STARTING AND GROWING AN ONLINE BUSINESS

COMPLETE GUIDE

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Chapter 1: Affiliate Marketing

There are many advantages of starting an online business. To name a few, you get to work from the comfort of your home, set your own hours, and cut costs associated with brick-and-mortar companies.

Affiliate marketing has become incredibly popular, with over 84% of publishers and 81% of advertisers in the US using this marketing strategy last year.

To start off on the right foot and grow your online business, you're required to manage a large number of aspects. Three of the most important include affiliate marketing, dropshipping and lead generation. They are key to promoting your website and generating revenue that will spark further growth.

Since establishing proper affiliate marketing and lead generation can be tricky, we've prepared an in-depth guide that will teach you how to do it. Starting and growing an online business is about to become a whole lot easier!

What Is Affiliate Marketing?

In simple terms, affiliate marketing is a way to earn money by promoting other people's products or services. The setup involves two parties: an affiliate (publisher) and an advertiser (retailer).

The affiliate is the one who helps an advertiser to generate more traffic on the affiliate's websites and hopes to receive a commission in return. This is normally set up such that commissions are only paid when leads are converted into customers.

Affiliate Marketing Beginner FAQs

Q: Can Anyone Be an Affiliate?

A: Yes, anyone can become an affiliate marketer. This profession doesn't require years of training or schooling, internships, or working one's way up. There are no age or location requirements either – all you need to become an affiliate is a stable internet connection.

Q: What Are Affiliate Programs?

A: An affiliate program serves as a connection between publishers and advertisers. Some of the most well-known platforms include CJ Affiliate (formerly Commission Junction), Share A Sale, Rakuten Marketing, Pepperjam, and Awin. These networks charge fees to the vendors that they work with, where the fees are generally paid as a certain percentage of each sale.

Q: What Websites Do Affiliates Own?

A: Affiliates run a wide array of websites to earn a commission. They can range from blogs and influencer networks to technology platforms. Other examples include:

• Shopping sites

• Product review webpages

• Mobile apps

- Coupon sites

- Rewards/loyalty sites

Q: What Is the Affiliate Marketing Industry Worth?

A: Affiliate Marketing is a huge industry worth over $12 billion. The leading markets are the EU and the US.

How to Earn Money with Affiliate Marketing

Earning Commissions

As previously mentioned, the primary mode of making money through affiliate marketing is earning a commission. Once you've set up your affiliate marketing website, this is how you'll be making a profit:

- You'll recommend products or services to the followers of your blog, email list, or website.

- The followers purchase the products or services using an affiliate link.

- You receive a commission for the sales made through the affiliate link.

In addition to the pay-per-sale system, there are two other ways affiliates can make a commission:

Pay per Lead

This system is a bit more complex and includes compensation to the affiliate based on lead conversion. Under this arrangement, the affiliate is to get their followers to visit the advertiser's webpage and complete a specific action. For instance, they may be prompted to fill out a contact form, sign up for product trials, subscribe to newsletters, or download a file.

Pay per Click

The focus of this system is to increase web traffic on the advertiser's webpage. For this reason, the affiliate needs to redirect their followers to the advertiser's webpage. Afterward, the affiliate gets paid according to how much they helped increase the traffic.

Average Incomes

According to Glassdoor's income statistics, affiliate marketers do quite alright for themselves. On average, they make nearly $66,000 a year, with the low-end marketers making around $42,000 and the top-end marketers closer to $83,000 annually.

Traffic	Avg Click Thru	Avg Purchase Rate	Commission Rate	Avg Price	Ad Revenue	Revenue Potential (Monthly)
5,000	36%	10%	4%	$60.00	$75.00	$507.00
10,000	36%	10%	4%	$60.00	$150.00	$1,014.00
25,000	36%	10%	4%	$60.00	$375.00	$2,535.00
50,000	36%	10%	4%	$60.00	$750.00	$6,750.00

These numbers are average for the industry — you may have better results, or worse. (Existing site owners: if you do have the traffic indicated, and are not reaching these revenue targets, contact us and we may be able to optimize your site.)

Diversify Your Income

Diversifying the income that you receive from affiliate marketing is a wise choice. It contributes to your financial security since you can always rely on at least one source of income if the others aren't very profitable. Here are two ways you can diversify your income as an affiliate:

Put Display Ads on Site

When it comes to running ads, people typically go for one of the two following programs:

• Google AdSense

• Ezoic

Displaying ads with AdSense is fairly simple. After creating your AdSense account, the only potentially challenging part is a bit of coding necessary to set the program in motion.

Once you've included it on your website, the program will start displaying targeted ads that are relevant to the users' search history or the website's content. The website visitors click the ads, and you get paid for it.

Ezoic is another platform that lets you put up ads on your webpage. The software incorporates an advanced system that conducts multivariate layout website testing. According to the results, Ezoic determines the ideal layout and delivers a custom experience to each webpage visitor, depending on their behavior.

Another great thing about Ezoic is that it enables you to optimize your revenue, bounce rate, page views, and average time on site. Accordingly, you can check how your ads perform on particular devices or in specific countries. This is why Ezoic is one of the most powerful ad platforms.

Add a Dropship Store to Your Affiliate Site

Dropshipping is a business model that lets anyone sell products from various suppliers on their webpage. The main reason why [dropship stores are still popular](#) is that there's no need for any inventory. Namely, when a customer buys a product from your website, the order is relayed to the supplier responsible for shipping the product(s) to the buyer.

If you don't want to worry about stocking and restocking, adding a dropship store is the way to go.

Steps to Affiliate Marketing

Choosing a Niche

Deciding on a niche is a crucial part of starting your online business. It will dictate the products you'll be promoting on your website. You need to pick your niche carefully but don't stick to it blindly. Instead, you'll have to show flexibility since there will be a recurring need to adapt to changing tastes and trends.

For the time being, find a niche that you're passionate about. Choose the type of product that you frequently use since you already know everything about it. Promoting these products will be much easier and you'll know which products to recommend.

Also, try to avoid these three mistakes when picking your first niche:

•	Running to niches that seem more lucrative, even if you don't know anything about the products

•	Picking a niche according to current market trends without realizing that they can literally change overnight

- Selecting a niche that you're not familiar with due to limited competition

These three mistakes can ruin your chances of success. First, going with a profitable niche that you don't know anything about is bound to be a bust. This is because you probably don't understand what content you need to create to promote the product. Moreover, you don't know if the niche is too competitive and if people actually need the products within the niche.

Also, don't select your niche according to a current trend. For instance, some of the most sought-after items now include face masks, protective gear, and sanitizers. Focusing your affiliate marketing efforts around these items may yield profit for a short period, but the demand will likely dissipate soon.

The main thing that you need to worry about is the value that your content is providing. To determine if that is the case, ask yourself these questions:

- Is it helpful to indecisive buyers?

- Is your website helping customers find their desired items?

- Are you offering trustworthy information?

Find an Affiliate Program

Next, you're going to find a suitable affiliate program. It's crucial to get the right affiliate marketing program that will make it easy to earn money from your webpage. There are many great options you can choose from:

Amazon Associates

Amazon Associates is the most popular as the platform sells nearly any product imaginable. You can rest assured knowing that they have products relevant to your websites' content. You can join it for free and there's a convenient single sign-up process that doesn't require you to register for each product or service separately.

CJ Affiliate

CJ Affiliate is another great option. The platform has product widgets embedded on your webpage that allows you to include multiple products using a grid, collage, or slideshow to ramp up sales. There's also deep link automation that automatically monetizes links leading to an advertiser's domain, as well as transaction monitoring.

Rakuten

Rakuten is a popular program due to a bevy of useful features. For example, setting up the platform is easy, the user interface is intuitive, and the deep linking is optimized with advanced tools. You can also create rotating banners to promote your retailers. Additionally, Rakuten has outstanding tutorial videos and transaction reporting

Share A Sale

This program also has a lot to offer. You can use a large product catalog that contains a range of items, such as beauty supplies, luxury goods, eyewear, and sports gear. There are nearly 5,000 vendors on the platform, allowing you to find relevant products quickly. The program utilizes a power ranking system to recommend the most popular retailers. The sign-up doesn't take very long or cost anything.

eBay

Similar to Amazon Associates, eBay contains nearly everything anyone can think of. The platform is incredibly diverse and there are no complicated rules to follow. Including links is easy, which means you can quickly start making money if you contribute to successful sales.

ClickBank

ClickBank enables you to partner with various partners. The program is most famous for its wide selection of eBooks. It's easy to get started with this platform and the sign-up costs nothing, making it excellent for startups.
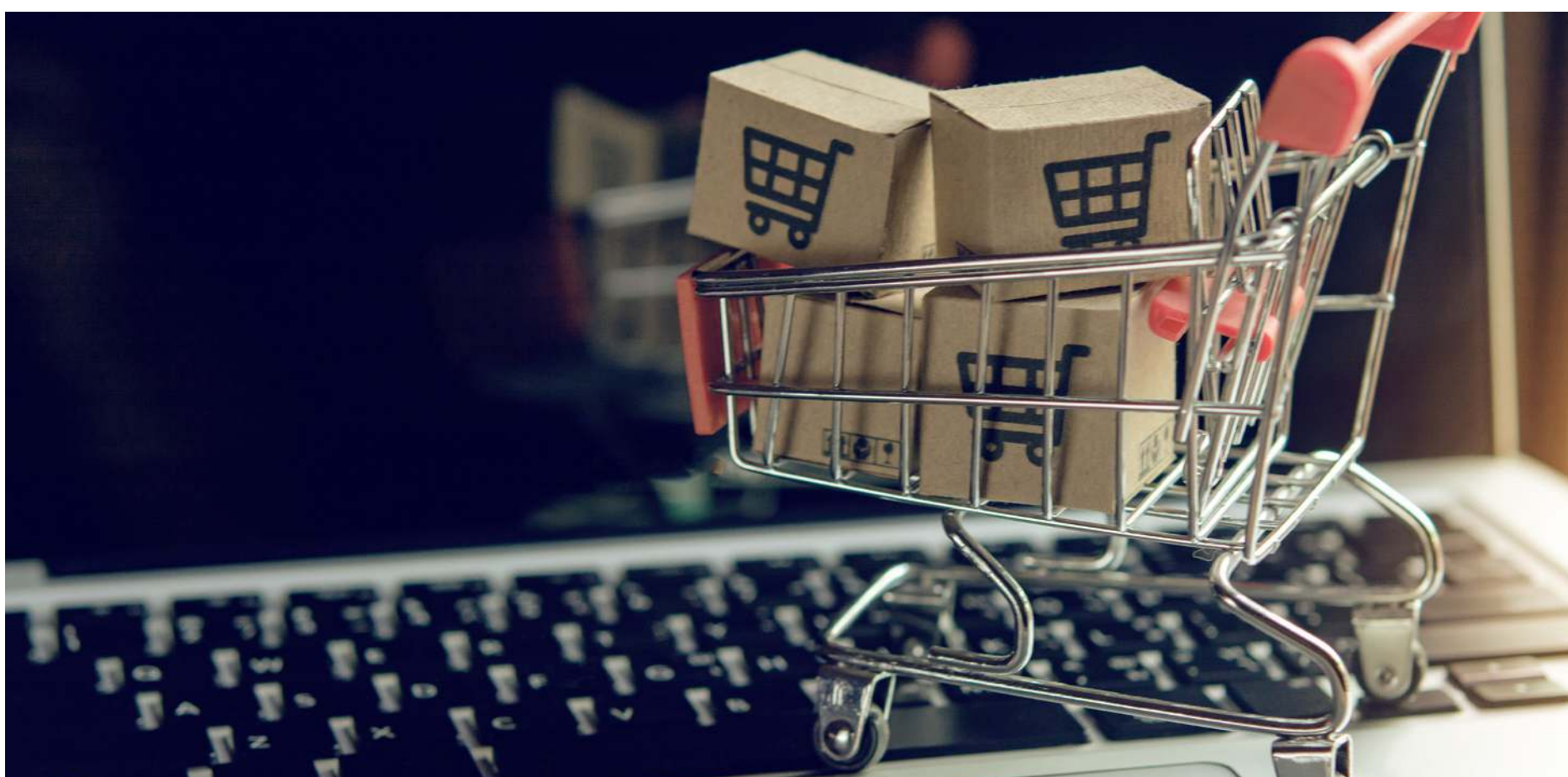
Other Options

On top of these six affiliate programs, many others can be immensely helpful:

• Fiverr

• JVZoo

• Shopify Affiliate Program

- Skimlinks

- Tradedoubler

- Leadpages Partner Program

- JotForm Affiliate Program

Build Your Site

Now's the time to start building the website that will advertise the products of your retailers. To do so, you'll need the right content management system (CMS) that will provide your webpage with the necessary functions. Also, you have to conduct some keyword research and decide on the type of articles your website will feature.

Choosing the Right CMS – WordPress

Many affiliate marketers rely on WordPress due to its attractive design options. However, the CMS has a lot more to offer, besides the visual aspect.

It Is Versatile and Easy

First, you can easily set up and use WordPress. Although some coding knowledge may prove useful from time to time, you don't need any coding skills to launch an affiliate webpage with this program. All you need is the right theme and plugin. Luckily, both are readily available and the same goes for scripts, extensions, and add-ons.

WordPress Is SEO-Friendly

The platform is developed on clean code and follows the best standards that improve your search results.

Easy Ad Integration

WordPress widgets allow you to incorporate ads into your affiliate site with ease, maximizing its earning potential. All you need to do is paste the HTML code of the advertisement into a widget and place it in a suitable location, depending on the theme. For example, some themes come with specialized ad sections in their header.

Excellent Support

Not many CMS solutions can match the support of WordPress. The community is a terrific source of support when building your affiliate site. There are bloggers, developers, consultants, fellow contributors, and many other users eager to share their expertise.

Now that we've covered why WordPress is a perfect choice, check out some of the best websites that you can use the platform to start making money:

Daily Deal Webpages

Affiliates rake in a tremendous amount of money when scoring great discounts for their followers with various businesses. They make their money by setting up a daily deals website. The most significant advantage of this page is that it's easy to launch and simple to use. The business model is also straightforward – your affiliate commission is based on the number of deals you refer.

WordPress allows you to set up stylish daily deal websites. It has remarkable pre-made themes, such as the [Kupon theme](#), ideal for your business. In particular, this theme features all the necessary functions, such as coupon countdown, front-end deal submission, and social integration.

Price Comparison Webpages

In general, a price comparison site shows you products and their prices at several stores. There are usually product reviews that make up most of the content. Affiliates make money with this type of website when users click on links and visit the retailer's store to buy something. Selling advertising space is another solution.

To add reviews and other elements, you can use the [Price Compare Theme](#) available in WordPress. It's terrific for sharing favorite products with website visitors using clear comparison tables that contain prices, dates, logos, and more.

Product Review Webpages

A product review website features reviews about products that you've tested or used. It can also include reviews from other users who have experiences with the product to enrich the content. You make a commission when you refer a user to a retailer and they buy a product or complete other desired actions.

The reason why WordPress is ideal for such webpages is the Review Theme. It comes with easy options for your readers to leave ratings. Your followers can feel confident about the ratings, making them more likely to click the affiliate links.
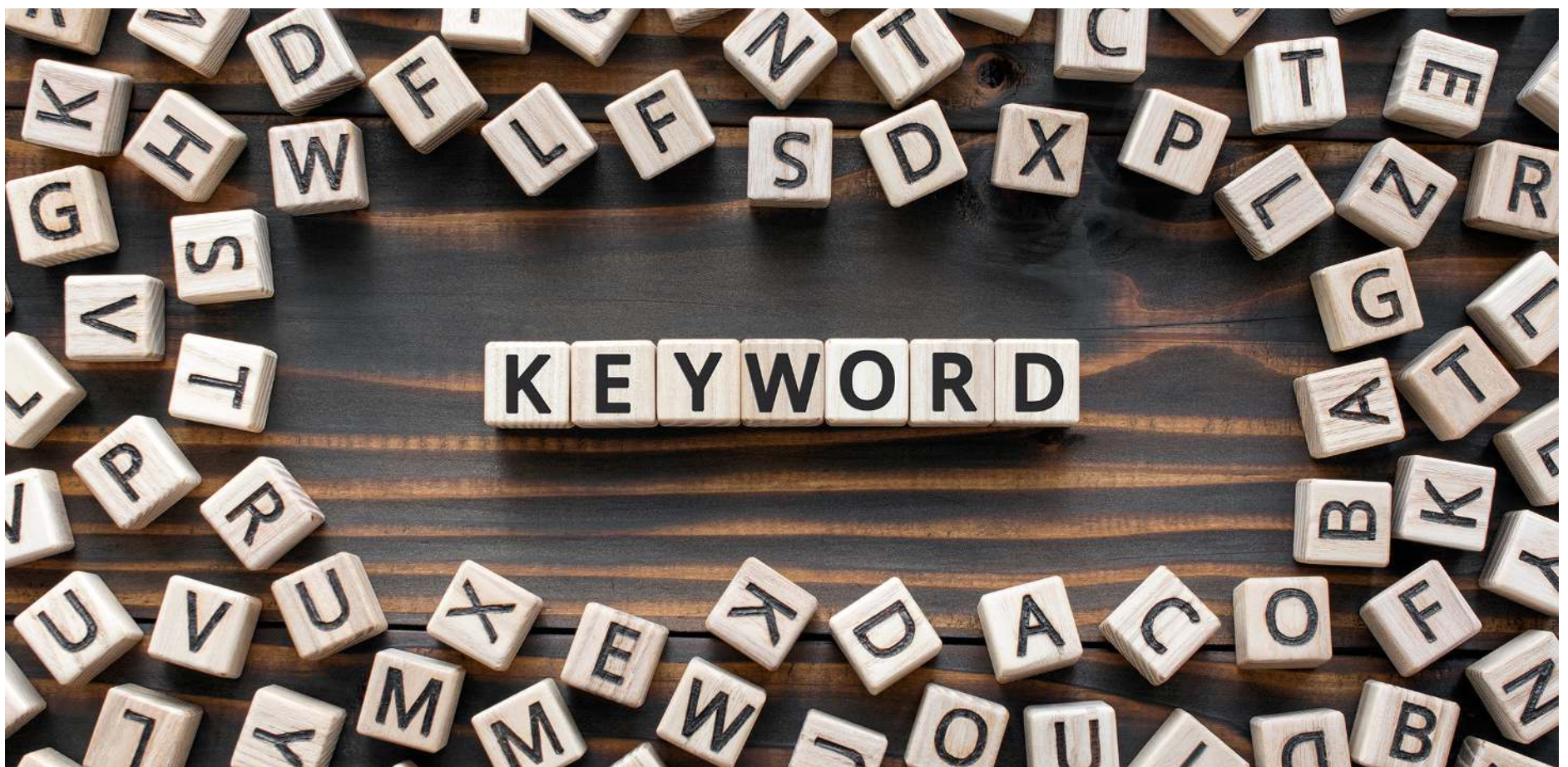
Keyword Research

Driving traffic to affiliate marketing campaigns requires you to place a special emphasis on keywords. This is because they determine the rank of your content in Google's search results. Since Google updates its search algorithm between 500 and 600 times per year, having outdated SEO practices can be problematic

One of the most effective strategies is using long-tail keywords. They are generally three to six words long and serve to narrow down the topic. For example, if you're promoting computer graphic cards, you could include long-tail keywords like 'best graphic cards under $500' in your content. This would ensure that your webpage

appears in the narrowed search results.

To perform keyword research, you can use a free online tool called Ubersuggest. The app makes it easier to form keyword lists and identify keyword competition. You can use the tool to check out how other sites used specific keywords and see which ones people search for the most. With this knowledge, you can optimize your content and make it more visible.

Type of Articles

While there are many ways of promoting your affiliate sales, writing articles is the go-to strategy for most affiliate marketers. There are two main types: informational and money articles.

Informational Articles

Writing informational articles is an excellent promotional strategy. They cover the most important aspects of your products and include a certain number of affiliate links. Some informational pieces feature just one or two products, whereas others may have a lot more. However, when writing these, you want to keep things concise and do away with irrelevant items that don't add value to your content.

Money Articles

To better understand money articles, let's take a look at two of the most common examples:

- Best-of Articles – A typical example of a best-of article would be Best BMW Grill Stripes or Best Recliner Chairs for Back Pain. They serve as a product roundup and their main advantage is that they usually allow plenty of room to market a large number of products.

- Comparisons – The most widely used template of this article type is Product A vs. Product B. The titles are normally long-tail keywords that generate decent search results.

Get Ranked!

Even if your website is beautifully rendered and your portfolio is unimpeachable, you can't grow your online business without proper SEO. That is why understanding how you can enhance your SEO is of the utmost importance.
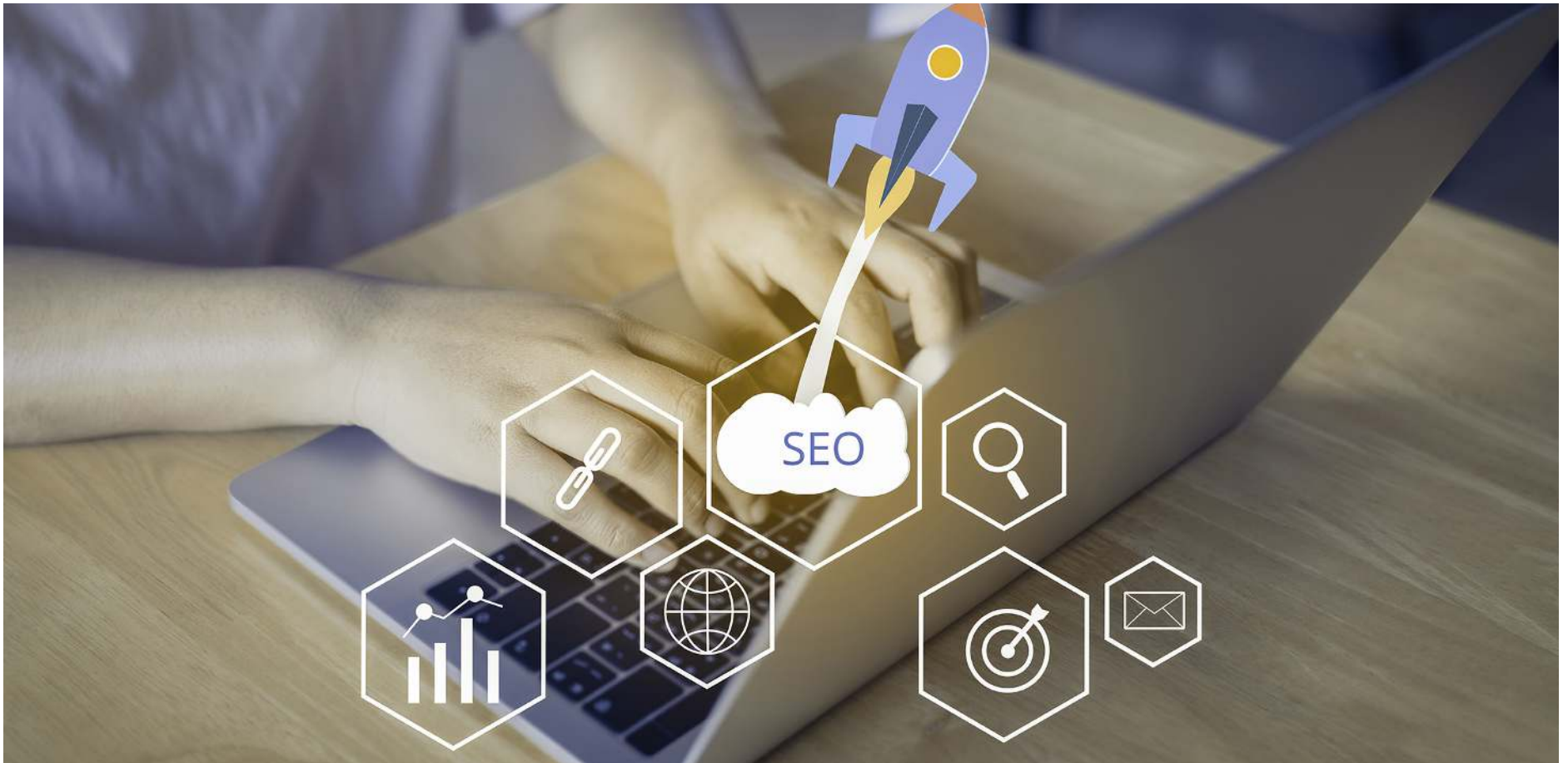
Tips for Getting Ranked in Google

Google is the most popular search engine, and you should focus your efforts on getting higher rankings in the search results pages. There are several approaches you should adopt:

Include Page Titles

Google uses title tags to show your page in the search results and at the top of browsers. These tags briefly explain what the website is about. Keep in mind that Google only shows 50 to 60 characters in title tags, which is the range that your descriptions should stick to. Keep the tags short and relevant.

Use Keywords

As we've already covered, keywords are integral to how well your webpage fares in search results. Make sure to use them naturally throughout your content. Also, don't use too many keywords.

Add ALT Tags

Each video and image on your website can include descriptions in its imprint. These are known as alternative text descriptions and they enable Google to locate your webpage with the keywords from your video and image descriptions. Therefore, adding ALT tags leads to higher chances of users finding your site.

Create and Publish Top-Notch Content Each Month

Posting content your visitors are likely to search for is a must. You're going to have to come up with engaging articles and update them regularly to ensure your website remains relevant.

Proven Affiliate Marketing Methods

Having a successful online business requires adequate advertising strategies to direct your users to ads and their publishers. The leading players in the affiliate marketing industry employ these two tactics:

Blog – Grow Your Content

Blogging is extremely effective at promoting different brands. Starting one can help affiliates establish their expertise in a certain industry. Readers recognize blogs that are useful sources of knowledge and return to your website for more information, increasing the traffic on your page.

When coming up with your blogs, try to be creative. A good idea is to include a video since such blogs are 53% more likely to rank higher in Google.

Social Media Promotion

Social platforms connect advertisers with billions of users worldwide who want to find out more about various products. According to [this research from 2020](#), nearly 50% of adult internet users use social networks to research products. So, whether or not you should use social channels in your affiliate marketing is a no-brainer.

Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest

To get more clicks, turn to the most popular platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Pinterest.

One of the most effective methods of facilitating your social media efforts is running paid searches. For example, you can use Google Ads to set up your paid search features. The platform allows you to analyze conversions and come up with keywords for your posts.

Also, make sure to target millennials with your posts since around [90% of them](#) interact on social media. Put yourself in their shoes to figure out what they like.

Successful Affiliate Marketers

Check out a couple stories from Human Proof Designs of successful affiliate marketers:

1) Traffic up 282%, Earnings up 300%+ in 4 months: HPD DFY SEO Case Study - Human Proof Designs
https://www.humanproofdesigns.com/affiliate-seo-case-study/

2) How Marty Generates $1200/mo From His Authority Sites - Human Proof Designs
https://www.humanproofdesigns.com/marty/

Chapter 2: Dropshipping/eCommerce

Dropshipping can be a great way to start an online business and make money with your own eCommerce store. Many people have great success with an online dropshipping business.

Dropshipping success requires a lot of time and effort and can involve learning digital management and marketing tools.

It does not usually require a high initial investment, and there are many resources to help you understand the necessary tools. Here is a guide to how to start and grow an online dropshipping business.

What is Dropshipping?

Dropshipping is a method of building and operating a retail eCommerce store online without investing in buying, storing, or shipping products yourself.

The dropshipper creates an online retail environment and attracts customers to their store. The customer places an order for a product in that online store. The order is sent electronically to a third party supplier, who packs the order and sends it directly to the customer.

Most internet influencers are also dropshippers, so if you've ever gone to an influencer's "merch" store, you've visited a dropshipping store. The influencer doesn't purchase the products, store them, and resell them to the customer, packaging and shipping them.

Instead, the influencer chooses the products and features them in their virtual store, but the physical items are stored, packed, and shipped from a third party supplier.

Even if you've never heard the term "dropship," chances are high that, if you're shopping online, you've bought dropshipped products.

Dropshipping Beginner FAQ

Q: Is Dropshipping Profitable?

A: Dropshipping is a business like any other. It can be very profitable, but profits depend on your costs, products, markup, marketing, and other factors that make a business profitable.

Like any other business, it's essential to make a plan and work out your budget before you begin. Many people make high profits from their eCommerce dropshipping stores, but it takes time and effort to grow your business.

In other words, yes, dropshipping can be quite profitable, but it's not a "get rich quick" business.

Q: Does Dropshipping Require an Upfront Investment?

A: Yes, dropshipping usually requires an initial investment, although these costs can be relatively low compared to other businesses.

For example, you will need a web site, which typically requires purchasing a domain, a host, and other nominal fees. However, many specialized dropshipping site themes, apps, and other resources can help you and be worth investing in.

While there are many free ways to promote and market your online business, paid advertising is usually more effective and may be worth the cost. It might be worth investing in reputable online classes on subjects like website creation and management, digital marketing, or other relevant skills for beginners.

To put it simply, you can begin an online dropshipping store for a minimal initial investment, but spending money on the tools and skills you need for success is usually a good idea.

Q: What Kind of Products Can You Dropship?

A: You can dropship virtually any product. In fact, it's easier to list what you can't dropship than what you can. Here are some products that are not suitable for dropshipping:

Large Products

Oversized, heavy items like major appliances, exercise equipment, furniture, or big, fragile items like large TVs are not great candidates for dropshipping, especially for beginners.

These items have additional delivery costs and require special care during packing, transport, and delivery. They are often expensive items, and if they are damaged or incomplete, the customer will be unhappy and expect you to rectify the situation.

However, their size and weight also make them difficult to return and replace or service locally or in the customer's home.

These items should be dropshipped with extreme caution and only by dropshippers with extremely reliable suppliers and fulfillment centers. It's also best to avoid extremely fragile items, like glass and crystal, for the same reason.

Products with Advertising Restrictions

Most dropshippers rely on Facebook for advertising, but you may also want to advertise on Google, Instagram, Pinterest, TikTok, or other platforms. Always check that platform's guidelines to see what products are restricted for advertising. For example, you cannot use Facebook to advertise:

·   Adult products

·   Tobacco, drugs, or drug-related products

·   Surveillance equipment

·   Many health products and supplements

·   Controversial products

If you plan on using social media marketing, make sure that your products are suitable for the network.

Copyrighted or Counterfeit Products

There are extremely limited opportunities to dropship copyrighted products like Nike shoes or Gucci bags. In most cases, dropshippers encounter look-alike products that are counterfeit.

Selling unlicensed copyrighted or counterfeit products can expose you to legal risk and cause unhappy customers who thought they were getting a good deal on an authentic brand-name product. It's best to avoid these altogether unless you can get an official license from the copyright holder to resell their products.

Safety and Health Equipment

As a dropshipper, you typically cannot personally inspect every item and ensure that it works as claimed. In safety and health equipment, even occasional product failure can be a source of legal liability. To reduce your risk, it's best to avoid these products altogether.

Legally Required and Regulated Products

This is a companion to safety and health equipment but is broader for all legally required and regulated products. For example, in some places, motorcycle helmets are legally required and must meet specific standards. In some places, drones are subject to special rules and regulations.

Laws and regulations regarding fireworks, chemicals, weapons, children's toys, health supplements, etc., can vary widely, and you need to be careful about where you are importing these products from and exporting them to. In most cases, it's a good idea to avoid these types of products.

Q: Where do You Find Dropshipping Suppliers?

A: When looking for dropshipping suppliers, you can look at the many online directories and recommendations, check dropshipping platforms and websites for participants, or even look at online marketplaces like AliExpress and identify the suppliers and sellers of those marketplaces.

Dropshippers also have many online forums and community boards where they share resources and recommendations.

Q: Who is Responsible for Customer Problems, Refunds, and Returns?

A: Online shopping is prone to many problems. Customers order clothes that don't fit, an order arrives damaged or incomplete, or an order is slow to arrive or lost during shipping, and the customer wants a refund.

In most cases, how these problems are handled is in the agreement between a dropshipper, a supplier, and a shipping company. It's important to read contracts carefully and ensure that these situations are covered. It's also important to understand that, even if the contract provides that the supplier is responsible, the customer will always hold you accountable.

From their perspective, they made a transaction with your store based on your marketing claims and expect you to provide service, support, and stand behind your products.

Even if the problem is the supplier or shipping company's fault, they may leave your store a negative review and damage your business. So even when your supplier contract protects you, it's essential to always offer products that you stand behind and problem-solving that quickly resolves customer questions and complaints.

Q: What Makes an Excellent Dropshipping Business?

A: The two ingredients of a good dropshipping business are the right products and the right marketing. Good products for dropshipping are distinctive, a good value, and worth waiting for (since most dropshippers can't offer the express shipping of many online mega-retailers).

When the dropshipper has the right products, they also need to get their products in front of the right customer, which means intelligent targeting and creating persuasive ads.

Q: How do You Advertise a Dropshipping/eCommerce Store?

A: The most effective way to market a dropshipping store is by advertising online, so your products are just a "click away." Facebook is an excellent platform for promoting a dropshipping store since its rates are affordable and offer strong targeting tools.

Depending on your desired market, you may also consider advertising with AdWords and/or Google search, other social networks like Twitter or Pinterest, or relevant online gathering places like Reddit or Tumblr.

Q: What is Blind Dropshipping/White Label Dropshipping?

A: For the most basic dropshipping, even though the customer comes to your online store and orders their products from you, the box or package may have branding or invoicing from the supplier or some other company that fulfills the order.

Many dropshippers choose "blind" dropshipping, where the supplier does not include any invoices or anything with their name in/on the product to create a more complete brand image.

For a higher price, dropshippers can also choose "white label" dropshipping, where any included invoices, the shipping box, and other documents include their own store name and branding.

How to Earn Money with Dropshipping

Product Sales – Margins and Markups

At the most basic level, dropshippers make money like any other retailer - they sell products for more than the products' cost, generating a profit.

To look a little bit deeper, you need to put a price on your products that is high enough to cover the cost of the product, as well as all your other business expenses, with enough left over for a profit.

However, if you ask too much for your products, your customer may go elsewhere, looking for a better deal. To price your products correctly, it's good to understand the difference between your markup and your margin.

Markup

Your markup is usually a standard percentage that you add to your products' cost to cover your business costs and generate profit.

Margin

Your profit margin is the percentage that represents the difference between the amount of your sale and the cost of the goods sold.

Despite how similar they are, it is essential not to confuse those terms. Markup is the amount you add to the purchase price of products. Margin is the profit you made on the transaction. Here's the critical difference:

If you buy a product for $100, add a 20% markup, and sell it for $120, it does not mean you have a 20% profit (or a 20% margin).

If you sell a product for $120, you would need to have paid $96, not $100, to generate a 20% margin.

In other words, you need to calculate your margin first (the amount of profit you want to make) to determine how much your markup should be (the asking price of your products).

The formula is: [desired margin] / [cost of goods] = markup percentage. If you want to make a 20% profit, you need to mark up your products by 25%.

Average Dropshipping Incomes

All this talk of markups and margins is fine, but what does that mean for a dropshipper's income? For every millionaire dropshipping success story, thousands of people lost money and eventually quit their dropshipping business.

Success and failure are determined by the strength of your niche and the effectiveness of your marketing efforts. Shopify estimates that a dropshipper with a strong business plan, working part-time while maintaining their day job, can work their way up to earning $1000-2000 per month in the first year.

On the other hand, a dropshipper with a strong business plan and great marketing, working full time on their eCommerce business, may earn as much as $50,000 in their first year.

While that may not sound like a lot of money for the amount of effort required, it's essential to keep two things in mind.

·   After a dropshipping business is set up and has momentum, it requires much less time per week to maintain than a standard 9-to-5 job. Your business becomes more efficient and more profitable over time

·   Your business has its own value. A successful dropshipping business is an asset that has value and equity beyond your own income, creating the potential for selling your business and enjoying the profits

The below table is an estimate of potential monthly income levels based on traffic. We have used industry standard metrics to develop an estimate. The average price and margin will vary based on your niche and product selection. Keep in mind you must also reduce monthly profit by any expenses you have (such as advertising).

Traffic	Conversion	Avg Price	Avg Margin	Profit Potential (Monthly)
2,500	3%	$60	45%	$2,025.00
5,000	3%	$60	45%	$4,050.00
10,000	3%	$60	45%	$8,100.00
25,000	3%	$60	45%	$20,250.00
50,000	3%	$60	45%	$40,500.00

Steps to Successful Dropshipping

If you are interested in starting your own eCommerce dropshipping store, here are the necessary steps to follow.

Choosing a Niche

A dropshipping "niche" is a specialized business area where a selection of products is likely to appeal to the same customer. Some example niches might be:

· Educational toys for children

· Japanese anime and manga

· Yoga equipment

Choosing a niche is one of the most critical ingredients to success in dropshipping. A profitable niche requires:

· Products that you personally use and understand so you can make meaningful recommendations and create rapport with your customer

· Products that are suitable for dropshipping so they are likely to arrive in good condition after shipping, and the customer feels they are worth waiting for

· Products with reliable suppliers, so you don't go to all the trouble of creating your store only to find out that you can't consistently provide products

· Niches without a lot of existing competition, so you can distinguish yourself from other stores

Choosing a niche requires a lot of research. You should be familiar with the marketplace and have a plan to stand out from the competition, be familiar with your products and be comfortable answering questions or providing customer support, and be familiar with the suppliers so you can build a reliable relationship.

Because your niche forms the basis for your business plan, it is critical to take your time with this step and get it right.

Find Suppliers for Your Products

Droppshipping's been around for a while now. Still, in the 2020s, it's difficult for upstarts and companies to find a truly reliable dropshipping supplier. Many talk the talk but don't walk the walk — we're here to help you pick out who's who!

Dropshipping suppliers act as a liaison between goods manufacturers and you, the client. This is the difference between actual suppliers and retail stores that claim to be wholesalers but aren't. Reliable wholesale suppliers will always give you better pricing.

Remember: the key to success is going to be cutting as many middlemen as possible.

How to Spot a Real Dropshipping Supplier

It's not going to be as simple as doing a cursory Google search, unfortunately. While you'll be able to find some suppliers that way, more often than not that's how you'll end up finding fake dropshippers, and it's not that easy to tell them apart from the real thing at a glance.

Retail companies posing as wholesalers are great at hiding in plain sight and generally have spent big marketing and SEO bucks to claim the top spots in searches.

Actual wholesalers, unfortunately, are not really known for their penchant for great marketing; they tend to be rougher around the edges and plain harder to find.

Monthly Premiums: Big No No

Most — if not all — of the legitimate dropshipping suppliers we know of are not interested in a subscription fee. If they're trying to charge monthly, yearly, or service fees, then that's a big indicator that they're trying to snag little fish.

Real wholesalers want your continued business, not your subscription as if they were selling you a VOD membership. Their revenue comes from sales, and they're interested in building a rock-solid, ongoing relationship with their clients.

That's not to say that you won't find directories that ask for a one-time or ongoing finder's fee. Wholesaler directories are organized databases that screen actual suppliers and divide them by trade, product type, and market. It's perfectly OK to pay a fee to databases for peace of mind (more on that below).

Do they Sell to the Public or Just to Wholesalers?

Genuine wholesalers will ask you to jump through a few legal hoops before you can do business with them. For one, they'll need you to prove that your business is legitimate, with the corresponding legal documentation.

It's very likely that if they sell to the public, you may just be dealing with one of the crafty retail stores we were discussing above. You won't find much benefit to purchasing from them; a slight discount here, a nice deal there, but not enough if you're looking to set up your own empire!

On Fees and Order Sizes

Now, genuine wholesalers will sometimes charge an individual dropshipping fee per order. This is normal, and not a strike against them being legitimate. Just think that their costs are higher than for managing a bulk order, and includes packing and shipping individual items.

The standard costs range between $2 and $5, depending on factors like size, weight, etc.

Most wholesalers will also ask you to establish your bona fides with them by establishing a minimum requirement for your first order. Their idea is to discourage customers who want to get individual items at wholesale prices.

If their first-order requirements seem too steep to you, you can ask them to keep the unused cash as credit for your next order. That way, it's a win/win for both of you, and you'll establish your intention to start a long-term commitment.

How do You Find Dropshipping Suppliers?

You know how to tell true from false, but now it's going to be all about finding dropshipping suppliers. Here's a streamlined list of what, in our experience, are the most effective methods.

Contacting Manufacturers Directly

This is the way to go if you're already clear on the product or niche you want to focus on. The next step is reaching out to the manufacturer and asking them for wholesale suppliers. They'll generally be more than happy to oblige, and then you can ask the wholesalers if they dropship.

If they do, you're in business!

Overseas or Local?

This is going to be, again, largely dependent on your chosen product or niche.

Domestic, or local suppliers, generally have a much shorter supply chain. It's also much easier to contact manufacturers and suppliers directly to solve any issues that come up during the dropshipping process. You also won't have to deal with any import taxes or other duties that come from shipping from foreign vendors.

Overseas suppliers may offer products or services that are not readily available in your neck of the woods, which means more variety to work with, generally. Manufacturing costs may also be lower, but the overall quality may drop as a result if you're not discerning. You also have to deal with import costs and other fees that may appear during the process.

As you can see, both have tradeoffs, so you'll have to find what works best for you on a case-by-case basis.

Google

This might've been your first choice but, as we explained above, it's not so cut-and-dried. Real dropshipping suppliers tend to be the opposite of marketing-savvy, so you might have to do more digging than you initially bargained for.

In fact, sometimes finding good suppliers means you're going to have to counter-intuitively shut off some of the conditioned alarmed systems we've trained ourselves to have online.

For one, they're infamous for having outdated, anachronistic websites that seem straight out of the dial-up era. If bad design triggers your warning signals, wait! It might actually mean you're on to something good this time!

As we warned you in the intro, these suppliers aren't exactly investing the big bucks into SEO research. They know that good business will come to them regardless, so they tend to not put a lot of stock into ways of being found by the first keyboard warrior that comes around.

That's why you're going to have to put in some virtual legwork to even lay eyes on their ugly website! Using modifiers like it's 1998 all over again is going to be the name of the game, here. You can use the term "dropshipping," but you'll most likely have luck with more general keywords like "bulk," "warehouse," "wholesale," "supplier," and "seller."

Get creative!

WooCommerce

WooCommerce offers its own built-in management feature for dropshipping stores.

It lets you:

1. Notify suppliers when a customer buys one of their products off your store.

2. Importing inventory from your suppliers.

3. Assigning inventory to specific suppliers.

[Check out WooCommerce's dropshipping features](#).

Tradeshows

If you have the time, money, and inclination, you could do worse than attend a tradeshow. If you've already selected your industry/niche, then they're a great way to make contacts, find suppliers, and get some insider secrets!

Directories

If you're not the gumshoe type and don't want to dig around, you could try paying for access to a ready-made directory. This is the quickest, and most efficient solution if you just want to cut the preamble and get started with reliable dropshipping suppliers.

They can also be a fantastic tool if you need inspiration about what product or niche you want to base your dropshipping business on; you won't be short for ideas once you take a peek at a directory.

Some of the most popular, and known for curating quality lists of reliable dropshipping suppliers are:

1. Worldwide Brands — Lifetime membership of $299.

2. SalesHoo — Yearly Subscription of $67.

3. Doba — Monthly subscription of $60, but it's already integrated with dropshippers and has a detailed centralized system for placing orders from multiple warehouses.

4. Wholesale Central — Quality suppliers have to pay to be listed here, so it's free client-side!

Things to Know Before you Start Contacting Dropshipping Suppliers

It's not just about etiquette, but about meeting all the requirements to appear professional and ready before contacting your suppliers. Here are some short rules of thumb you should observe.

They'll Want to Check That You're Legit

They'll answer some basic questions without asking for legal proof, sure, but they'll want to know that you're on the up-and-up before signing you up as a client. Make sure you've got all of your legal requirements in check. Reliable dropshipping suppliers work with legitimate businesses only.

Be Professional

That includes not asking for discounts on your first purchase and maintaining an air of decorum and professionalism. We know you're eager to start your new business, but wholesalers see up-and-comers come and go every day. Trust us: they're not impressed.

As time goes by and you build yourself a reputation as a steady buyer, they'll become more accommodating. That doesn't mean that they'll be totally inflexible if you bring them a well-organized game plan, though. They tend to be much more open to businesses that are well-organized, even if they're just starting out.

The Personal Touch

Everybody does most of their business online nowadays. But many wholesalers still have that old-school touch — you'll be surprised at how friendly and personable they are over the phone. It doesn't hurt that it's also the fastest and most efficient way to handle any issues that come up.

When in doubt, just call.

Finding Reliable Dropshipping Suppliers - Sorting the Wheat from the Chaff

Now you know the basics, it's about dealing with only the best of the best.

Do They Know Their Stuff?

This is doubly easy to fact-check if you call, as we recommended. Great suppliers have knowledgeable, expert staff that lives and breathes their product. They should be able to handle most questions you throw at them with ease and know the ins-and-outs of their industry. You want the reassurance of a professional staff, especially if you're just starting out.

Do They Offer Samples?

There's no easier way to see how a process works than to experience it client-side. Order a sample from them, and see if you have positive results!

They Need a Great Support Team

It's life; things can, and will, go wrong from time to time, and that's a rule. But how a supplier deals with adversity is definitely one of their top-selling points. If they have you covered every step of the way, with a well-prepared support team that shows readiness and attentiveness, you know they're keepers.

Is their Tech Game Strong?

This does not have to mean that they must have a pretty website, as we discussed. But do they leverage emerging technologies to make transactions easier, safer, and more organized for you? That includes everything from taking orders via email (other than just by phone or on their website), to integrating with apps and automated stock-keeping and order-management systems.

Where Are They Located?

This may seem like a small issue but isn't. In the US. centrally-located suppliers have the advantage of being able to ship to both coasts faster (2-3 business days, typically).

Shipping from NY to California could take up to a week.

Some locations may be more advantageous to you than others.

Do They Handle the Process in an Organized Way?

Sadly, every new relationship with a supplier entails some trial and error. If you're lucky, every part of the process will net them a gold star from you.

Just make sure they're:

1. Quick to confirm orders after they come in

2. Get down to shipping as fast as possible

3. Give you quick and accurate tracking information along with an invoice

4. Do a tip-top packaging job

Payment

Most dropshipping suppliers will take credit or debit cards. Others will offer you credit for a certain amount of days, 30 being the most common. Of course, they'll run credit checks on you first if you want to go with that option, and they may also ask you to make your first purchases with credit and debit regardless.

If they agree to give you credit, you'll be able to pay via check or wire transfer.

Finding a reliable dropshipping supplier is not an easy task, but it's not insurmountable either. It just requires looking in the right places, having an eye for detail, and not falling for the tricks of fake wholesalers.

After, it's about steadily building a relationship of professional rapport and trust with your new supplier. Give it time, and you'll watch your business and opportunities grow steadily. You'll be glad you took the time to read this guide to start off on the right foot!

Build Your Site

To sell your product, you need a website. The most common platforms for building and hosting your site are Wix, Squarespace, and WordPress.

WordPress is our recommended website platform because it is the best balance of ease of use, professional results, limitless customization potential, and affordability.
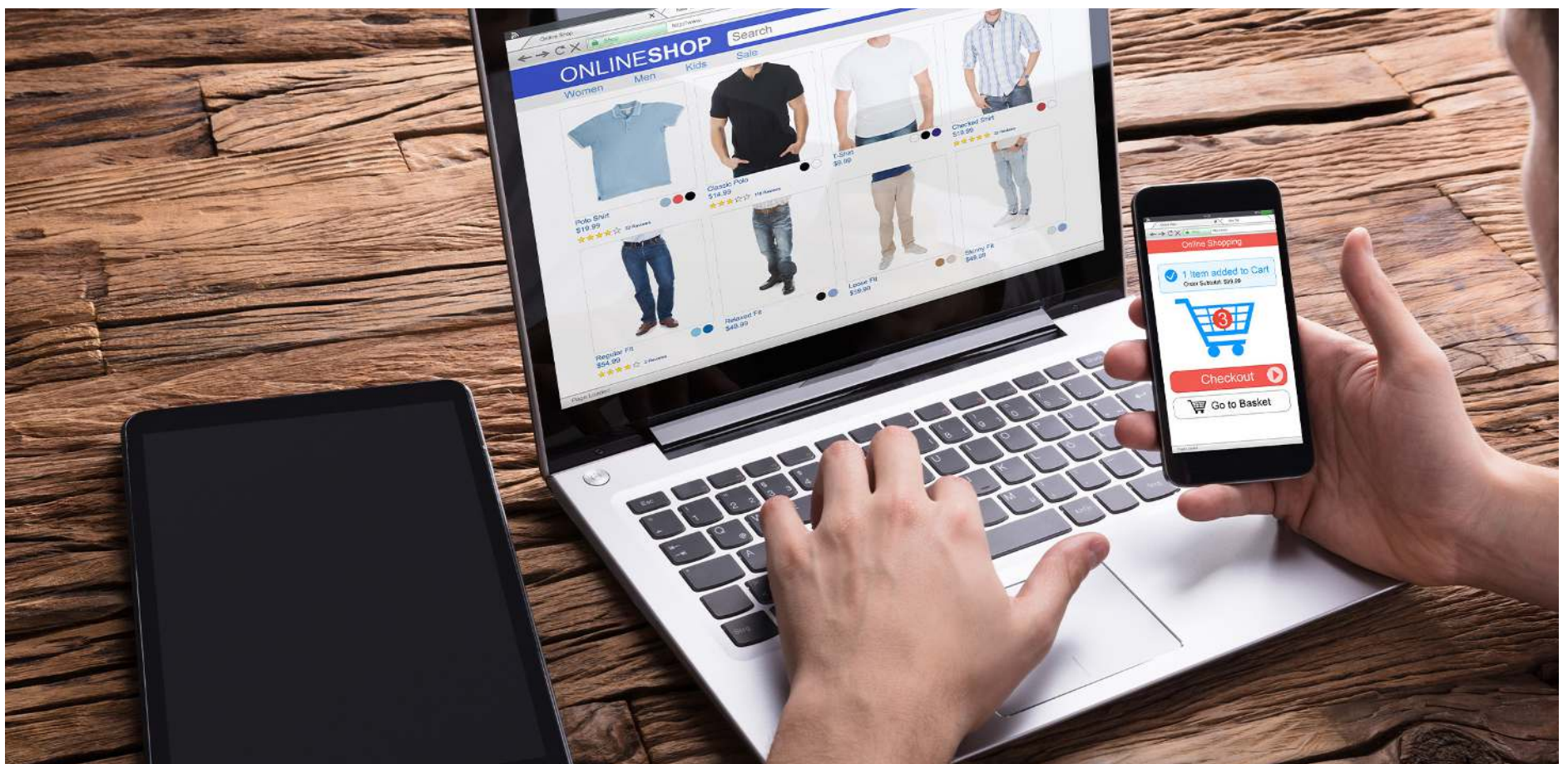
WordPress sites are better optimized for search engines, so your site is easier to find. It also has hundreds (or perhaps thousands) of templates and plugins specifically designed for eCommerce, along with the ability to code and program custom features, so you have lots of easy-to-use tools that will help you easily create an eCommerce website with a look and feel that will appeal to your customers.

Add Shopping Technology to Your Site

A basic website does not have eCommerce capabilities, like the ability for customers to add items to a cart or use an online payment system.

Also, these orders need to be captured, transmitted to the supplier, and tracked. Adding these functionalities to a basic website is difficult and expensive, so most dropshippers use a plugin that automates and simplifies this process.

The most popular eCommerce plugins are Shopify and WooCommerce. While Shopify is a top-rated tool, we prefer WooCommerce. Shopify pricing can be expensive and unpredictable and requires you to use their platform for your store.

WooCommerce is a WordPress plugin, so it's affordable, easy to use, and has a much more comprehensive range of capabilities and customization possibilities.

WooCommerce allows your website to accept secure online payments, configure shipping options, manage inventory, and more. It also has a mobile app so you can manage your online store from anywhere.

Create Product Listings

Depending on your products and your supplier, you may have high-resolution photos, product descriptions, and other information about your products. You use all this information to create listings for your products.

In most cases, it's important not to just use bare-bones descriptions of the product but create your own compelling marketing text that helps sell the product. You may want to describe how it works or how it's used, what features it has that set it apart from other products, and how it benefits the customer.

The more compelling your product listings are, the more likely you are to sell your products and have a successful store.

Ongoing Marketing Activities to Grow Your Dropshipping Business

Once your store is created and set up, you begin the ongoing task of getting visitors to your site and getting those visitors to buy your products. These ongoing activities are the difference between success and failure in an eCommerce site.

Start a Blog

Blogging is an essential aspect of a successful dropshipping business. Your blog differentiates your store from the competition and builds trust and rapport with customers, so your recommendations are more meaningful.

Blogging also generates organic (not driven by paid advertising) visitors to your site, so you get increased visibility and product sales. High-quality blog posts with a regular posting schedule will create regular visitors and readers, increasing the number of people who visit your site every month and increasing your opportunity to sell your products.

Start an Email List

Email marketing is far more effective than you might think. When your visitors are engaged enough to share their email address and subscribe to your list, they are more likely to buy your products.

Email marketing is complex and multi-layered. For example, you may want one email list for people who give you their address and sign up. You may want a second list for people who have purchased your products in the past, encouraging them to shop with you again.

You may create as many different lists as you like, creating specialized offers and messaging for different audiences.

Successful email campaigns often include special offers or discount codes, new product announcements, or seasonal suggestions and recommendations. Email is the best way to turn a single transaction into an ongoing relationship that grows your business.

Advertising and Promotion

While blogging and email are great ways to convert your site visitors into paying customers, it can be an extremely slow, unreliable way to grow a dropshipping business.

To improve your chances of success, advertising and promotional activities can reach a much wider audience, generating more traffic and increasing your sales. Most dropshippers use a combination of these two methods, depending on their niche:

·   Paid advertising. Paid advertising is precisely like it sounds: you create an advertisement and pay a platform to show it to your intended audience. Your advertisements can be simple blocks of text, or larger combinations of text and images,

or even include video or animation. You can then buy space on an ad platform to display these ads. The most popular advertising platforms are Google and Facebook, both of which have a wide range of options for ad size and type, pricing, and audience reach. The advantage of advertising online (as opposed to traditional TV, radio, or magazine ads) is that you can specify what type of person should be viewing your ads and see real-time results in the number of views, clicks, and sales. This results in more effective advertising and better lets you measure the results of your investment.

·   Promotional content. Promotional social media content is a great way to get around ad-blockers and create more visibility for your online store. With promotional content, you create content designed for a specific social media platform and then pay the platform to improve the content's visibility. We've all seen "sponsored content" in our Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, or Instagram feeds. Well-crafted promotional content doesn't just improve visibility, traffic, and sales – it may also be liked and shared by people who see the content, which naturally helps your marketing reach a wider audience and increase engagement.

A/B Testing

You may not always know which products are the best fit for your visitors or which prices or product descriptions are most effective at boosting sales.

That's where A/B testing comes in. With A/B testing, you show different options to different visitors and track which options are most effective for generating sales.

For example, you might create two separate emails, two different product listings, or two advertisements. You show one version to a portion of your audience, and the other version to a different portion, and measure which is most effective.

Ongoing A/B testing lets you make informed, data-driven decisions about which tools work best for your products and your audience, so your marketing gets more and more effective over time.

Proven Methods for Dropshipping Success

To recap, although having an online dropshipping business saves entrepreneurs money compared to the traditional costs of retail space, staff, and inventory, the ingredients to success are still the same.

Master the Basics

Have a great business plan. Choose the right niche and high-quality products. Build a professional site that works well for the customer and helps you manage your business.

Increase Your Reach

Build your visibility with blogging, advertising, email, SEO, and other tools to help customers find your site and purchase your products.

Build Relationships

Stand behind your products with excellent service, and use social media and communication tools to build a good reputation and lasting relationships.

Grow Your Business

Once your eCommerce store has a solid foundation, high traffic, and consistent profits, you can grow your business in any number of ways. Consider some of the following:

· Add products. Expand your product offerings with a broader range of dropshipped products that appeal to your customer.

· Affiliate marketing. You don't have to limit your store to dropshipped products. A wide range of online retailers also have affiliate programs, where you sell their products and earn commission on each sale.

· Create your own products. Some websites and suppliers will create customized products with your logo or artwork, designs, or specifications. This can be a great way to offer unique products that can't be found anywhere else.

· Market your knowledge and expertise. Many successful entrepreneurs eventually write books, hold seminars, or give classes, making money while sharing their expertise with others.

Starting an online dropshipping business is not a "get rich quick scheme." It's a serious business and requires knowledge, time, and effort. But if you want to start your own business, control your time, and build an income stream that gives you independence, it's a fantastic opportunity to change your life forever.

Chapter 3: Local Lead Generation

One of the greatest challenges that online businesses face is the ability to generate leads. As many as [61% of marketers](#) claim generating leads is their top challenge.

Back in the day, you'd rely on things like the yellow pages or local paper advertisements, but the game has changed significantly.

Traditional methods of promoting your business aren't as fruitful they once were, so any business that wants to prevail in today's extremely competitive environment needs a well-thought-out local lead generation strategy.

What Are Local Lead Generation Sites?

Before you understand the concept of local lead generation, let's first take a look at the meaning of lead generation. Essentially, it's a process used to attract and convert strangers into potential customers interested in your products or services. Some of the most common examples include blog posts, job applications, live events, online content, and coupons.

But since you'll be conducting business with locals, such as real estate agents or contractors, you'll have to slightly modify your approach. In that case, you want to focus your efforts on the generation of local leads. Your marketing plans are thus geared towards enticing your local community that makes up the most of your customer base.

Local Lead Generation FAQs

Q: How Do Businesses Generate Local Leads?

A: You can employ many methods to generate local leads. Most companies do the following:

- Cold-call targeted prospects

- Host webinars and collect the participants' information

- Set up automated chat pots on their website

- Email campaigns

Q: Is Local Lead Generation Worth It?

A: Any business would want to grow and increase sales, of which a great way to do this is to attract more customers. This method requires you to perform some local lead generation operations. Even though it can take up about 50% of your budget, lead generation leads to more sales, which is why the practice pays dividends.
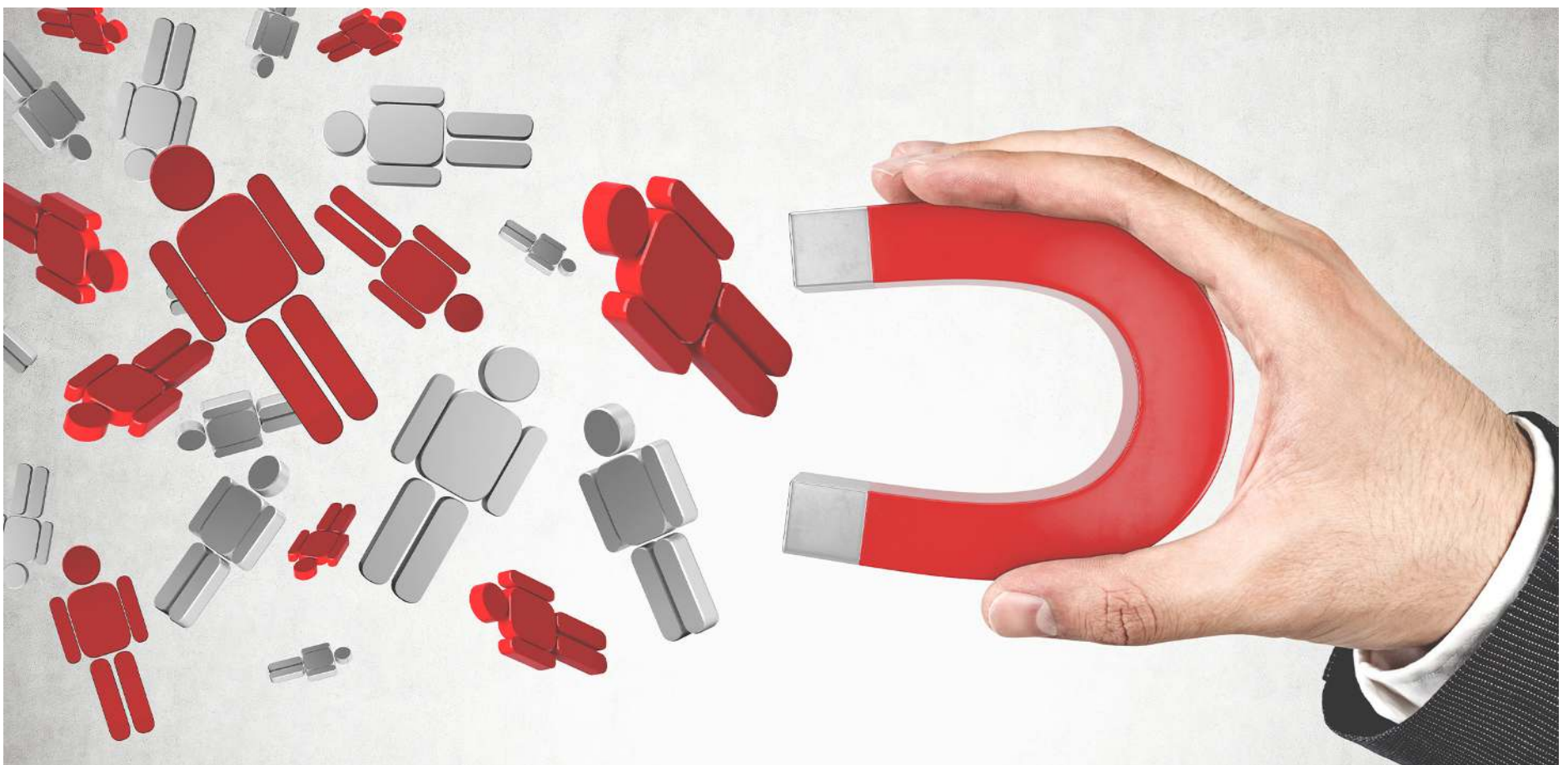
How to Earn Money with Local Lead Generation Sites

Earn Fees for Referring Leads

Local lead generation pages vary, but they typically make money for each lead generated for their client companies. Bear in mind that no sales are consummated in the process. Your leads are those who show interest in your product or service by calling or clicking on affiliate links.

Some businesses even qualify prospects as leads if they fill out a form. Others qualify only if they pick up the phone and talk for at least 30 seconds.

While local lead generation programs differ, the premise is the same. For each qualified lead sent to your partner, you receive a finder's fee.

Average Income

Wondering how much money you can make on your local lead generation site? The below table is an estimate of potential monthly income levels based on traffic. We have used industry standard metrics to develop an estimate. The average price and margin will vary based on your niche and product selection. See the table below for averages by industry.

Traffic	Avg Conversion	Avg Rev Per Lead	Avg Profit
500	4%	$80	$1,600.00
1,000	4%	$80	$3,200.00
2,500	4%	$80	$8,000.00
5,000	4%	$80	$16,000.00

Average price paid per lead below for various industries

Industry	Low	High	Average
Financial Services	$44	$272	$100
IT, Computer, and Technical Services	$39	$370	$200
Education	$37	$66	$50
Healthcare and Medical	$36	$286	$150
Industrial and Manufacturing	$33	$235	$125
Travel & Tourism	$29	$182	$100
Retail	$25	$41	$30
Consumer Products	$24	$182	$50
Telecom	$24	$64	$45

Marketing Agencies	$22	$173	$100
Media and Publishing	$21	$191	$75
Non-Profits	$16	$43	$25
Business Services	$39	$225	$100

Steps to Local Lead Generation Sites

Choosing a Niche and City/Location

The first step in establishing successful local lead generation is picking a niche or product category to promote. As in affiliate marketing, you should choose one that you're familiar with. To help you decide on your niche, consider the following aspects:

• How familiar are you with the market?

• How much money can your partner make in LTVs (long-term value) and margins from your local leads?

• What's the competition?

• Is the market saturated?

Also, the narrower your niche, the more likely it is to be successful. For instance, if your category is Finance, you should drill into one of its subcategories. You could go to insurance and from there, your final choice could be pet insurance. A smaller category will be much less competition and you stand a better chance to make it.

Build Your Site

A fully-functional local lead generation site requires an efficient CMS. WordPress is the ideal choice.

WordPress

Once you're set up your self-hosted website, you'll now register with an email marketing service provider. These services use a simple interface to send mass emails and two of the most popular are AWeber and Constant Contact.

You'll also need a lead generation program. For one, OptinMonster requires minimal setup and has terrific lead capture forms and page-level targeting. It comes highly recommended and can help maximize your chances of converting webpage visitors into buyers.

You should then take advantage of your WordPress website features to generate more local lead generation opportunities. There are several feasible plans to do so:

Capture Your Leads with Comment Redirect

Upon posting comments on your site, your visitors aren't redirected to a different page. Instead, they stay on the same site and the only difference is that the page now has a preview of their comment.

To convert these followers into subscribers, you can redirect them to another page once they leave a comment. For example, you can include a special offer or thank you page.

Use the Comment Subscription Feature

Another aspect of your WordPress website that you should improve upon is the fact that your visitors don't receive notifications after submitting comments. They have to come back manually to check if other users replied to their comments.

By adding a comment subscription option, you allow your users to receive notifications about comment replies. In turn, you get an increase in your return visitors, page views, as well as brand recognition. Best of all, this gives you more room to convert the users into subscribers.

Contact Forms to Track and Forward Leads

Incorporating contact forms is a well-established practice in local lead generation. However, many WordPress contact forms don't integrate with certain email service providers and are hard to use.

To facilitate your contact form integration, give [WPForms](#) a try. The plugin is user-friendly and allows you to come up with distinct contact forms. On top of that, it provides seamless integration with numerous email service tools.

Whether you need simple contact forms, quote forms, or other types of inquiry forms, you can simply build them using the drag and drop builder.

Keyword Research for Local Results

Next on your list of priorities is conducting local keyword research. This task helps you determine the keywords that your target users search for when looking for local businesses with Google. Once you understand which keywords to use, you can modify your pages and create new ones to target the related terms. You'll be releasing SEO-friendly content that will lead to a higher ranking in Google.

Local keyword research is integral to lead generation because most search queries come with underlying purchase intent. In fact, [88% of searches of local businesses](#) result in a call or visit to the company within 24 hours. That's why you should dedicate extra effort to your local SEO strategies.

If you're well-versed in the product or service that you're marketing, you may already have an idea of the type of items your target users search for. However, the chances are that there are tons of keywords you're not aware of that can boost your search results.

When doing your keyword research, you want to focus on items with search intent, search volume, and keywords that your domain can rank for. To kick things off, you should list keywords closely related to your webpage. These are the search terms that you anticipate your users to enter when looking for your website.

Therefore, try to adopt the same mindset as your customers and figure out what they would look for on the internet. Consider the products or services that you're promoting and generate as many keyword ideas as possible. Beyond that, you want to include the location and incorporate different variations into your list.

For example, if you want to generate leads for pest control services in Chicago, this is what your keyword list could look like:

• Pest control services Chicago

• Chicago pest control service

• Pest control specialists in Chicago

- Bed bugs pest control Chicago

- Chicago termites control

After you've thought of an adequate number of keywords, you would include them in your website content. This helps your webpage rank higher in Google's search results and increases traffic and lead generation.

Set Up Google My Business Listing

Since over 90% of the search engine market share belongs to Google, making your website visible on the platform is crucial. Perhaps the best way to do it is to set up a Google My Business (GMB) page to generate leads. GMB has become an indispensable tool for successful local lead generation.

This is what you need to do to set up GMB for your website:

Go to this site and press the "Start Now" button in the top-right corner. You'll need a Google account to enable GMB, so create one if you haven't already.

Enter the name of your business and select "Next."

Specify your address. On this page, you'll see two checkboxes: check the ones that apply to you and choose "Next."

Pick a business category. It's important to be specific since this will allow Google to show your website to ideal customers.

Include your website and phone number.

Verify the business with one of the five available verification options:

a.   Phone - Your company may be eligible for verification via phone call or text. If this applies to you, Google will call or text you a code to enter in the verification box.

b.   Email - If Google lets you verify your business via email, you'll receive an email from Google with a code you'll type in the verification box.

c.   Postcard - Postcards are a method that you may have to use if faster verification options aren't available. In this case, Google sends a postcard to the address of your business. The postcard contains the code necessary to complete the verification process.

d.   Bulk – If you have 10 or more physical locations, you may qualify for bulk verification and verify all branches at once.

e.   Instant – If your business has already been verified, you can obtain instant verification by linking your My Business account.

When you're verified, you can begin to optimize your local lead generation.

Get Ranked!

It's hard to overstate the importance of SEO to lead generation. The higher your website ranks in search results, the better your chances of generating more leads. More specifically, websites that rank first in Google's search results receive about 32% of all the clicks.

Tips for Getting Ranked in Google

Apart from page titles, keywords, and ALT tags, many other tactics can help improve your website's position in the search results:

Sitemaps

Sitemaps are pages that specifically list and create links to other important pages on a website. This allows search spiders to track down these pages quickly and adds relevance to Google searches. Thus, both users and spiders can find your pages more easily and reach them with fewer clicks.
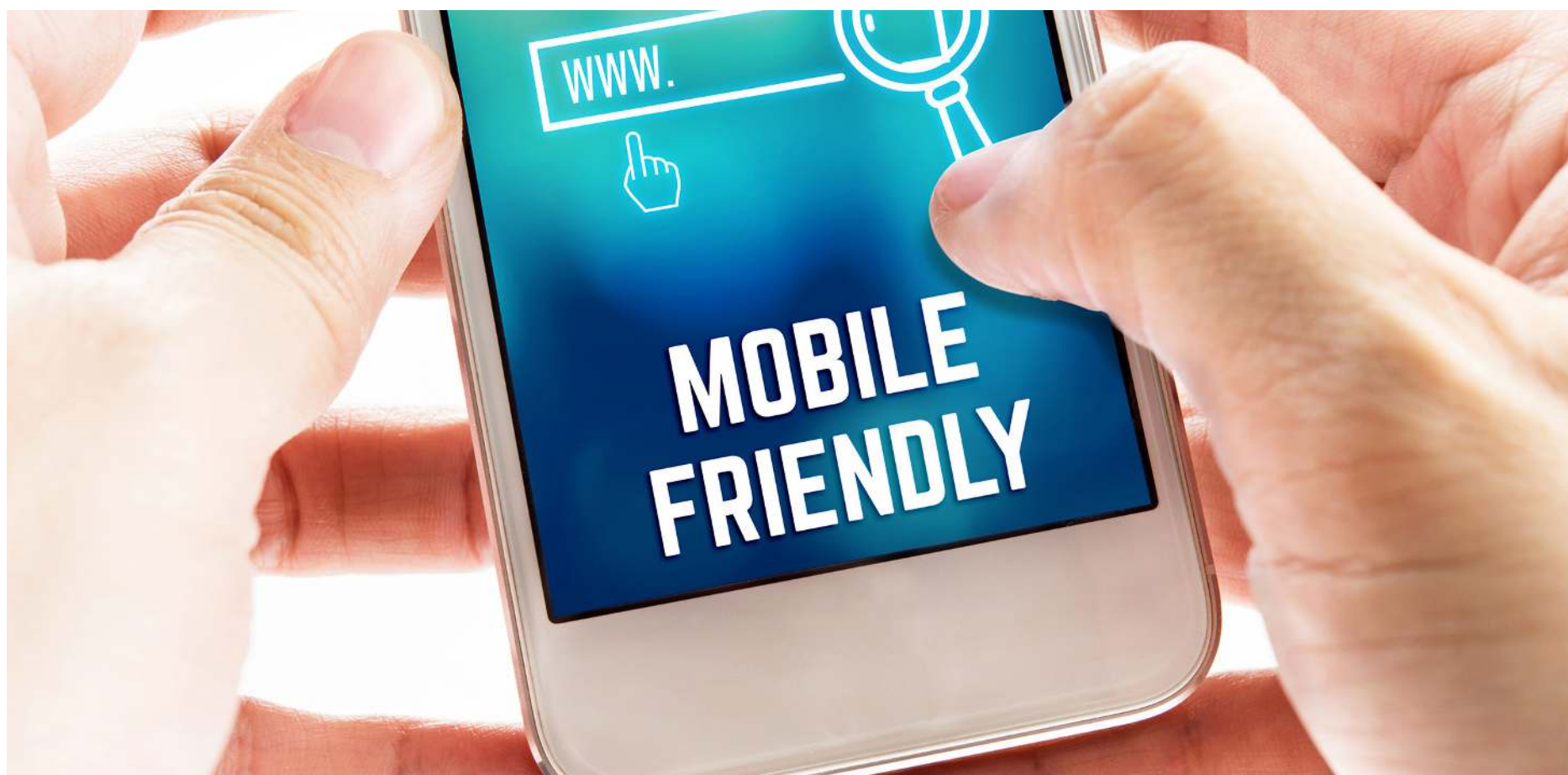
Mobile Site

Having a responsive, user-friendly website goes a long way in increasing your traffic. Webpages with fully-functional mobile versions are 61% more likely to be contacted by potential customers. The better the experience users have on your website, the higher your chances of generating local leads are.

Don't Go for Flash

Using Flash to launch your website is easy and relatively cheap. But since Flash doesn't allow you to link to individual pages, Flash sites are ranked lower than alternative platforms. To improve your rankings, your best bet is to use WordPress.

URL Structure

One of the first details that Google uses to determine your website's rank is the URL structure. Hence, it's crucial to have a simple URL search spiders can reach easily. You can do this by keeping your URL short, relevant to your website's topic, and ensuring your URL helps categorize your site pages.

Create and Publish Top-Notch Content Each Month

To make sure your website remains relevant, don't forget to post great content every month. This will give your visitors a reason to come back to your webpage and check out what novelties you have to offer. The most common way to do this is to write various articles, such as product reviews, to-dos, and comparisons. It's a great way to start building more authority as a source of knowledge for your readers and improve your chances of generating leads.

Contact Local Businesses to Sell Leads To

Implementing all the above strategies will come to no avail if you can't find local businesses to sell your leads. Admittedly, finding leads can be intimidating since you most likely don't know many business owners or where to start.

Luckily, you can fill this gap by conducting a simple Google search. Just type in the product or service that you want to promote and the location and see what pops up.

For example, if you want to sell leads to criminal defense attorneys that operate out of Boston, you'd Google something like 'criminal defense attorneys Boston.' The search engine would then give you a list of such lawyers in Boston with their contact information. Reach out to them by contacting their marketing person or connecting with them on LinkedIn.

Moreover, you can navigate to the bottom of the results and see which businesses have the 'Ad' inscription next to them. This means that these companies want to buy leads and they could be the ideal starting point of your recruitment process.

Tips for Growing Your Local Lead Generation Site

Blog – Grow Content Every Month

For many websites, blogging is the go-to method of generating local leads because most internet users ([77%](#)) read blogs. This means that the audience is there – it's up to you to attract them to your blogs.

When coming up with blogs, writers employ various tactics that help engage readers and get them to revisit their websites. One of the best ways of generating leads with blogs is to invite your readers to sign up to an email list. You can include a free resource whose aim is to solve the problems that your target audience has.

Another great idea that can help you generate more local leads is zeroing in on a knowledge gap in the related field. Once you've found a topic that people haven't blogged about, there's room to write stunning blog posts of more than 1000 words. However, you'll need to do extensive research to cover each aspect that your followers may find intriguing.

Finally, you should provide actionable information that adds value to your website. If you start blogging with a single purpose of generating leads, you're not going to get very far. Instead, put yourself in your readers' shoes and imagine the questions that they may have. After that, you can answer these questions in an appropriate manner.

If you hit the nail on the head, your followers will highly appreciate it. They'll recognize you as a trustworthy source and turn to your website whenever they want to learn about similar topics in the future. This is one good way to create traffic that can spark massive lead generation.

Offer Free Leads to Local Businesses for Limited Time to Enroll Businesses

You can't grow your local lead generation website without products or services. That's why you have to enroll local companies to ensure your webpage gains traction.

Initially, getting local businesses to join your platform can be challenging. However, you can persuade local entrepreneurs to prove yourself by offering them free leads for a limited time. If the cooperation yields results and you generate a sufficient number of leads, you can then retain those businesses on your webpage and charge them for your services.

Social Media Promotion

Using social media to promote your local lead generation site is an effective strategy. If you organize your profiles on multiple platforms, you can reach a much larger audience than you would otherwise.

Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest

Here's what you can do to polish your initiatives on some of the most popular social media platforms:

Optimize Your Profiles

Before planning your lead campaigns, make sure your profile has everything you need for organic lead collection. The main feature that your social media profiles should have is contact information. It's best to include multiple ways for your users to reach you, whether by email, phone, or Messenger.

Another must-have is granting your users the ability to sign up for newsletters, shop, and do similar actions. Creating call to action buttons is another wise decision. For instance, if you want your visitors to sign up for a newsletter, incorporate a sign-up button into your Facebook profile.

Provide Compelling Content

If the content on your social media is bland, collecting leads will be a struggle. Since everyone competes for attention on social media, you also have to enhance your content to get more clicks. Make sure that you're offering clear and to-the-point content that your users can go through effortlessly.

Create Simple Landing Pages

If you manage to convince a visitor to click a link, don't let them down with a poor landing page. First, it must be relevant since the person expects to find specific information or product when visiting it. If the content is irrelevant, your users will likely close the page or even forget why they're visiting it.

An effective landing page should also be easily scannable and visually seamless. It needs to be easy to follow and personal.

Ready To Get Started?

And there you have it. You may have had some second thoughts about launching your affiliate marketing, dropship or local generation initiatives before, but the story is completely different now. With these insights, starting your online business won't be as daunting as before.

The main takeaway is to choose a niche that you know a lot about. It will drive you to press on since you'll be marketing products or services that have real meaning for you. With a compelling niche, all the other components, from keyword research to promotional strategies, will run much more smoothly.

So, get your online business underway from **Human Proof Designs** and start earning!