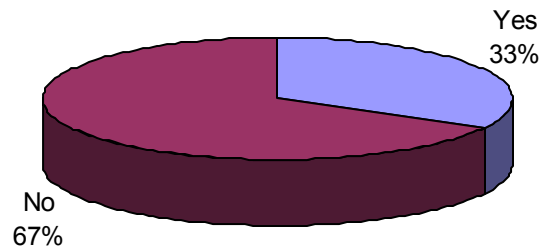
How are affiliates promoting your affiliate program? Do you know which affiliates are using search engines and email, and how they are doing it?



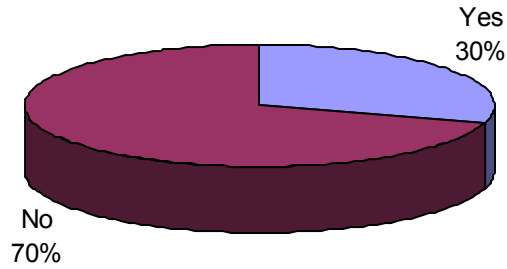
How many domains do you own?



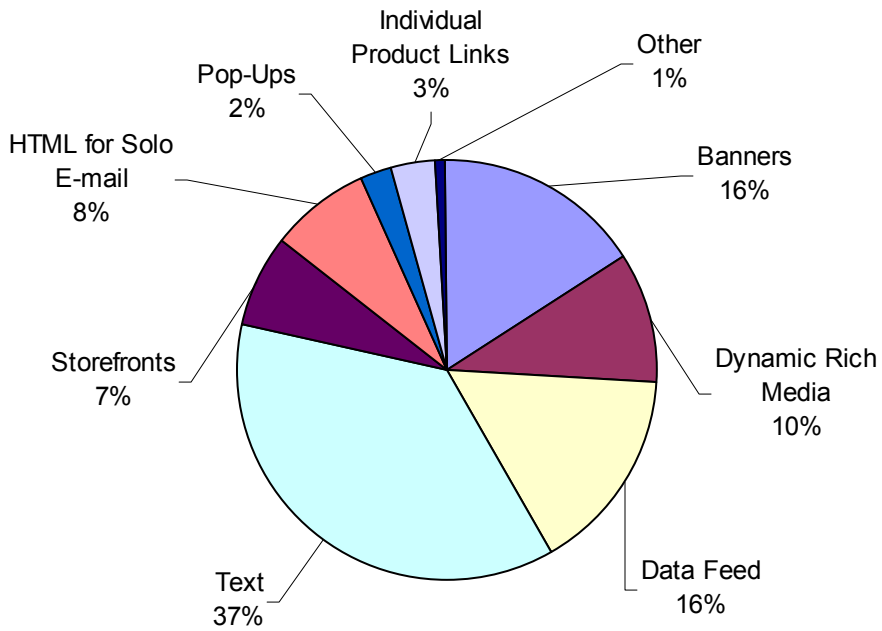
Do you own any domains dedicated to a particular affiliate program?



Do you cloak links (CGI, .htaccess, meta redirect, etc.)?

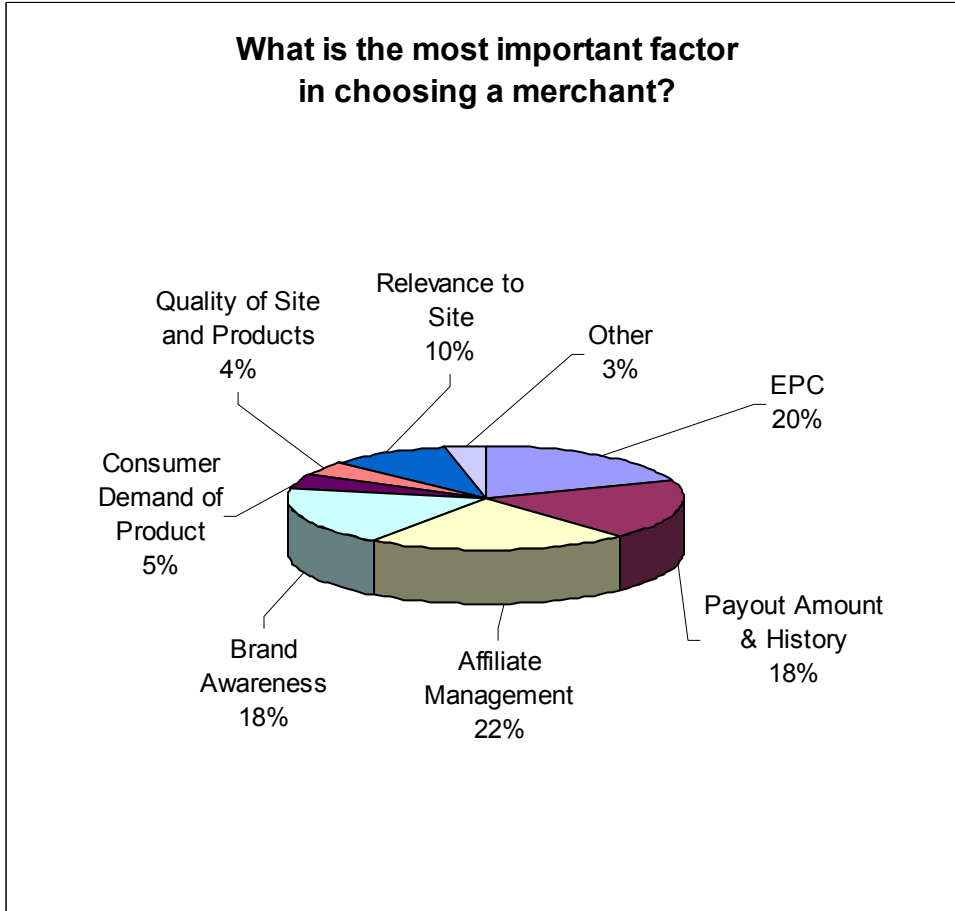


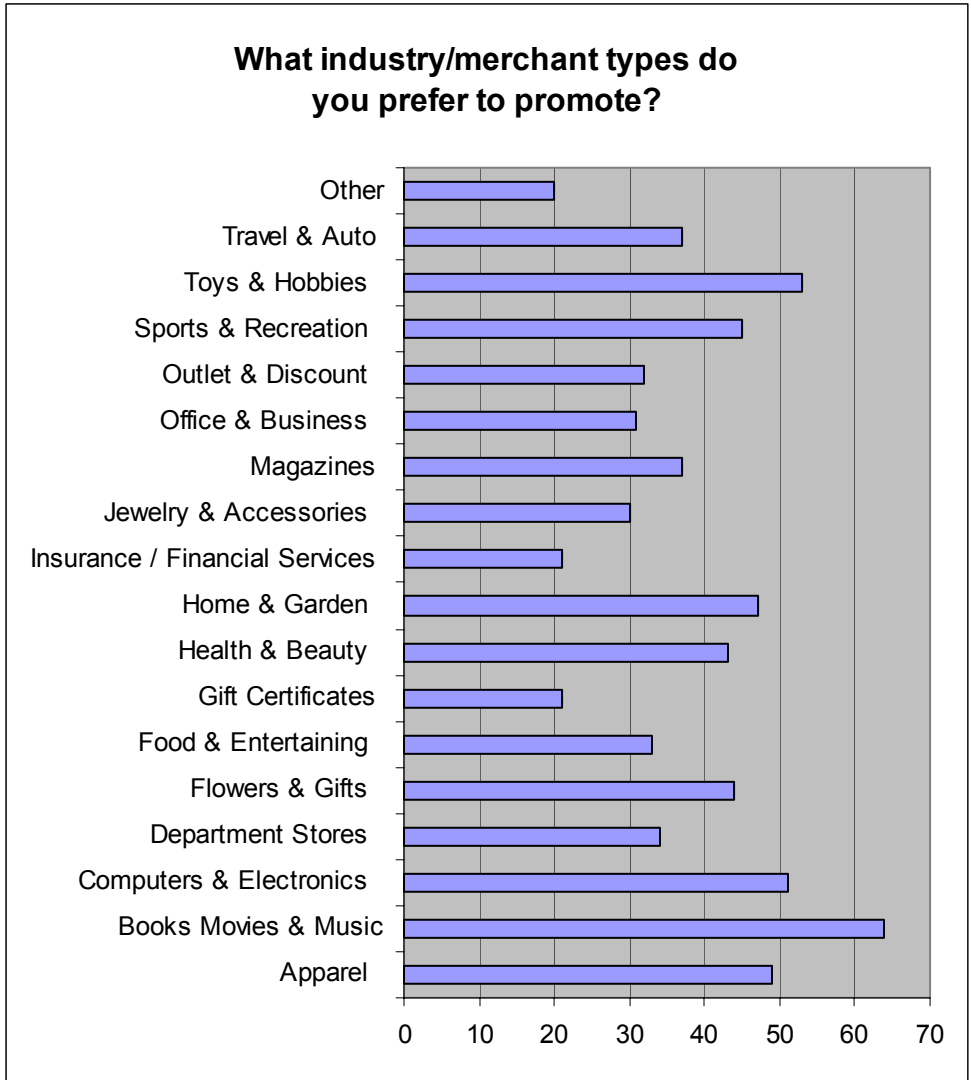
What are your preferred link types?



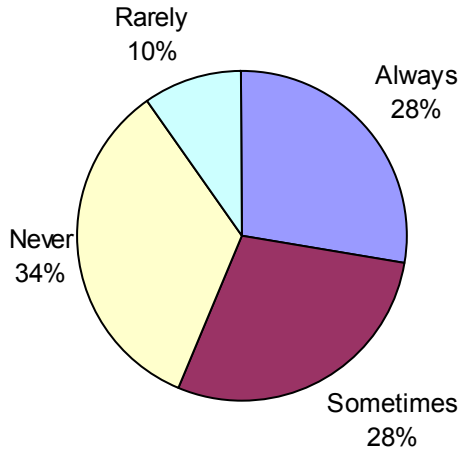
Why They Join

Affiliates may be picking your program because of the number of return days you provide, your product line, your stance on various issues, or just because they think you'll perform well on their site.

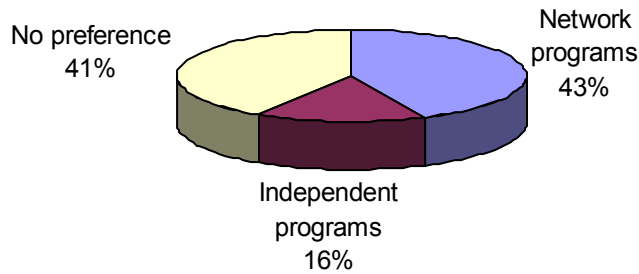




Do you choose the affiliate programs you promote based on whether or not they allow affiliates that use direct marketing software (aka BHOs, adware, ParasiteWare™)?



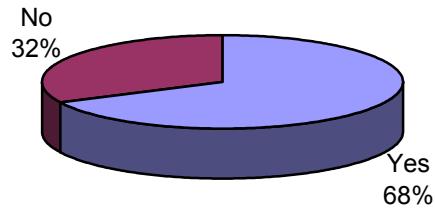
Do you prefer network or independent affiliate programs?



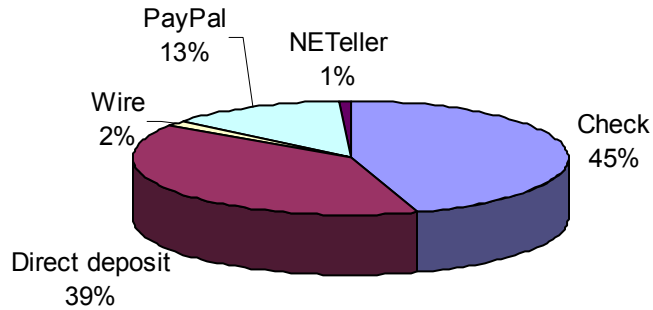
Commission Issues

Are you paying affiliates often enough? Do you offer a sweeter deal for “super affiliates”? Affiliates want their money, and they want it in certain ways.

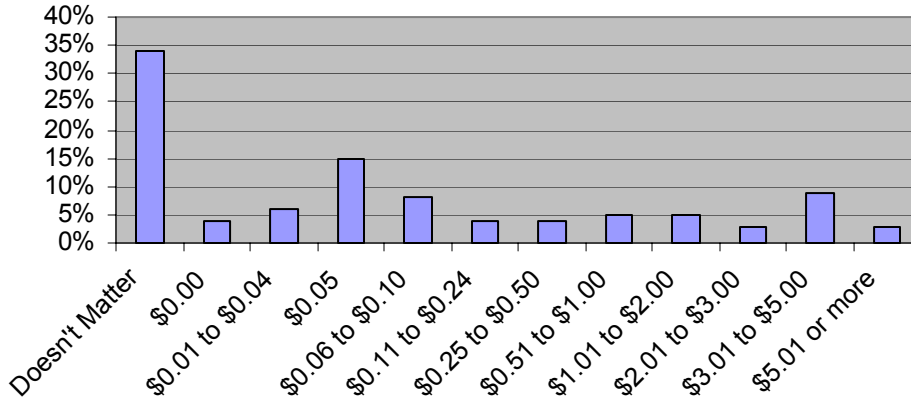
Do commission payment policies (how often a program pays) affect your decision to promote an affiliate program?



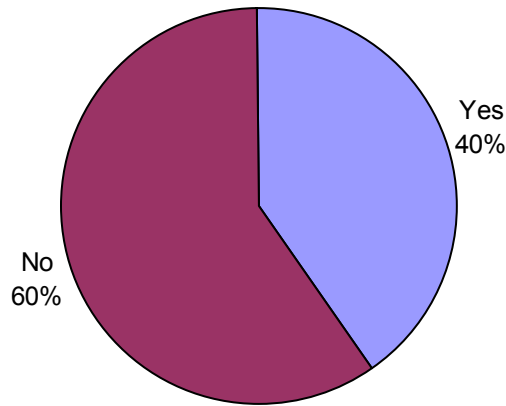
What is your preferred method of commission payment?

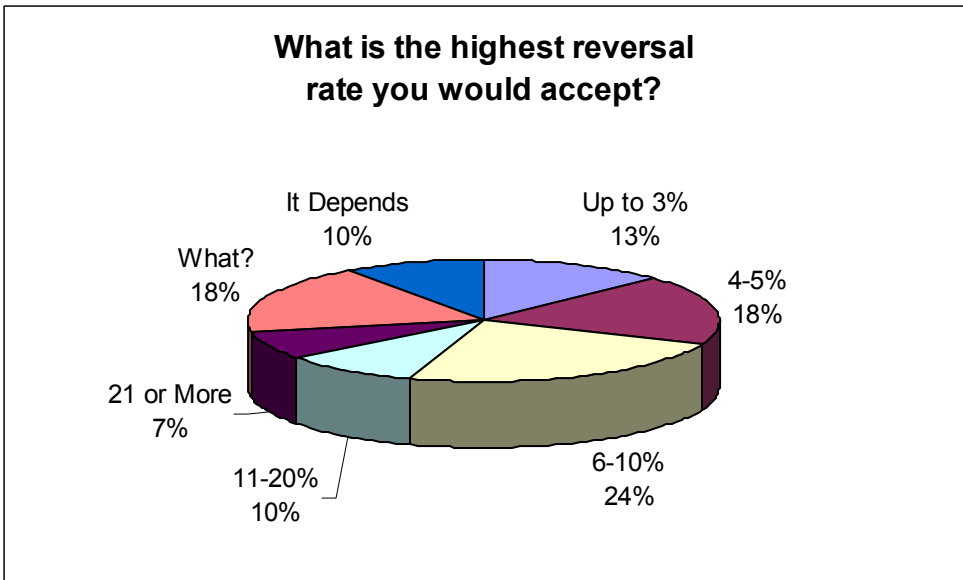
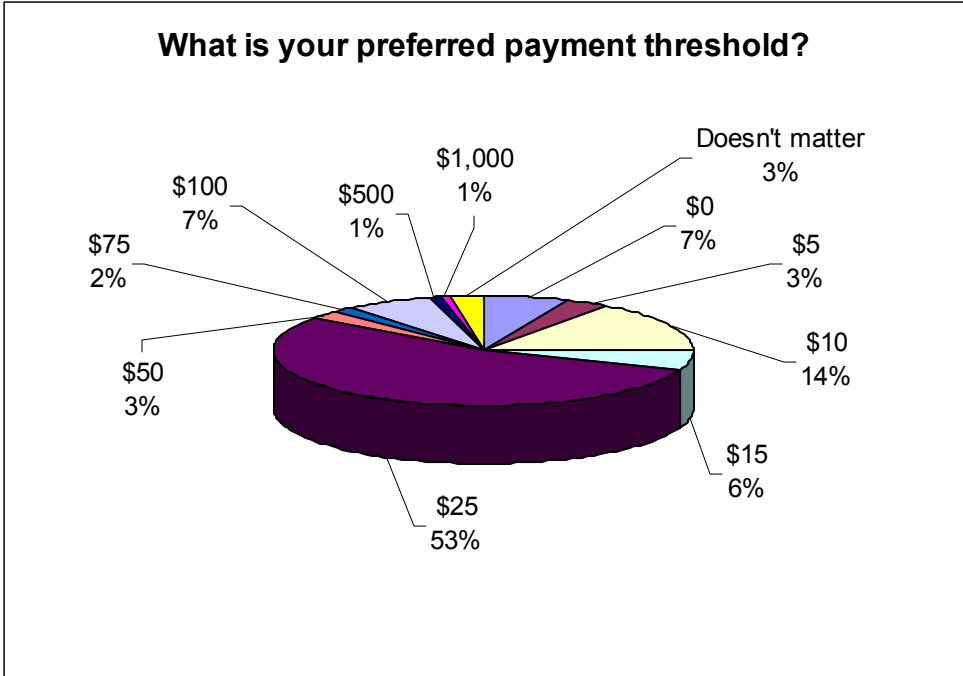


What is the minimum EPC (earnings per 1 click) for you to promote an affiliate program?



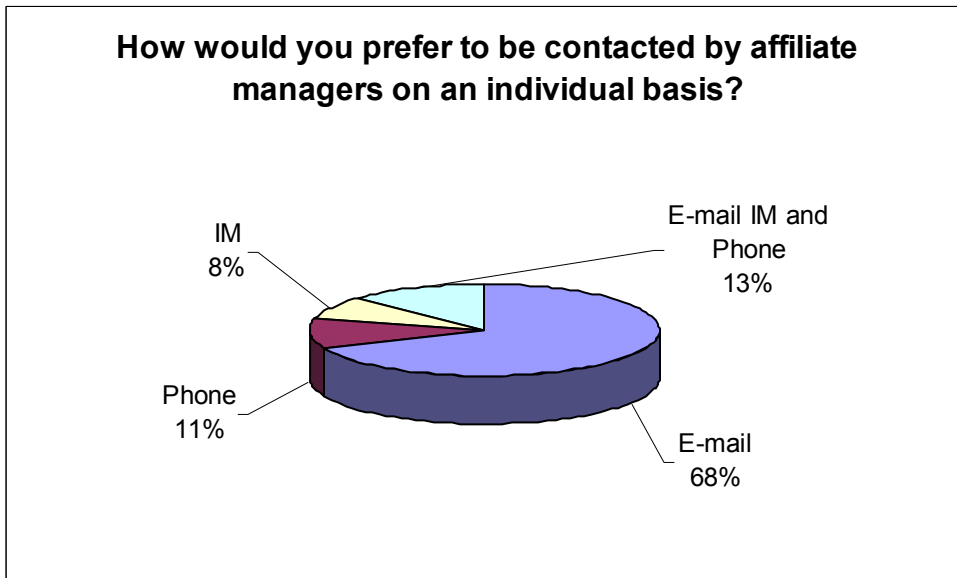
Have you successfully requested an increase in commission from an affiliate manager?



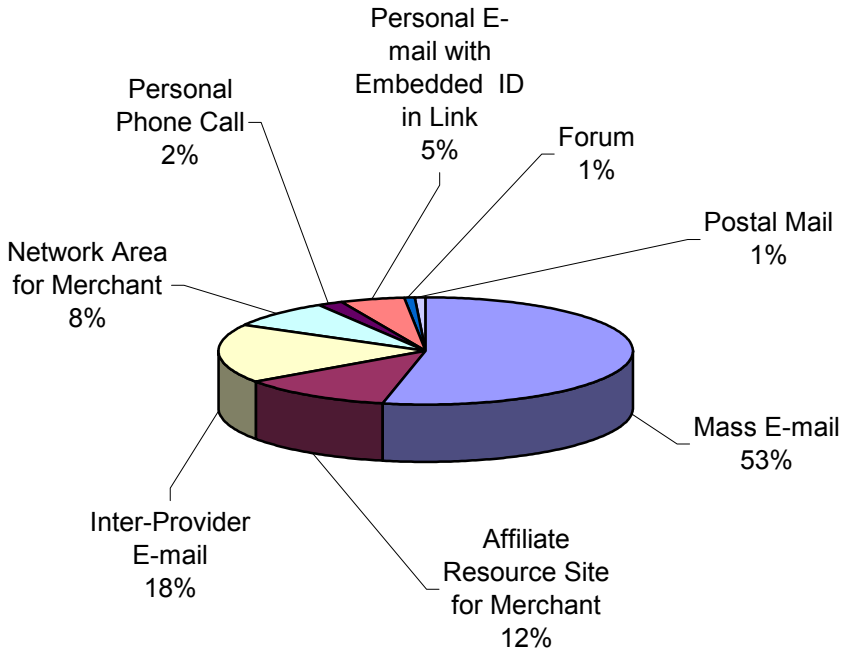


Communication Strategies

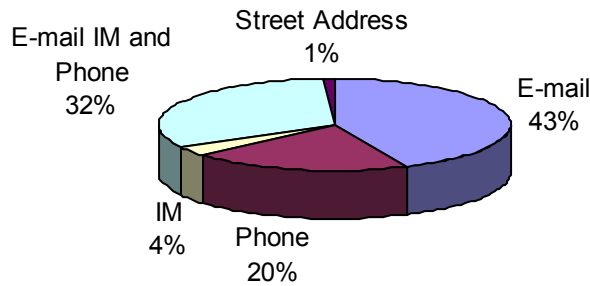
How often and in what way are you communicating with your affiliates? And would they prefer you were doing it differently?

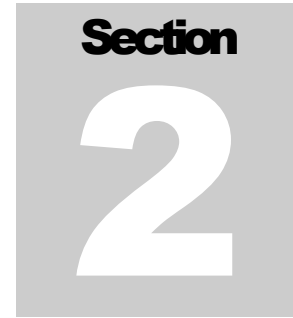


What is your preferred method for finding out information from an affiliate manager?



How much information should an affiliate manager make available to you?





Their Words

When given a soapbox, what do affiliates have to say about things?

The affiliates in your program are not happy with some things, would love to see some changes, and at the end of the day, they just want to work together with you to make some money.

Read what they have to say, and you might just learn a thing or two about how to manage your program better, generate greater results, and retain those top affiliates that may be on the verge of leaving you for your competition.

The following comments are broken down as those that were gathered in 2004 and those culled in 2005 from affiliates. Read and learn.

Affiliates Speak Out on the Issues 2005

1. Don't quit your day job for a affiliate program! I use affiliate programs as fillers for my hosting site only. Affiliate links are ripped off and redirected all the time by the companies and by the scammers (Hackers). There is an easy solution, but it would seem that no one wants to change the linking system for honesty.
2. I don't think companies that force cookies or download software to computer users without their knowledge is not playing fare game and should be eliminated. Some of us actually spend time each week keeping up on all the sales and promos, but get cheated by those that take away our chances. Affiliates need to be more aggressive and suspending those that try to cheat the system. Where all in the business to make money and we should all play fare. We are working on ways to be more competitive by offering more services.
3. Affiliate marketing has sure come a long way since I started! There are many great things happening but the one thing that really bugs me is affiliate managers who do not communicate with affiliates. Most of us are juggling quite a few affiliate programs at once and if I'm not hearing from these managers on a regular basis, I forget to promote them or update my links. Sometimes, I get emails from programs with LAST months promotions or coupons that have been out for half the month that I was never notified of. I like to keep my site up to date with the latest promotions but if I don't know what they are it's kind of hard to update. Every month on the first, I go to all of my affiliate programs (Linkshare, CJ, share-a-sale, etc. to find the latest promotions and many times they're not posted - okay so I wait a day or 2 check again - still not there - a week - still not there! That really frustrates me! That being said there are many affiliate managers that DO keep their affiliate up to date and that is greatly appreciated! I also love when they include in their updates best performers and top selling products & little tips and tricks for getting better conversions - that's a BIG help!
4. I have no real complaint. However, I feel that affiliate marketing can't work unless you are really aggressive with "in your face" marketing. I am opposed to that; consequently the only affiliate that truly works for me is Amazon.com because its items are really relevant to my subject when I write an article for my news column.
5. I would like Clubmom.com to put more marketing money into giving away free products, such as magazine subscriptions, to new members. I had much better luck with signups, with free merchandise, than the current sweepstakes. I hardly get any click-throughs, with the sweepstakes, such as the spa giveaway.
6. I am frustrated at the rate my email "language" gets stolen by other affiliates. I actually enjoy affiliate marketing, though, because I don't inherit the headache of managing everything myself. For that, I'm more than willing to accept only a percentage of the profits, rather than all.
7. Most affiliate banners don't work because they don't contain a source address. They only have a destination address. They often don't tie the affiliate number to the user ID number, therefore if some one comes to your initial site to buy something and then decides to become an affiliate, you don't get credit.
8. I think that affiliate marketing is great if everyone knew how to do it more effectively. Email Campaigns, Advertising (Free or Paid), Search Engines, EZines, Newsletters, Blogs, RSS Feeders & Content Websites, etc. are great but how do you make money? If all affiliates were schooled, in plain English, and not have to read a book or waste money to become successful, then I think being an affiliate marketer would be an excellent home-based business for the netpreneur.

9. The Internet has come to almost a complete halt. Nothing new to experience or work with. Advertising is down via Newsletter and Ezine. Spam hasn't ended but is less than last year. I believe that everyone is pretty much burned out from the scams and ripoffs and are now holding on to their money even tighter.
10. When I first started my affiliate program my partners were very important to me in terms of sales. 2 years later my affiliates are still doing really well for me, although I now also use CPC advertising & have high search engine rankings. I would not be where I am today if not for them. I am in a niche market & therefore sites that compliment my market are perfect affiliate partners. I regard them as a great asset to my business. About every 3 months I still search for compatible sites to present my affiliate program to. I pay 15% which I feel they deserve. Some of my affiliates do better than others, but I believe it mostly depends on how they promote the program. People that just slap up a bunch of banners or links cannot really expect to receive much in the way of commissions. If you can match content to programs you have a better chance of success.
11. Residual income is a must. I wish more merchants would get onboard. I'll do my part...
12. Affiliates think that the merchants should provide them with everything (website and all), data feeds, etc. They forget that there is some work that needs to be done on their end, beyond just owning a domain name. There is so much fraud in this space that it is overwhelming, especially with applications. The networks should make this a top priority.
13. I surf and surf and surf etc. for months and months and get multiple hits but no sales? I use affiliate web pages and their links on my web site and nothing. Where is all the money they claim you will get if you surf and advertise?
14. It's hard to get going. Free Marketing Tools would be nice. Some affiliate programs want to charge you for everything! Even training and customer support.
15. I personally believe 98% of the affiliate programs are bunk. A person would have a better chance of making a living at a casino. Very few actually pay as advertised. The ones that do rate as good to excellent - the three I've had the most success with - Epage classifieds, LinkShare, adreporting.com.
16. It can work if done properly. It takes time and some skill. It takes more than placing a link on your site. You must be aware of what your unique readers are interested in.
17. There are always wanna haves with this kind of utility. But I must say. You are doing an excellent job of focusing on what we need. I find the links useful, as well as I appreciate the added visitors.
18. I might be mistaken, but, If the affiliate is not reciprocal, it does not benefit the site w/ the link, because it is only one way and not a two way link? Please correct and explain if not right, it's how I learn.
19. I've been in this business for last 3 years, so far not made any significant money. However I didn't put my time and effort much, only casually, I did the work.
20. As I agree sharing links is a great way to gain more exposure for anyone's web url , but it does pose a drawback when seeking higher ranking with search engines. Too many links can be viewed as a link farm which can hurt your web positioning. I think that there should be a work around for this or a compromise from the search engine industry to allow web owners to have as many linkbacks as they want. We should not have to compromise our index pages with these linkbacks. Our home pages should be the expression of its owner and product there

offering. All link backs can be either searchable through just one link, placed into a directory from that link under a section relevant to its category. If you looked over my site you would find linkbacks on and near bottom of page that was required when I placed my info on the page. There should be a ruling of a sort that all linkbacks be created separate from our main pages with only a link leading to all affiliates and sort.

21. These are just a general across the board comments on all affiliate sites I'm involved with. To name a few but not limited to with a rating from 1-10 with 10 being the best: cj.com - 9 befree.com - 5 performics.com - 6 linkshare.com - 7 shareasale.com - 4 (payment issues) epage.com - 7 (to many outside ads) adddrive.com - 5 valuemedia.com - new clickbank.com - 10 GoogleAdSense.com - 8 (unreasonable policy changes) nationwideclassifieds.com - 9 advertisingresults.com - 9 nationwidewenewspapers.com - 2 (payment issues) theusatimes.com - 1 (affiliate support issues) metarewards.com - 1 (affiliate support issues) advertising.com - new catalogs.com - 6 Some affiliate sites allow to much outside marketing or advertising on affiliate landing pages. There should be some limits or provide for other options such as low cost to keep out. Timeliness of payment is sometimes an issue but is rare. I've had late payments but have always been paid. Ability to deep link would be great for marketing specific products but not all allow for it. Fresh subject matter is always good. Support is questionable at times.
22. Affiliate marketing is one of the cornerstones of Internet Marketing. As with any sales channel it has its challenges, but the underlying theme is that Affiliate marketing works. It drives commissions to affiliates and adds significant ROI to merchants.
23. 1) Third party merchants that charge a fee to allow affiliates access to datafeeds need to reconsider. 2) Affiliates that earn money from a merchant's affiliate program deserve to have their emails answered. I have unanswered emails where I was offering suggestions and asking questions to help both of us earn even more money than we are now. I have considered finding replacement merchants even though I have been making a nice amount of money with these programs.
24. I think affiliate marketing is still in its infancy. If you look at some of the larger affiliate companies, they look "clunky" and are not always so user-friendly. What bothers me the most is how parasites can take sales right out of one's hands and there seems to be little that can be done. At least from what I've read (I'm still fairly new to this whole thing). What I appreciate the most is how smaller companies, like ClubMom, are willing to go that extra mile and give a personal touch. I appreciate the newsletters and specials that are promoted here. All in all, I think affiliate marketing will continue to grow, expand and offer better services to us affiliates.
25. While I'm really happy to see a trend is shorter forms to qualify for a "lead", I'm really disheartened by how many misleading programs are out there right now. Get a free \$500 gift card/Nintendo DS/dinner/ etc ads are on almost every network now. And while it's a great way for an affiliate to make a quick buck (most are one field only) they are very misleading ads. It's almost impossible for a person to actually for the free thing that is being advertised. It makes it hard as a webmaster - you have to choose between being ethical and not run those ads or to run them to help cover costs (they do pay and convert well). The other thing that I'd really like to see is better text links. Often a text link is really short or very long. We run text links in our newsletters and love when we can just cut and paste a short 3-4 sentence description about a product/promo/freebie/newsletter without having to alter it. We like the longer text because we can often blend it into the newsletter making it look less like an ad and more like content. And finally, I'm tired of affiliate networks that deactivate accounts without letting you know it's going to happen or has happened. A perfect example of this is our CJ account was deactivated, which we didn't know about until we went to browse it one day. When we contacted them they told us it was due to not generating a lead in 6 months. Had they written us in advance and let us know, we would have gladly looked for some CJ offers to promote. Instead, we will continue to give business to other networks with better communication. Obviously CJ would rather lose affiliates than drop a letter reminding them they need to generate some leads.

Affiliates Speak Out on the Issues 2004

I would have to say that things that make me happy as an affiliate are having great updates, wide range of linking options, and direct product links. Please have an EASY way to make product links.

Currently, CJ is my best product link maker. There are a couple of programs, like Irv's Luggage, that offer a way to do a WHOLE category or topic for product links. This saves affiliate time to make these links, and allows more time to promote those products.

To tell you the truth, I don't really know what I need to do to increase sales. I've gotten one check and don't know how I got that! Pretty sad, huh?

I'd like to earn more as an affiliate, but just don't have a clear understanding. I run an ad in my newsletter every week for affiliate programs.

Electronic payment, whether via PayPal, direct deposit, or wire transfers, really makes things much easier for those of us who receive too many little checks each month.

I find that we can be 'peppered' with emails. We are people on this end and at times I feel like a computer is greeting me.

Add link codes in the emails, especially on acceptance emails. But then, not 50 link codes either. Keep in mind that we do not just read the emails; we must pick them apart for relevant data. Offer selling points when a product is nondescript by title.

Communication is VERY important. With many programs to promote, it's not possible to check everyone's site for current promotions etc.

I love when affiliate managers email me letting me know what is going on with their site/program. It really helps me keep things up to date and get out merchants promotions in a timely manner.

Most promotional contests put everyone in the same boat. Big companies like LookSmart, Shopping.com, etc. compete with the little guys - it's a joke.

Most merchants do not care who gets paid - it's about the sale. Only a few go after and remove commission stealing web sites.

I have seen them give kudos and rewards to top affiliates, who are known to use Adware and ParasiteWare™. A few places are starting to be pro-active, but I think I loose 20-40% in commissions every month.

How else can you explain sales conversion rates dropping 60 - 80% on the same type of traffic? It's very annoying that most merchants don't care.

I'm tired of affiliate managers wanting me to promote their program when they are working with parasite companies.

I have several companies who contact me for better positioning on my sites, yet I recently discovered when a visitor comes to my site that company's website pops over mine, because of WhenU and other scamware taking away any commission that I might have received. I refuse to work with any company that advertises in that way.

1-800 number orders should be tracked - cookie return days should be 10 days at a bare minimum - cookies should persist for the length specified after the first order is made. This would reward affiliates for multiple purchases from the same customer (CJ calls this "Action Referral Occurrences").

I love being an affiliate. I am a disabled person and this has taught me a lot about computing and merchandise.

I feel that we get peppered with emails that are not direct. Emails should contain links, not just info on products. The easier the merchant or program makes it, the quicker the links get placed. I feel pressured by some emails and that is a big turn off.

Please add links to emails, thus removing a step. It takes a toll on a computers memory to copy and paste double info.

More Canadian Dollar shopping sites and the ability to search within affiliate programs for Canadian Dollar websites.

In the 8 months I have been involved in the affiliate programs, the biggest flaw I see is the inability of the publisher to promote the sites within my own sites or to be able to use the earnings from my work to offer special promotions to customers because of the restrictions in the affiliate agreement.

A publisher should be able to promote his site as long as there's communication between publisher and merchant. If a merchant wants main page listing, they should be more willing

to help the publisher become more successful, which will promote their business more. As it is now, it's all for the merchants and the publishers have to fend for themselves.

Personal contact from affiliate managers is critical. High-performing affiliates should be hearing from managers on a regular basis. The most productive affiliates often have worthwhile and creative promotions to suggest.

Also, personal contact helps to keep your program "top of mind." Remember, most successful affiliates are promoting dozens of programs. We need to be reminded about yours! Almost every time I get a phone call or personal email from an affiliate manager, a specific promotion results from it, with a corresponding spike in sales.

I feel any contact with a merchant via the affiliate manager warrants a response. This is far too often not the case in my experience. LinkShare is best in this area, CJ next, but Share-a-Sale, Performics and Be Free suck at it.

If you choose to promulgate links via personalized emails, make sure the code has been tested before compelling me to do a whole lot of work inserting them in various categories.

I frequently get "corrected" emails within a couple of hours or the next day, which advise that either tracking code was incorrect, or learn the hard way (from a customer) that the given link returns a 404 error. Makes us both look bad.

I want...

1. Text links, with all detail clearly stated, in an email update once or twice a month.
 2. Sale name and date range of sale coupon code link.
 3. Make it easier for your affiliates to post your links by supplying those links, instead of making us look for them on our own. The more work we have to do for a merchant, the less likely we are to do it, and move on to another merchant who has done the leg work.
 4. Some due diligence in not accepting every Tom, Dick, and Harry as affiliates. Have some standards on the site you accept the better quality the site the better quality the consumer being sent to the merchant.
-

My only beef is trying to track down missing transactions and trying to get an answer from a merchant. Because our program promotes our highly reliable service, it is frustrating when you can't tell a customer why a transaction wasn't commissioned because the merchant doesn't bother to reply to inquiries.

Just because we are relatively small (50,000 - 100,000 uniques per month) and non-tech savvy (no xml ability) doesn't mean we can't sell.

IF:

1. We have a large variety of quality creative leading to specific target pages and products.
2. The ability to craft individual item links to suit our websites - e.g. permission to modify links (Amazon is a good example of a company that lets you do it however you want).
3. MUCH more lead time on holiday, sales, upcoming merchants site changes, etc. (e.g. receiving affiliate newsletters at the beginning of the month, not in the middle!). And why do some companies have their holiday creative up so late? I start working on Christmas in July - why don't they?
4. Accurate and comprehensive tracking of sales and click-throughs, particularly product tracking (a huge failing with almost all programs, except a few independents like Amazon and All Posters). How can we promote on niche sites without knowing what is being bought? I sell hundreds of calendars for calendars.com each year going solely "by guess and by golly." How many more could I sell if I had product sales tracking?

Pet Peeves

1. Unresponsive, uninterested, and uninformed program managers.
2. Disregard for affiliates: for example, broken links and product removal without notice. In the past month, I've had at least two merchants change their domain names or redesign their sites without advance notice.
3. I would much prefer not to do business with companies that play with the bad boys (Ebates, WhenU - God I hate them, gator, etc. and the email Spammers) but have a couple of problems. First, it's hard to keep track or find out who is sleeping with whom, and companies will lie about it (Amazon leaps to mind). Secondly, as a one-woman shop with niche sites, sometimes I have few choices as to who to promote if I want to make sales. It would be great if all companies publicly stated their policies and stuck to it. It would be great if we could continue to pressure them on these issues.
4. I'm especially annoyed that there are still companies who view affiliates as simply free advertising. I try very hard not to do business with them. After Christmas (I just started my first general "shopping" site), I'm dumping everyone with no return days, except Amazon (let's face it, Amazon has all booksellers over a barrel) and the big toy companies (what can you do, when they are all the same?). I'm also dumping the companies that have set up individual affiliate programs for each of their interconnected companies (yes, that means Sears, Target, etc.). They insult my intelligence and that gets old. Also, the small companies that are themselves an affiliate, and heavily cross-promote other sites, luring my commissions away.
5. Companies that jump from provider to provider - or cancel their programs - or run out of funds - all just after I've made sales. I'm sure we all have our own list of those companies we will never do business with again.
6. Companies that can't convert. If I send over 200 highly targeted (niche site) visitors and don't get a sale - something is wrong. I can't believe the number of poorly designed, tacky, confusing, slow loading, poorly designed web sites that even some larger companies still have.

7. Companies that think their name is enough. It's not. With three profitable websites, growing all the time, I have finally reached the point where I can be picky. And I will be.

I really like the Commission Junction model, where you get paid when your sales exceed THEIR minimum -- and not have a minimum sales amount for each separate affiliate program, like LinkShare.

We need to know what is coming, what is going to be hot, before it happens, to give us lead-time to create a good marketing effort.

Pop ups and poor landing pages are determining factors in selecting a merchant, more than a high EPC.

Cookie duration and unlimited actions are a must. If a merchant is limiting the action that we are paid on, then the merchant is not interested in a lasting relationship with the affiliate.

The most frustrating thing I find is that you spend so much time setting up pages and then shortly thereafter, an affiliate program is dropped and commissions are lost - happens in Be Free's network often.

I have lost commissions with them and they do not provide assistance other than tell you to contact the affiliate company, who never answers you or sends commission checks.

Payment structure with Be Free is lousy. CJ has the best since they combine ALL affiliate programs into one monthly payment. Hope this does not change when they merge.

LinkShare is beginning to become my preference of marketing affiliate sites. Even though they have payment structures for each affiliate store, they DO send checks throughout the month instead of making you wonder what happened.

There are way too many no-confidence whiners in this business and I wish they'd go get jobs and leave things to us real professionals. The term "affiliate manager" has harmed the industry a lot.

This is because, suddenly, these people think they're the BOSS of something! No real affiliate will accept a boss!!! Plus they are the bosses of nothing, anyway. We can hit Drop Program, so fast they won't even see the tire marks, if a bossy attitude is detected.

Affiliate "Managers" who do NOT try to form a relationship with me, and just send the checks when they're due, are aces.

Make it easy for us: give expiration dates, clear text links, coupons, communicate often and let us know when something expires or a significant promotion has started.

This is very important. Every affiliate manager needs to create a standard group of ad banners for affiliates to use. These banners should at a minimum include: 468x60, 234x60, 125x125, 120x90, 120x60, 88x31, 120x240, and 120x600.

I find way too many programs that don't have some of the above. Thus, I don't promote them. If I ask to have some banners created, all too often the manager is unwilling to develop any new banners.

Product links are the only way to go. The product is there when the customer is there and this is the best opportunity to make the sale.

How dare you condescend to an affiliate? We work hard, get little response from you, and we can't even trust that you report our sales accurately and honestly. For example, I have one affiliate program right now that is \$1 shy of a payout. It was performing nicely, and now... no sales for more than a month.

Can't tell me that someone's not monkeying with the reports. Furthermore, if we don't receive a check after 30 days, most of you act as though we're shining. I am truly hoping that Congress will begin investigating affiliate marketing programs and their reporting methods.

You think we're stupid. We're not. We just have no real legal recourse, yet. Don't you know that most of us know that when a site is down for routine maintenance, it means you're adjusting reports????

I'm not alone in my thinking. I know hundreds of people who maintain professional level web sites, many with Google rankings at six and above who think exactly as I do. In fact, we privately discuss what's good, what's not, who's trustworthy and who isn't. You're the one's who are stupid.

As far as links, I like to have plenty of text links and some standard banner size links.

What I want: 10% minimum commission, 30 day minimum cookie, unlimited occurrences, auto updating banners, allow redirects, allow cloaking, automatic approval, pay by PayPal or direct deposit.

Don't continuously change banners. Don't micro manage and create a thousand obstacles for the different styles that affiliates choose to function by. Take a good look at ClickBank,

simple, dependable (or they were until they decided to upgrade), a no nonsense network, sell it and get your money, no qualifying, no hassles, no bull, 60 day cookies, unlimited occurrences, BIG commissions and paid bi-weekly! ClickBank is the Best!

We put out a monthly newsletter around the 10th of each month for sales and specials. We would like as early notice as possible of the up coming sales to inform our customers.

Affiliate managers need to look at how affiliates are promoting their site. Spamming search engines with multiple look-alike pages with keyword stuffed, no content pages. Some people do a good job at product presentation; others do crap. Weed out the ones that are crap. Avoid the BHO (Parasites) like the plague.

Merchants who dump parasites and maintain active communication and fair cookie durations will get exposure regardless of other factors.

Here we go, but i bet this will be a waste of time and effort, as we are never taken seriously, even though we do all the work and sell the products for the companies.

1. We need to be told when each individual product has finished with their code ID, and given the new products with code ID, so we can be kept up to date at all times. And so we don't have to spend so much time going through 1000's of products that wastes our time if we choose to put up everything the company has to offer.
2. Each individual product should have set specifications throughout all merchants on size, quality and amount of info with actual prices listed, showing people how much they are before the have to click on them.
3. If a company has more than 1000 products listed, we should be able to access them all, listed in set categories with key words listed, so we can get everything, and also so we don't have them doubling up within each other.
4. All customer support should be split up, so they have a set amount of affiliates (for example: 100 each), so we can have a direct email address to contact for help, as the current support set-up is crap and very frustrating. It is useless. I have sent in emails and they have not been all 100% answered. Also, sending emails to the merchants doesn't seem to work, as I have sent in a lot with no answer.
5. HTML code links should be double checked before issuing them, as I have found endless amounts of mistakes in the code, which looks very silly coming from professionals.
6. When checking up on what we have sold, we would like to see what the actual products were, as in clear, colored pictures, like the ones in the actual link itself. How many? Where they went? And any other detail possible, so we can have an idea what is actually selling and so forth.
7. All merchants should be made to supply individual product links, and not just silly banners and text.
8. Being supplied with the merchant's logo would also be nice.

Ideally catalogs which can be used to promote products. Why do some companies want their goods promoted, and then make it difficult by refusing permission for affiliates to use images?

Also, US Companies need to be open to working with international affiliates and customers. Many will not work with persons outside of the USA.

As I see it, in the 4 months I have been at this, the inability to promote sites within your site in advertising is a real hindrance to profitability. I have tried to self promote based on flat based commission, but was denied. It's too one-sided in favor of the programs. Allow the individual partner the ability to establish themselves and not make it all for the program.

1. I hate reversals. Affiliate pays and promotes to make sale. Merchant would still have to pay if using other forms of advertising.
 2. Primarily promote merchants with large commission payout. Advertising costs are increasing tremendously. It's the only way to make any profits. Small payouts don't pay for the advertising costs.
 3. It's getting harder and harder for affiliates to make profits. The merchants have their own advertising departments and pay top bid prices, which always outbid affiliates on search engines.
 4. Free shipping and free returns are good selling practices.
-

New fresh offers, deals and coupons. I've seen programs that have had the same links for more than a year. Provide creative and changing promotions, it provides a better income for your affiliates and more traffic and interest in your products. Prompt payment is always a plus too.

For affiliate networks:

1. Consolidate check payments.
2. Do not use the affiliate mailing address to describe affiliate site demographics.

For Individual programs:

1. Have PayPal payment or similar alternatives as option.
 2. Do not make any type of errors when preparing check cutting.
 3. Will answer emails.
 4. For PayPal or other money sending alternatives:
 - a. Allow withdraw money via USD check.
 - b. Allow withdraw to non-US bank in USD (no currency conversion)
-

Don't let affiliates run your business. Big mistake. Just run your program honestly and everything should be just fine!

Offer a REASONABLE payout, which leaves YOU enough profit, so you don't feel compelled to cheat us! Don't be so restrictive with OUR advertising! We don't tell YOU how to advertise and promote! DONT tell us!

Networks charge too much. A \$1 cost to a merchant usually only gets 50 cents to affiliates.

If statistics aren't kept up to date daily, and payment is not made on time, I will drop a program within a month or two.

Make it easier for the little guy or gal to get what they've earned, even small amounts. Rather than setting minimum payouts, eliminate the higher costs by using PayPal or direct deposit. It would be very encouraging to those starting out and may help increase efforts if rewarded early on.

Affiliate agreements at all networks all very unfair to affiliates. The one at LinkShare is an excellent example of not protecting affiliates. Affiliate Managers should move towards using independent technology, and letting affiliates and merchants work more closely together as the system was originally designed.

The system is overwhelmed with the number of middlemen needed to administrate a simple relationship. If affiliates started pressuring merchants for independent technology, the networks would evaporate and more equitable deals could be made. This would mean more money in the pocket of people who deserve it the most. The affiliates.

I like dealing with affiliate managers that work with the merchants and educate them on the industry of affiliate marketing.

If a program allows BHO's as affiliates, at least admit that it is an injustice to the rest of us. I hate the "what's the big deal?" response from merchants. Merchants should think about their brand requirements before opening an affiliate program so that affiliates can get a clear picture right away of what is allowable with that merchant. Major changes afterwards can cause communication and trust problems.

Affiliate managers need to realize that we are the ones who are making their business work. We need to be respected as they would respect an advertising agency that they hire to promote their products.

They should all provide decent data feeds & links and kill BHO's!

Would like a little more notice for specials and discounts for customers. Would like to see more content links. Majority of visitors have bought a product through a content link.

Would like to be able to get more dialogue with merchants.

I hate stealing of commissions, and reversals without explanation.

I think one of the main things is working hands on with their affiliates. After all, the more money we make, the more money they make. Any tips, suggestions etc would be beneficial to both parties.

I would like...

1. To have the detail stat and ability to set up sub campaigns, in order for the affiliate to track which ad campaign works.
 2. For affiliate networks, please make sure to pay on time.
-

Take affiliates more seriously, please

Affiliate managers should first and foremost come to the understanding that they are facilitators of a partnership -- NOT an employer or the affiliate's manager.

Small affiliate sites are the merchant's best friends. It is better to have a hundred small sites, than 10 dupers.

Do's: long cookie, private label, and good avg. \$ per sale.
Don'ts: no allowing cheaters as affiliates.

The reporting is abysmal. I have sometimes seen 5 views and 20 conversions. This does not help me figure out what works and what the genuine conversion rate is.

One email monthly or quarterly would be great. Coupon codes or specials mailed in advance of the promo would be nice.

Don't be cheap, spend time on writing GOOD copy for text links we can use, give us several sizes of graphics.

I want an easy to use data feed, clean banners and 2 tier commissions :)

Affiliate managers need to be more responsive in answering questions and approving customized text/images. I need images to fit into the layout of the newsletter, but on average, having requested approval, 99% of the affiliate managers never respond.

Another quick thought: affiliate managers should remember that even small sites can bring quality traffic and some of those sites may someday become super affiliates. Nurture those relationships.



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