



Welcome ...

First things first ... thank you very much for purchasing this eBook. :-)

My name is Louis Allport of AllportPublishing.com and I recently had the good fortune to speak with Neil Shearing of ScamFreeZone.com for over four hours on just one subject -- proven tactics for making a full time income online with affiliate programs.

Now -- if you don't know Neil, his site makes well over \$200,000 a year -- and he runs it all from a study in his home in the quiet English countryside.

And -- a good percentage of his profits is made with affiliate programs ... where merchants pay Neil commission for every sale he refers. And even more amazingly -- a lot of his affiliate income comes in on auto-pilot!

In this eBook you get the full four hours with Neil ... in both text and audio format ... so whether you're looking to make \$100 extra a month ... or even \$2,000 (or much more!) we'll show you how.

Let's get started! :-)

Louis Allport

PS. [Click here for 4 hours of bonus interviews ...](#)

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You also can listen to this entire book in audio format. You get the complete four hour Q & A session Neil and I had.

All the audio is in MP3 format ... which means you can listen to it on pretty much any audio player ... including [Windows Media Player](#) and [Real Player](#).

And for faster download the audio is zipped up -- so you'll need [WinZip](#) (PC) or [Aladdin Expander](#) (Mac) to open it up. Both are free.

I've also listed the file sizes below -- and as you can see none of them are particularly small. However, if you've got a fast connection and want to save time ... you can download ALL the audio in one go -- it comes to 45 MB!

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- Introduction To Affiliate Income -

Well, first of all Neil ... for those that don't know you, could you tell me a bit about yourself please?

Certainly. My personal history is that I'm here in England and married a lady from America and we live down in Devon.

And originally I worked in the field of science doing breast cancer research ... my PhD just came through this year. But for the last several years I've been building up an online business at the same time.

And even while I was writing up my PhD I was working full-time online so it's been supporting me now for a couple of years. I've got 5 products that I sell online -- five digital products and am just about to release a [private members site](#).

Okay. And if I remember rightly from when I've spoken with you in the past, you pretty much started everything for free.

That's right.

Which is quite remarkable looking at where you are now.

Well I was a poor student at the time ... I just didn't have any money to invest into the business ... so all I was paying for was Internet Service Provider access fee at night and I would log onto the internet and I would just see the cheapest ways of doing things.

And I got free web space at what was then Geocities -- it's now been incorporated into Yahoo. And I wrote a little report using Microsoft word, and found third party processor companies that were willing to take the credit card orders for me -- take out a percentage which they kept, and send me a check for the rest. So it was really done on a shoe-string budget.

That just goes to show if you've got the determination you can do it from wherever you start from.

That's right. I think it's one of the easiest businesses to start from a monetary point of view. You know all these companies around me were investing millions and millions of dollars and joint ventures and buying customers left, right and center ... not making any money.

And there was me plugging away at night just enjoying it, and getting a check once in a while. It was great. And it's just grown steadily from there. I never really invested a fortune in it ... it's always been reinvesting profits from the company.

That's really good. Just out of interest ... from my experience that really seems to be one of the make or break things, just the sheer amount of time you put into it.

When I was building my business up, basically when I wasn't doing my day job I was doing my internet thing, all the time to the point where it took over. Did you find that as well -- you just took an awful lot of time every day to keep at it, keep building it up?

Yeah that's right. I think if you start now and you want to start from ground zero you obviously have to put in an incredible amount of hours ... personally I've been doing it since ... I started online in 1996 so I didn't have to put an incredible amount of hours at the time ... it's just a couple of hours here, a couple of hours there and it grew and it's obviously been growing over years rather than just the past couple of months ... so it's taken me a long time to reach the point that I'm at now.

I was going to say that in the last newsletter I sent out, I wrote an article that was basically saying how fed up I was with people emailing me and saying how easy it is to make \$5,000 a month by next month and I was saying how you have to put in the time, you have to put in the effort ... it's just not going to happen overnight.

And I was saying how the people who are online that are successful ... like, I was actually thinking of [Jim Edwards](#) and the people online that are successful they've put in the hours and they're successful because they deserve to be successful whereas the people that are floundering around and failing are usually failing for a very good reason in that they're not willing to put in the time and the effort.

It's like any business. People pay because you're providing them with something -- and to actually create something takes a lot of effort. And also the marketing and the customer support as well.

Oh yes definitely -- if you're going to be a one man band you have to wear all the different hats and I was talking to someone in the States recently -- another marketer and we were saying how difficult it is to wear all those hats not just because the amount of time you have to put in but the actual needs of the person to be customer service, to be your own accountant, to be the web designer and everything. It isn't easy. It's true, it is something that you need to get to grips with.

But the benefits are if you do make the dedication you can basically pick your own hours.

That's right, you can pick your own hours. And if you want to put in the time you can basically pick your own amount of money you want to make as well -- if you're happy making an extra \$200 a month -- great, if you want to make millions then you are going to have to put in some considerable amount of effort.

Exactly. Okay, now I'm going to ask you a question I'm sure an awful lot of people know the answer to, but I think it may be interesting if some people don't exactly understand the concept...

What we're going to focus on today is specifically ... well, you have your very heavily visited [ScamFreeZone.com](#) site, and you have your 5 products, and also I know from things you've mentioned to me and also in your newsletter you make a healthy -- I say 'supplemental income' but a nice extra income just with affiliate programs.

That's right -- yes.

So just in a nutshell, what exactly is an affiliate program?

An affiliate program is basically a joint revenue sharing scheme that someone can come and [sign up at my web site for free](#) -- they get a unique affiliate link and then if they send any traffic to my site through their unique link and any of that traffic buys my products I'll send them half of the purchase price.

So it's like a win-win situation in that I've got the product, they've got the traffic they send the traffic over and we'll split the sales revenue down the middle.

So it's basically a commission-only sales force?

That's right, yeah.

And I can actually say from experience it's almost embarrassingly easy how easy your products are to sell.

Thanks. That's good to know.

I was playing around -- I thought I'd just send a few hits and I started getting \$50 commissions and stuff, so now I'm sending quite a bit of traffic your way and that should just keep on increasing.

That was one of the basic tenets I had when I started the affiliate program. I looked at various other affiliate programs online and decided what works and what didn't, and I was going to take the bits that did work and use them as much as I could in my program.

So that was: setting a decent price point for the products such that if you sell a \$5 book at Amazon.com and get 10% as an affiliate, you're not going to be too chuffed to get tiny little checks like that so I offer 50% on all 5 of my products and that turns out to be an amount of money worthwhile for the affiliate.

If you buy the [Spider](#) which costs \$98 and I send you half you only have to make one sale a month to be earning that \$50 a month commission check ... and there are other aspects to the affiliate program that I worked hard to get right too before I launched.

I actually write about them on the web site. I write about what problems I saw and what problems I encountered and what I did to make sure my affiliate program worked better.

Do you have an address for that?

I'm just pulling it up now ... it's ScamFreeZone.com/assocs.

That's an introductory letter isn't it -- for your affiliate program?

Yeah -- it just basically breaks it down -- problems that I saw and how I can offer people a better solution ... like using [PayPal](#): I paid you by PayPal at the beginning of the month and I pay about 60 people at the beginning of each month ... the commissions instantly via PayPal.

I think I'm one of the few to do that and on top I know that PayPal takes out a bit of cash when they put the money in people's accounts so I add on 3% of the amount that I pay people, to try and cover that fee.

And lots of people write back to me and say "I love being paid by PayPal -- I couldn't believe you added money on top of the commissions as well" so it's just little things like that, that people really appreciate.

Yeah it's true. I like ... it's nice receiving it instantaneously by PayPal, you don't have to wait for a check, you don't have to walk down the bank...

It takes out all the hassle ... I pay about 5 people by check and about 60 people via PayPal every month.

Okay. And one of the important things about your program ... and about affiliate programs in general is the product has to sell. Whatever the benefits, whatever the commission structure it actually has to sell. Obviously otherwise there's no point sending traffic towards it.

Absolutely. You have to be sending it to a sales page that works. And I tell people how Allan Gardyne put an advert in his own newsletter ... he sent over so many people and one in eight people that saw the [Blueprint](#) sales page bought the product.

That's incredible.

Yeah -- you can get that conversion rate usually if people endorse it, but Allan didn't say "This is brilliant go and buy it" in which case you could accept it's one in eight.

But it was only a newsletter advert that was in his newsletter that people clicked on and normally that response would be about 1%, 2%, maybe 3%. But to get one in eight was quite incredible ... so you need your sales page to sell.

People need to see they're selling products, and then you also need low refund rates as well, because you don't want to have people get all excited about making a sale, and then take it away from them again. They tend to get a bit upset. So there's lots of different aspects to getting a successful affiliate program.

And I thought I was doing well with 1 in 15...

One in fifteen is great.

That was an endorsement for one of my products.

I have to be careful, because I say ... we've done as well as one in eight, and I've also seen none from three-thousand clicks, it depends very much where it's coming from.

It is true actually. Sometimes there's a flurry of traffic from an ezine ad or whatever and it's really interesting to look at the statistics and see the conversions.

That's right. I've also had lots of people write to me and say "Do you write your own sales copy?" -- they haven't actually gone as far as saying "Can you write some for me?" but "Do you write your own sales copy -- I love it".

And it's nice to hear, but then if I'm going to launch a new product my affiliate knows if I'm writing the sales copy then hopefully it's going to come out well rather than people that employ others or try and have a go themselves and get it wrong ... at least I seem to know I think what I'm doing as regards sales copy.

That's good. And of course -- that's something I've noticed actually the fact that a product sells is sometimes more important than what's being paid out.

Just as an example -- a product that's very popular at the minute is [Jim Cockrum's Silent Sales Machine](#) and that sells for about \$18 which is a very modest price and he pays 50% to affiliates and the thing is though with that product at the minute it really seems to have caught people's imagination and it's just so easy to make sales on so an awful lot of people are sending traffic his way.

So if the traffic you do send to an affiliate program does convert that's what really excites people.

Right. I can see that. It's also difficult to sign up lots and lots of new customers every month at low ticket items -- my [Yahoo Exposed](#) is \$19 but on the same page there's an upsell to have the reprint rights with it and that sells for \$69 and then the affiliates either get \$9.50 or \$34.50 and it makes quite a difference once people buy the upsell, to the size of the commission check.

So I think if you're going to have a low ticket item you might want to come back with higher-priced items that you can split with the affiliates and keep them really happy.

Of course. That's a good thing about your program -- you have 5 products at all sorts of different prices. As you say starting at \$19 going up to about \$100. And plus you generally have upsells on those anyway.

Yeah, every product of mine has an upsell.

Every product?

Yeah, it's like an extra bonus -- [Blueprint](#) comes with the Seminar files and I got them from a marketer in the States who sent them over ... I don't know what exchange we did now but I got these 8 audio cassettes, physical audio cassettes.

And he said "It's like an internet marketing seminar -- how to make money with your web site ... they're only available as audio cassettes -- I'll just send them over".

I said "Why are they only available as audio cassettes?" -- so the first thing I did was take them off and turned them into a digital product and I said "The only way to buy these online at the moment is to pay \$300 and get these audio cassettes physically sent to you -- If you buy the digital files with my Blueprint I'll sell them to you for \$12".

So instead of \$27 for the Blueprint it became \$39 -- Blueprint and the seminar files.

It's still a steal.

Exactly -- it's a \$300 product ... okay you might not get the cassettes in the post but you get the information for \$12. So a lot of people sign up for that upsell. But they're upsells on the other products as well.

And another thing you do of course is you set a permanent cookie and you aim to grab people's details so you can follow up on them with your weekly newsletter.

And of course if the cookie's been set, if they buy now or if they buy from you in two years after you've been in contact with them that person still gets a commission.

That's right. I said to my programmer "Let's set a hundred year cookie -- no one's going to come back after 100 years and say 'the customer bought from me 101 years later, I want my money'".

So I think it's quite an outside possibility. I said "Let's set 100 year cookie". Some people set 30 day cookies, and ten day cookies -- what's the point in that?

Even one day cookies I've seen.

Do they? That's just crazy. So basically the person has to make the sale then for the affiliate to make the commission.

It's not very nice to the affiliate, who makes the effort to send you traffic, and then you don't reward them.

That's right. And there are lots of different shady marketing methods that people need to be wary of.

I've seen -- if you send traffic to one marketer to sell product A he brings up popup windows for other products that purposely sets affiliate ID's that aren't yours.

So if the person doesn't buy the product that you initially sent them over to, but buys his other product you purposely don't get the commission. And that's just wrong I think.

I set the one cookie for a hundred years and if that person comes back any time in the future and buys any of my products you get the 50%.

So if they happen to be using the same computer in 50 years time ...

That's right -- it has to be the same computer, and they have to not learnt how to delete all their cookies.

Or you could keep sending them through the link with the affiliate ID and it will drop the cookie or renew the cookie but that's why I said to my affiliates "You don't have to send people over and try and make the sale on the first attempt -- you don't have to send them to the [Blueprint](#) page or the [Spider](#) page -- you can send them to the forum and say on your web site 'There's this really good [internet marketing forum](#)'. Just click here and take a look and ask a question if you need to, or if you're good at it post an answer or something like that"

And then it's kind of sticky ... the people keep coming back but every time they come back that cookie is read and if they buy any of my products you still get the commission. Like a soft-sell thing.

And something else you've done recently is your -- I forget the exact title ... your 101 Tips eBook?

That's right. [101 eBook](#).

And people can refer simply to that.

That's right.

So instead of actually trying to sell someone, you can say "Check out Neil's site ... here's a free eBook".

Exactly. You can use an affiliate link to the page which people download the free 101 eBook from, and it's the same cookie. You know they're not different in any way ... you've just dropped a cookie on that computer and if that person buys any time in the future any of my products, you get 50%.

Actually, maybe not everyone knows what a cookie is ... could you just give a quick definition?

Sure. A cookie is just a tiny little text file that basically labels your computer as having been to my web site before and I can also drop in the affiliate who referred you.

So if person A comes to my web site with person B's affiliate ID, a little text file is dropped on their computer saying "Person A visited as a result of clicking on a link from person B".

And then if person A ever comes back again that cookie is read by my web server and it thinks to itself "If any sales are made remember to credit them to person B". So it's quite straightforward, it's just a tiny little text file.

Okay. This may concern some people -- how common or uncommon is it for people to actually clean their cookies?

I don't think it's very common. I don't have any hard statistics on it, I haven't gone into detail and looked it up, but you do have to really know what you're doing with your web browser and go to the right panel within it and to clear the cookies, or to clear the files from your browser.

So probably advanced internet marketers will know what they're doing, and will be able to click and delete the cookies, if they want to. But most regular users don't know how, or would be bothered to.

And often cookies are actually helpful, because it makes browsing that much easier -- it remembers your settings.

Exactly. There's no reason really to go and delete them. They just sit there and identify your machine to any web site that has dropped a cookie on it before.

Exactly. If we can break it down briefly what would you say are the different kinds of affiliate programs people can sign up for?

As in the different revenue types? There's pay-per-click ... where the merchant would pay per click to have people come to their web site.

Is that particularly common any more?

It was, but it died out because of the substantial fraud associated with it. So merchants started going off that as a revenue generating system. Pay per click kind of died out.

Then there's pay per lead so merchants would pay if say a certain form on their web site was filled out and submitted. That would be considered a lead. They wouldn't pay you per click but they would pay you per person that filled out the form. That's pay per lead.

I've actually seen that for some of these services like World Wide Lists where they actually offer email addresses of people interested in certain subjects. If you add a form to your site where people sign up you get 10 cents per email lead or something.

There you go -- that's one of them. You often see it with companies like insurance companies because they know for every 50 leads they generate they know they're going to convert one or two customers.

They know the value of the customers so they can work out how much they're going to pay per lead. As long as they filter all the leads and chuck out the useless ones ... they can know which affiliates are sending them useful leads and pay people per qualified lead.

So that's kind of like an extension of the pay per click program. I think it's not as common as it was. I think the whole affiliate arena is shifting to just pay per sale which is the main one, where an affiliate just sends traffic to a merchant, and the affiliate is rewarded for any sales that are made. That's the most common one -- pay per sale.

And of course there's single tier, two-tier associate programs, and even goes up to multi-levels sometimes.

That's a different way of looking at the affiliate program. I was just talking about pay-per-click, pay-per-lead, pay-per-sale.

But then on top of that you have the structure of the affiliate program so you can have one tier being just what we're talking about -- where there's an affiliate, and the affiliate gets paid for any sales.

If you include the second tier the way that works is not only could the affiliate try and refer sales, they could also refer other affiliates to the program, and every time an affiliate refers another affiliate, the second affiliate is put under the first one.

And then if the new affiliate refers any sales the originating affiliate will also take a percentage.

[So I run a two tier program](#) but I have it biased towards sales. Such that if an affiliate makes a sale they get 50% ... if they refer another affiliate who makes a sale the affiliate who makes the sale gets 50%, and the referring affiliate gets 10%.

So that's a two tier program that you can make money from either your direct sales, or one level of indirect sales.

And then of course you can have multiple tiers until you get to multi-level marketing with like 16 levels, payouts on every level, and trying to fill matrixes and all that. Which I steer well clear of.

Because it didn't really work offline, but online it's a nightmare because everyone just signs up all their mates who sign up all their mates, who sign up all their friends, and no one actually concentrates on the sales, they just concentrate on recruiting and that's really no good.

I did notice that actually. There was one program -- I think they have 5 levels and they push that quite heavily, so you think "5 levels, I can earn quite a bit of money".

And one time I actually sat down and did the maths, and you would need really huge amounts of people on your levels to actually earn a decent income.

That's right. Normally they're biased so if you look at them closely you get paid on your first level so that you have a bit of an incentive, and then the next five or six levels will be a very small amount and they'll be a big bonus for hitting the last level.

So they're structured so that lots of people don't normally recruit people down to five levels ... people get bored and it peters out and it fizzles away.

So there's kind of a big reward, a big inducement in getting down that far, but then usually it's not only for recruiting people, it's for making sales, so you might have a million people filling out hundreds of levels but if no ones making any sales, you're not making any money.

Exactly.

So I like to try and get people to focus on the sales and pay people for that.

Obviously your 50% commission is nice, but I think the other day a second level commission came in for me, and it's nice. \$10 just suddenly appears.

There you go. It's worthwhile doing, because there are people out there with big lists who may not be interested in promoting your product directly but may like your affiliate program, and recommend your affiliate program.

Well, they should get some reward then if they sign up 500 new affiliates for you.

So it's just horses for courses. You pay people who recommend your products and make sales, and you still owe people something if they recommend your program and bring in a lot of people who make sales.

But my affiliate program is obviously only based around the sales -- you don't get money directly for recruiting anyone.

Okay. And actually one thing you mentioned earlier -- [your new site](#). And as opposed to pay per sale, it's a slightly different structure -- it's recurring commissions ... let's take your site as an example, how would that work in your case?

Well I haven't actually thrashed out the details if I'm going to offer a recurring income affiliate program. Well there's Terry Dean's site at NetBreakThroughs.com.

He pays people on a recurring basis for membership signups and I don't remember the exact percentage but I know he pays people monthly so if I were to recruit you into Terry Dean's membership site, Terry would pay me monthly a portion of your membership fees.

I know he does that through a third party processor which has the whole system including the monthly billing and monthly payment all set up for him, whereas my system with WorldPay and my custom affiliate scripts would make it a bit more difficult for me to pay people recurring commissions.

It would be more work for me, so I'm not sure whether I'll be doing that, or whether it will be a flat fee or whether it will be part of the affiliate program or not. I'm still juggling with all those variables.

Okay ... we've covered the main affiliate models. I think we've covered a lot of this already, but I'd be interested if we can sum it up -- what would you say to look for in a good affiliate program? It's nice -- but obviously there is more to it than purely the commission payout of course...

That's right. There's a lot of different things you need to be interested in.

Firstly -- how do they track sales? You need to make sure there's a professional tracking system -- preferably with cookies and CGI scripts and you might even want to put through a test order.

Ask the merchant if you can put through a test order to see exactly how it works -- because if you're going to be sending lots of traffic you want to know that every sale is tracked.

I've had people come up to me and say "I've sent you lots of traffic and I expected to make tons of sales and I haven't made any -- are you sure you're tracking things right?".

And I say "If you really want to go through, put in an order, and I won't complete the order so you can see if everything's tracked and you won't be billed at the end of it -- obviously you won't get any commission from it but you can just make sure that everything's working."

And they come back later and they say "I put through a test order and it came through fine".

So you need to be confident that things are working with the order processing and that it's an established merchant.

You also need to make sure that there's the creative copy that you want like sometimes it's not enough just to put up a banner, you might want copy and paste adverts for your ezine, you might want different types of interactive banners which get more clicks, and you might even want to paste a full article at your web site -- something like that.

You need to obviously make sure like we said before that the product is of really high quality. The best way to do that is to have a copy ... whether you go to the merchant and say "Look, I can generate 100 sales a month, can I have a complimentary copy?". Or whether you go through the system and buy it as a customer does.

I remember reading that [Michael Campbell](#) said recently he just goes through and buys a copy as a customer would, just to make sure that the fulfillment works and the tracking works and everything like that. So that's a good tip to be doing that.

Through his own link?

Yeah I think most of the time he buys it through his own link. I'm not sure whether he said he did that, but it would make sense that you would then also be checking the tracking at the same time you're checking the fulfillment of the order.

I never do this myself. I think it's a bit iffy to promote something you don't actually know...

Exactly. But the people that do that don't make any money anyway, because they're busy saying "This product's fantastic" and it doesn't carry any weight because there's no believability.

I often get affiliates writing to me and saying "What's the best way to promote your product -- which one of these banners works best?" And I say "Have you seen the product? Have you bought it? Have you looked at it?"

Because the best thing to do is say "I bought Neil's Blueprint and I thought it was incredible -- if you're interested in starting an online business it's the Bee's knees -- click here for more information".

And that's going to out pull any banners or any ezine ads very, very easily.

So those are a few of the things -- a quality product, you want to know there's a high commission and that the merchant pays out on time, pays out regularly.

I make a fact of saying that I haven't missed out any payment dates by more than 24 hours, even when my son was born, so there might be an earthquake or something but I'm still going to pay people.

So how could people find that out -- just do a bit of research into an affiliate merchant before they start promoting?

Yes -- you can do a search online for affiliate links to any given program, and even ask webmasters if they're happy with the program.

That's true. And a lot of this does depend on faith -- and how honest the affiliate merchant is. And generally if people want a successful business they'll treat their affiliates well.

Of course -- because it's a win-win situation.

It seems the bigger companies that keep changing their affiliate programs, to be less and less beneficial to their affiliates.

That's right. So you want to stick with a merchant that sells good products and that you're happy to promote, and you get paid regularly and everyone's happy.

You need to do your research obviously -- you don't want to be promoting products that aren't targeted to your audience. That doesn't do anyone any good because you won't sell any you'll just get frustrated. You need to do some research before picking the right affiliate program for your web site.

Would you have any preferences over going with a merchant who uses a third-party service like [ClickBank](#) or [Commission Junction](#) rather than running their own scripts, and paying out manually -- would you take that into consideration?

I guess that you are a bit safer if everything's audited by ClickBank or by Commission Junction -- a lot of people use ClickBank so it's a well respected name and it has the added benefit that if you promote two different products by two different merchants but they both use ClickBank, you'll get one check from ClickBank and I guess Commission Junction works the same way.

I've hardly ever used Commission Junction -- I find their interface to be just overwhelming -- "We've got a million, billion affiliate programs -- sign up for them!". That's not the way I'm going to do it.

But I guess if you don't know an affiliate who runs their own scripts and has their own products and does their own accountancy, then you would have to be a little bit more wary of them.

Personally I find that ClickBank takes out I think it's about 7.5% plus a dollar from each transaction. So because I do my own scripts -- I run my own affiliate program and WorldPay's fees are a bit lower than ClickBank's, I can afford to pay out 50% to my affiliates so I run it all in-house and try to keep the costs down, then I can pass on more onto the affiliates.

But if people are unhappy trusting me then they can always go with people that run through third party merchants like Commission Junction or ClickBank.

That's true. Just out of interest -- have you signed up to their affiliate program? I find it very difficult to get into those affiliate programs.

I'm signed up to something at Commission Junction. I guess it's not a Commission Junction affiliate program per se, just promoting a few people that sell through Commission Junction. But I've never got a check through them. I think I'm owed about \$9.50 or something. It's not something I know a lot about.

I tried to sign up with [eBay](#), just to get \$5 per signup -- I think they're only accepting people in the US. And [Overture](#) took two attempts, and finally they signed me up.

One other thing I'd like to mention -- it seems a little bit controversial, sometimes you get lifetime ... some affiliate programs promote lifetime customers -- I think [Ken Evoy's](#) program does this and I think Aesop -- [Mark Joyner's](#) company does this as well.

If you get a customer, basically they're yours for life. They track name, address, cookie, they try to basically claim ... if that customer makes any future sales they try to claim it as yours as much as possible.

And that seemed like a good idea -- but I think I read something from [Michael Campbell](#) in one of his newsletters saying he doesn't really like them because you get people with a big list basically promoting the lifetime customers program everywhere, and it shuts a lot of other people out.

Yeah -- it has annoyed me in the past I have to admit. I made several sales of [Site Build It](#) -- this was several years ago now, and I was giving away my products if people bought it through my affiliate link, and it was a promotion I did in my newsletter, I sold several copies and I didn't get the commissions.

And I had to give these people the products since I promised them my products, so I wrote to the support at SiteSell, I said "How come I didn't get the commissions for the Site Build It?" and they said "They had already bought products from us from another affiliate link."

So these people might have bought [Make Your Site Sell](#) for \$17 in the past -- I refer them and they make a several hundred dollar purchase of Site Build It, and I get nothing.

So it is a double-edged sword. It is very nice to say "They're your customer for life", but if someone else promotes and makes sales and doesn't get any commission they I think have a right to get a bit upset.

That's a very interesting point actually. And also it gives people more incentive like with your program to promote constantly to make sure your cookie is always on people's computers.

That's right. It levels the playing field after each sale. If that person doesn't go through someone else's link, and it's not very likely they'll go through someone else's link, then the originating affiliate gets the sale, so it's still your customer for life. Unless they're overwritten by someone else's.

But I think it's up to the person that made the sale to get the commission, not just the originating affiliate.

So a couple of final questions for this section -- if we could sum it up, how could someone choose the right affiliate programs for them taking all that into consideration -- I guess the subject is important as well, the subject of the product, or the niche of the product?

I would take a step back and say if you want to make decent money online you need to be selling your own products.

But it's a good way to start out is to be an affiliate because most programs are free to signup -- you can send traffic to the merchant site, and see if you make sales.

Try and make the product targeted to the visitor, try and get visitors to go across and make sales, and you'll see how the whole process works.

It's not going to usually make you any kind of income that you can live off of, but it's a good way to get your feet wet in internet marketing and see how everything works.

Yes -- you will need to identify your target market, and know what visitors are coming to your site for what purpose, and then find the merchant that is selling goods that are applicable to those visitors because that's going to make it much easier to make a sale.

And then you use all the criteria we spoke about before to vet the different merchants and pick the one that seems most suitable to your situation.

So what consideration would you take for tools of the affiliate program? How important would you say are the tools they provide or are the people who really make the decent commissions those that create their own tools?

The super-affiliates are not that bothered about what banners are in the affiliate banner area, because what they'll do is do a write up and say "Joe Blow's released a new product. I loved all his old ones -- this new one looks great, go and buy it".

And the affiliates that make the most sales -- those super affiliates are going to talk to their list using their voice, they're not going to use copy and paste emails that are sent out saying "Marketer X has just released this fantastic product... " and just copy the text and send it to their list.

And they're not usually going to use something like banners or ezine ads so once you really know what you're doing the banners and all those other marketing techniques become less important.

But if you're first starting out and you obviously need to get your hands on banners and things like that to send your traffic through, because you probably wouldn't feel confident enough doing a write-up or a testimonial on your web site.

That's the thing -- just play around with it and get your hands dirty.

Yeah, it's a completely fail safe way to do that because you don't have any money invested. Okay you're sending visitors -- it might have cost you money to send those visitors so you need to make sure you're getting your money back that way but if you just have a page in a search engine the traffic comes across and you're thinking "How can I monetize this traffic?" then an affiliate program is a great way to just revenue share with a merchant, rather than go into the efforts of creating your own products.

It's true. And this is something I say to people and I think in my newsletter and it just becomes truer and truer for me ... is everything changed for me when I just got into it.

And I made silly mistakes but I just started out small, but it just develops and you've got to rather than just reading and reading, you've got to try it out and learn and see for yourself. And turn -- information into knowledge.

Absolutely, yeah. There's nothing better than jumping in at the deep end and getting started.

Yeah, just playing around and learning how it actually works.

I don't know if I had an advantage there because I obviously have the mind that's kind of scientist based, and wants to discover why things are happening and how things are happening, so when people started putting out web pages and stuff I was like "How do they do that? How does that image sit there and not on the right-hand side of the screen?"

And I would go to the view source, I'd print it off, and I'd go through how their table layout worked, and how they got the banner sitting in the middle at the top, and then I would edit the source and save it as a file on the desktop and open it up in the browser, make changes, and see how it worked.

Looking back on it, it was very much like science works -- just making little changes one at a time and seeing how it works, and eventually I just learnt HTML that way.

But it goes the same for all the different marketing techniques -- you don't know what a joint venture is until you go and try to find one and put it into practice.

Exactly. Just a couple of other quick things I've suddenly thought of: we'll probably come to this later, but I just thought it'll be good to mention ...

Something I remember reading ... I think I read this from Brian Garvin. He's very big with affiliate programs, and the more I think about it and study how he markets and study how other people market, and also the kinds of results I have seems to be true -- basically the closer your affiliate programs are to what the customer is looking for at exactly that time, the better you'll do.

For example in his [Optin-Lightning](#) program which is the mailing list program you install on your server, and in the manual he says "This works very well with [Host4Profit](#)"

He mentions that quite a few times "I recommend this hosting company, if you want to get this script installed I recommend this one". And because those two are tied so closely together, basically they're directly related, he gets an awful lot of [Host4Profit](#) customers.

I know that firsthand as well, because Stephan Ducharme of MoneyHome.com sells an eBook on how to get a million visitors to your website, with virtually no cost, and in his ebook he says one of the ways of doing it ... one of the most successful ways of doing it is to do joint ventures and he promotes the [Spider](#).

And so he sends a lot of people over to my website, and sells an awful lot of copies of the Spider. So it's a similar kind of thing. That he's basically using the eBook in pre-selling the customer and then sending them across, so that's basically the same kind of thing with Brian Garvin with his Host4Profit sales.

So rather than just mentioning it you're actually solving your customers problem as well, with an affiliate link.

That's right. Weaving it into your own products.

- How To Protect Your Affiliate Sales -

Let's talk about affiliate link protection now ... that seems to be quite a timely subject at the minute. A lot of people seem to be concerned about that.

Yeah -- it does seem to have jumped up as this months hottest topic.

The first question about that -- what exactly is affiliate link stealing, for those that haven't experienced it yet?

Okay -- it kind of grew out of a problem with ClickBank links ... obviously it applies to any system but I think it applies especially to ClickBank because when you've clicked on a link containing an affiliate ID code of ClickBank, it displayed the whole contents of the link including the affiliate ID in the web address browser area, and so people could see the merchant's web page but they also saw the affiliate code that was being used in the address part of the browser.

And if someone happened to have an affiliate ID they could replace the original affiliate ID in the link with theirs, reload the page, and then when they bought they would get the commission for the sale rather than the original referring affiliate.

I have to say I think ClickBank have changed their system now to counteract that but I think it was originally then, because it was such a big system that the problem originated or was identified by them mainly I think.

My system with the affiliate links and the affiliate codes ... if someone clicks on a link the page resolves to ScamFreeZone.com/ the name of the product, so even if you click an affiliate link with say an ID code of 100594 ... when you hit the actual merchant page it only shows ScamFreeZone.com/bizop so it would be much more difficult to unearth what the affiliate code was and change it using my system, compared to the old way that ClickBank did it.

Unless they're particularly determined...

Yeah -- I was talking about it to an affiliate actually. They would have to sign up for my associate program themselves, which is not particularly easy because there's no links to my affiliate program from any of my product pages.

They'd have to find out first of all that I ran an affiliate program which isn't obvious because like I said the affiliate link is not shown when people come to my product pages.

Then they would have to sign up -- they'd have to get their own ID, they'd have to delete all the cookies from the browser and we touched on that before ... then they'd have to come through their own affiliate link and buy the product.

So I think it's an awful lot more involved -- it can be done but it's a lot more involved than the old ClickBank way of doing it which was to look at the web address, change the affiliate ID, and reload the page.

I don't remember the exact figures -- I think I remember reading somebody was losing around 30% at one point of their [ClickBank](#) links because people were just substituting their ID.

There are no hard and fast figures -- I don't think ClickBank's told anyone, but that's an industry guesstimate I think -- as high as 30%, not 30% definite but as high as, or up to ... or in some cases as much as 30%.

But that would be the old system before they changed it. When it was very, very easy to change an affiliate link.

Now I've noticed they actually set a permanent cookie which you can't actually replace. You can't even replace it even if you go through your own hoplink.

Well, it's an interesting story because I saw someone's product online -- an eBook and I bought it and thought it was great, and I said to the merchant "You're selling this product through ClickBank but I've noticed that you don't have any affiliates -- why's that?"

And he said "Oh I've just never got round to starting an affiliate program."

I said "Would you mind if I used my affiliate link and created a ClickBank link and sent some traffic over."

He said "No ... go ahead, be my first affiliate, that'll be great".

So I mentioned his product and I sent lots of people over and I made lots of sales, and I was quite happy, and he wrote back and said "Do you know there's this one customer that bought my book but not through your link, through his own link?"

I know he's defrauded you because I don't have any other affiliates -- he couldn't have signed up anywhere to promote my product -- the only way he could have got his link in is to have changed yours"

So it's definitely a problem -- I don't know if it's 30% but it's definitely a problem.

He told me who the person was as well, so I now know that this person changed the link on me.

They're in your black book.

Exactly. I've got a little red flag pops up whenever his name appears.

So what solutions would you actually offer for this? Obviously looking for an affiliate program such as your own where it's not obvious it's an affiliate link since it sets a cookie and then just redirects to the page in question. What else can be done? What else can we look for?

Well we were talking about this on my forum recently. I said "I know of a couple of pieces of software -- are there any others and what do you think of them?"

And we had a good discussion about it. There are pieces of software that you can download to your machine and you put in your affiliate link, whatever it would be to whatever the product it is, and it will create a page basically that scrambles the affiliate link -- either it will use conversion to code that can't be read or it will use some other way of masking the link, so that it can't be seen and it can't be detected.

So there are 3 or 4 different pieces of software that are available for about 30 dollars each that do that for you.

Can you list a couple just out of interest? If people are interested in that?

Yes -- I mentioned Jim Edwards earlier. He produced [Affiliate Link Cloaker](#). I had a hand in creating that. So I've tested that one -- I like that and I recommend that one.

What affiliate programs is that for? Any, or just ClickBank?

I pretty much think it would work with any.

There was [EZClickGuard](#) by Adrian Ling. I've worked closely with Adrian. And I think it only worked with ClickBank though I'd have to check on that.

And now ClickBank have updated the way they show their affiliate codes, or the way they do their tracking, I don't think that's as viable as it was before. So I would go and check with Adrian for the latest version of what it does before recommending that one.

Right. And of course when doing a promotion -- especially in an ezine for example I've noticed you always use a redirect page.

That's basically just for aesthetics. Every link I use is ScamFreeZone.com/something.

It just maintains the look rather than say "Here's this affiliate link" ... "Here's that affiliate link" ... "Here's another one..."

And some of them can be a mile long. When you put in all the scripts names and your affiliate names and the page you're going to go to and all that -- they can get very unwieldy so I'd rather just say ScamFreeZone.com/jim or /louis or /jim2 or whatever. So that just redirects people to the affiliate link.

I think it lowers people's resistance as well because it doesn't really look like an affiliate link.

That's right. It doesn't do any fancy protection or anything it just redirects people, and I think it looks better in the newsletter.

I think I actually tried to find a page on your site once -- I think ScamFreeZone.com/banners I thought "Right, that will take me to the affiliate banners" and I ended up at another site.

Did you? That's a bit of a coincidence there then. Like I said it's all ScamFreeZone.com/something. I must have used banners for...

Banner Ad Magic.

Yeah, there you go.

I was thinking "That's not his affiliate program".

It's ScamFreeZone.com/assocs/banners.shtml

That's the one. Just something you mentioned earlier which would be interesting to go into briefly -- people don't really mention this, and occasionally on forums you see people say "Oh I really disagree with this" is affiliate sign up links on product sales pages.

As you say you don't do that in your own program ... what's your take on that? Would you say that's important to pay attention to when choosing an affiliate program?

Well, the main reason I don't do it and other merchants shouldn't do it in my opinion is because you want people to come to your site, through an affiliate link or not through an affiliate link, and you want to give them one choice.

And that choice on that page is to do something or not do it. And for a product page it would be to buy the product or not buy the product. And if it's a newsletter sign up page you want them to sign up or not sign up.

So I don't offer different choices such as "Click here to buy the product, click here to join my affiliate program, click here to join my newsletter" and so on and so forth.

Because the more choices you give people the more confused they'll get and the more likely they'll disappear off your site altogether. So that's the main reason why I don't do it.

Also -- my affiliates have the choice if they want to send someone to the [Blueprint](#) product or the [Spider](#) product or if they want to send them to the associates program page to sign up as an [associate](#) and put them in their second tier -- that's up to them.

So I as the merchant shouldn't be making that choice ... I should just be trying to get the visitor to do whatever the referring affiliate wants them to do. If that's to buy the product -- great. If that's to join the affiliate program -- great. If it's just to visit the [forum](#) -- great, I'll provide the forum. So I don't think it's my place to pick and choose what they should be doing.

- Building Mini-Sites For Affiliate Profits -

I seem to hear slightly different views of exactly what a minisite is ... some people say direct response sites for selling a single product are minisites. Others say it's for pre-selling people for affiliate products.

If they're both right with those definitions ... I've got involved with the first one, but not really for pre-selling affiliate programs. Could you clarify what exactly is a minisite?

Well a minisite is basically a website that's dedicated to just doing one thing via one or two or three pages. Like I was saying just a few moments ago. My [Blueprint](#) sales copy page just sells the Blueprint, it doesn't do anything else, so you could class that as a minisite within the Scam-Free Zone.

But what people will do is they will take several different domain names and promote one different product on each of the sites. And then if you link them all together in a certain way you can boost the chances of rating very highly in the search engines.

[Michael Campbell's](#) an expert at linking all the different web sites together to try and create the best positioning in a search engine -- that gets away from the basic aspect of what a mini-site does which is just sell one thing to the visitor as they come through.

So it's basically just trimming it down, and trimming out all the extra content, 'cos if you go to CNN they're going to show you a million and one things on their page: they're probably going to show you advertising popups and banners and goodness knows what ... and that's more a portal.

It's more you go to CNN to see the headline news and then choose where you want to go and what you want to do.

Whereas if you're trying to sell something you want people to just think "Okay, I'm going to buy this" or "No thank you I don't fancy it today" and go somewhere else. So it is direct marketing in that respect.

Interesting. So a very focused site?

Absolutely. A very focused site. Usually I would say just one page. You don't need more than one page -- if you can keep people interested and get them to read your sales copy why do you need two or three pages?

You could maybe have a sales copy page, and then "Click here for testimonials" and then that's just a popup page that you can close of testimonials. Or I guess you have to have an order page, and if you count that and your testimonial pages you've got three pages.

Right. So how would you use that exactly for promoting affiliate programs -- promoting your affiliate links?

To promote the affiliate links of?...

To be perfectly honest I've never actually got involved with the minisite aspect of promoting affiliate programs. I hear quite a lot about it as in Phil Wiley's book [Minisite Profits](#).

Yes. Phil's is a great book.

He builds mini-sites to direct people to his affiliate links.

Oh okay, I'm with you now. What he does is he signs up for an affiliate program and one of the best ways of doing it is to keep it all in a certain network's affiliates, so if you go to [Commission Junction](#) and you sign up for a couple of different affiliate programs, you can get one check from Commission Junction.

Because you don't want to be getting several different checks from all over the place, it's going to start costing a lot to cash them in bank fees so if you were going to set up several different minisites for several different affiliate programs, I would go with a network like Commission Junction or something to process the sales.

What he would do is create a web site and he would kind of take the merchant's promotion literature ... say a picture of whatever he's selling at the time, he'll put it on his site and he would say, put a testimonial around it that he found the product to be really good or the service to be great.

And then he would drive traffic through the affiliate link on that page to the merchant and if he knows the conversion ratio of that page, or that merchant, say he gets one sale per hundred clicks, he can work out how much.

Then he can pay per click and he will go to the pay per click search engines and he will drive traffic through at less value that he makes per click. And that would generate his profit -- the difference between what he pays per click and what he makes per click.

I see -- that's interesting. So really just a single page?

That's right -- but with a single page you would have trouble ranking it highly in the search engines. That's why he goes for the pay per click traffic because if you just have one page on a domain name about one product, you know Google aren't going to think that's brilliant and rank it at the top of the search engine.

I didn't come up with the way the [Scam Free Zone](#) is organized as a fantastically clever way of getting to the top of the search engines, but the way it's evolved is that it's kind of a content site with different information and different resources.

And then the [Blueprint](#) and [Spider](#), [Diamonds](#), [Yahoo Exposed](#) ... these sales copy pages are like mini sites within the contents site, so Google will rank the contents site highly, because it likes seeing contents sites, and when they come over I drive them to the sales pages within the site.

So it's kind of like a mesh of a content site and a minisite, or several mini sites within the overall ScamFreeZone.com domain name.

Because I think you would really have your work cut out just selling from one-page minisites unless you can afford to bring in the pay per click traffic, pass it on to the merchant, and still make money.

Okay. So would you say it's particularly viable for an affiliate if you're looking to make money from affiliate programs?

Well, it's a possibility, the only problem I can see is that like I said at the beginning, you need to have your own products. Because say you set all this up and you go to the lengths of buying a domain name, creating a special tailored web page, you're bidding for traffic from [Overture](#) or another pay per click search engine, it's coming through, that's costing you money.

And then maybe the merchant drops the affiliate program because it wasn't profitable enough. You know you've put in all that effort and then the merchant and the product you were promoting just disappeared. so I've never really gone for it in a big way because I just don't like that problem with merchants disappearing.

I get emails all the time from commission junction saying "This BigWebsite.com domain name is dropping their program so please remove all the links to them in the next 72 hours." And you know if you've got several mini-sites promoting several of their products you've just wasted a lot of time.

Right. I've never really got involved with it -- I just wondered what all the fuss was about.

People like how it boils down the process to simple procedures. You know: this is where you go to get the domain name, this is how you write a one page site which is one page, it can't be that difficult, this is how you put it on a web site, this is where you go to get traffic, this is how you bid on the pay-per-click search engines ... traffic comes over ... this is the link to the affiliate program.

So it can work very very well, it can be very profitable but it's a lot of work and it is a bit risky.

Okay. So if we talk about it briefly -- how would that single page be structured? Would it be like a compressed version of a sales letter?

Yes -- the thing you want to do is make sure your content is original and unique because I've had people say to me "Can I take your sales copy -- it's really good -- can I put it on my page and then put a link at the bottom?"

And I'm like "Think about that for a second -- people read all my text on your page, they click on the affiliate link, and then they see my real page with the same text on it."

So that's not going to lead to good conversion rates, so you can compress the sales copy page, but I wouldn't use any of the same text, I would change it, make it short, punchy, and just focus on getting people excited about whatever product it is and then sending them through your affiliate link.

So what is the benefit of having a minisite in between let's say the pay-per-click search engine and the merchant site rather than just using pay-per-click straight to the merchant site?

Well, I guess the only point of doing that is to pre-sell the potential customer on how good the product is because it's like putting a link to my product sales copy in an ezine from just an advertisement. It's not going to convert incredibly well.

But if you put in a testimonial and link to my site you're going to make many more sales. So it's kind of building on the increasing the conversion ratio there.

If you just put an affiliate link in a pay per click search engine which they don't like anyway, if they do get it in there you're basically just sending the person over to the merchant and hoping the merchant does a good selling job.

Whereas if you put a page in between those saying how good the product is, you're going to have a much better chance of making the sale.

That's interesting. Okay -- so, I think that pretty much covers it exactly. So the final thing ... you would say if someone was to build a minisite the only viable way to get traffic really is pay-per-click search engines?

Yes -- it is really pay-per-click search engines. And unless you go to the effort of building several minisites around a theme such as [Michael Campbell](#) did with his mobile phone accessories.

And he built several different sites -- one would focus on headpieces, one would focus on batteries, one of the actual phones themselves ... and then he would link them to each other and the search engines really like that because it looks like one web site is being endorsed by the previous one ... getting links from the previous ones saying about mobile phones, and then it's going on to a merchant who's selling mobile phones.

So when the search engines see the whole site working together or the whole mini-networking together they give that a big search engine ranking boost. So Michael knows how to get to the top of the search engines doing that.

But if you're not going to go to the effort of building several sites and interlinking them, the page is not going to do very well in the search engines and you will need to look at alternative traffic such as pay-per-click search engines.

And perhaps ezine ads ... in related ezines if you can find them?

Yes -- that would be another way of doing it. You would want to establish how much you earn from the merchant per click, and from that information that you can get using the pay per click traffic you can then work out roughly how much traffic you can get from the ezine advert.

You can even ask the owner of the ezine "If I put in a sponsored ad how much traffic am I going to get?"

You can then work out how much you can afford to pay and whether it will be profitable or not. But you will need a baseline before you go into ezine advertising because if you spend \$200 on an ezine ad and don't convert any traffic into sales, you've lost \$200.

That's interesting -- and the more you talk about it the more it seems quite a lot of work for maybe not that much return.

Yes -- it is quite a bit of work, but once you've got a minisite set up ... as long as the merchant stays in business you just keep an eye on how much you're paying on the pay per click search engines -- make sure your rankings stay high enough and you get decent traffic, and it can be pretty much automated.

You would go on and build another one and another one and if you have a dozen or half a dozen, if one merchant disappears and goes under you just take it as a fact of life and move on. It is an inherent risk -- you do know it before you get started. It's something you would just budget for.

So maybe the final question about this is how do you choose a good subject to create a mini-site on? Is it again something you're interested in, something you've bought, or do you do your research on keywords...?

What I would normally recommend, to people if they were going to create a product, is to go to the pay-per-click search engines and see how much the keywords for those products are costing for the first couple of positions.

Say you wanted to create an ebook about hair drying -- you go to [Overture](#) and you find out that the first click for hair dryers is costing \$2 whereas for another idea you had it's only costing 20 cents.

You know that the money is in the product idea which is costing the most per click at Overture.

So that's how I would say to work out which is the profitable niche. By noticing how much the pay per clicks are charging per click.

But if you're going to build a minisite and you want to be paying the pay-per-click search engines per click you don't want to be paying a fortune. So you want to try and find a niche and a product that fills that niche that doesn't cost a fortune at the pay per click search engines.

So it's a bit trickier to try and work that out. You've got to do some keyword research, find out which keywords are being used in the search engines but are not costing a lot at the pay-per-click search engines.

And [Overture](#) have their keyword tool of course don't they. Which is fairly useful.

But if you go for the keywords which are not costing as much then they're probably not costing as much because less people are looking at them and less people are clicking on them.

Therefore you might only be paying 5 cents per click but if you only get 5 clicks a month you're not going to be making a lot of money even if you double your money. You make a dime. So there's swings and roundabouts to the situation.

It is true. I've played around with pay per click search engines a bit -- I just found unless you're paying a decent price, or get a huge amount of related keywords, you just hardly get any traffic. It just seemed to be a lot of money for very little return. I've stopped using them now.

I had one trial with them, and didn't like the way it was going. It seemed a lot of effort to keep up with what the different bids were costing and how much you were paying out, and then how much you were making from that.

I think you have to have an analytical mind to be able to create a spreadsheet and say "Okay, so this keyword -- I got this many clicks, it cost me this amount, I went through this affiliate link for this merchant and made X". And then you work back and see if it's profitable or not. But seems like a lot of work to me.

If people were to use them would you just stick with Overture, or would you say some of the other ones are worth people's time?

That's exactly what my whole point was. Overture was quite a lot of work in itself to keep tabs on everything and okay, the same keywords might be cheaper at search engines like [Kanoodle](#) or something like that, and [7Search](#) ... there are various other pay per clicks. But obviously they all get less traffic than [Overture](#) because that's the best known.

And even within Overture the first three search terms displayed, the ones that are most highly bid on, they're displayed across other networks such as ... MSN, AOL, things like that.

So even within Overture if you're not in the first three terms for any of the search engine key phrases, then you're going to get a lot less traffic, and if you then go and look at all the other pay-per-click search engines you're going to get even less traffic.

But you still need to keep an eye on what you're bidding and all those different things, so I think if you're really interested in putting in that much effort I think you should go and write your own product.

Go and create your own product -- look at what terms are charging the most. Say if someone's paying \$2 per click at Overture then you know that's a lucrative niche. So explore that niche and create a product around it.

Because it's an awful lot of work to keep up with all the pay-per-click search engines. One of the good resources would be PayPerClickSearchEngines.com. That's run by Allan Gardyne -- we'll give it a quick mention. Rather than listing several different engines.

He does run very good sites -- I'm almost a bit embarrassed to admit because I guess he competes directly with me in some affiliate programs, but I'm still happy to send people to his sites just because there's so much good information.

That's right. Allan's one of the few people that actually makes a living from affiliate links.

He's got quite a few assistants, so he must make a serious amount.

Right, rather than selling his own products. But very few people can get away with doing that.

Allan started his site at about the same time as mine, maybe a little later, so it's been around for an enormous amount of time, it's got links from prestigious sites because he's not actually selling anything so they're happy to link to him as you were saying which gets him a lot of traffic and then he makes the money through the affiliate link recommendations on his web site.

Just for people's interest, do you have an example of a minisite maybe you can point people towards?

Yeah. I would call it a niche site ... I use the term niche sites as well as minisites because a niche site obviously focuses on a certain topic or theme.

I've got a site 3rdPartyProcessors.com and what it does is compare and contrast some of these services online that will take credit card orders on your behalf.

The site is only about 5 pages ... it basically explains what a third party processor is, and why you would want to get one of those or use one of those rather than your own merchant account and then it compares and contrasts different third party processors -- and there's one or two other pages.

So it's really highly focused on just that one small niche, so that would be my example of a niche site or a mini site.

Okay -- how did you choose that subject?

Because when I first started I used a third party processor and I thought they were great -- it's a way to start with virtually zero costs, and see if your product sells or not.

If it sells really well then you can take the profits and go and take your own merchant account if needs be. But I started out using third party processors so I thought no one else has got a site comparing and contrasting them and I thought people would find it useful.

Okay. So how do you actually get traffic to that?

Basically it's word of mouth. I had Allan Gardyne mention it in his newsletter. And from that various other people have linked to it, and also I think it ranks quite highly in the search engines for keywords such as "third party processor" and "payment processors" but I haven't actually checked and I haven't done any promotion ... so it just sits there and the traffic just comes to it by default really if anyone's searching for third party processor information.

So do you have any particular competition for that or are you quite unique in that respect?

Well it had very little if any competition when I started it. I think because it's got quite a bit of publicity -- I was saying how it makes me about \$400 a month every month and I never touch it.

And Allan Gardyne used it as a good example of a niche site or a mini site. And since then I think other people have decided "Wow, that's quite lucrative, I'll copy what Neil's doing". It has some competition just because it's making some money I think.

Okay. And you refer people to third party processors like [ClickBank](http://ClickBank.com) and [Verotel](http://Verotel.com)?

That's right. ClickBank pay you about \$10 if you refer a new merchant so they pay me once in a while. Verotel pay me a percentage of any merchant sales that I refer to them.

So I referred a couple of merchants that have since made a lot of sales through Verotel. And Verotel send me a nice little check every two weeks and have been doing so for several years now.

And they pay you -- is it about 1% for the first year, or is that indefinitely?

I think it's been longer than a year. So it's probably indefinitely.

A lot of processors offer finders fees like that -- I think iBill does it as well and others too.

Let's say you wanted to advertise your mini site in an ezine -- I know as you've got a large subscriber list and obviously a lot of traffic to your site am I right in saying you don't get involved with ezine advertising that much these days -- but if you were to find one to advertise in, how would you do that ... how would you find relevant ezines or responsive ezines even?

It's not actually a topic that I've gone into in much depth because I haven't paid to advertise in many ezines. What I would do is look for an audience that is interested in whatever your niche product is and secondly that the list is responsive to the owner -- they pay attention to what the owner says and they read every issue.

And then you can extrapolate from that, that they're willing to pay attention to the adverts that run in the ezine and if it's a targeted audience issues get a lot of traffic and a lot of sales and sign ups or whatever you're looking for.

Personally because I've got my own ezine I focus on that and I usually put my own adverts in my own ezine and send traffic to wherever I like.

So you would recommend in the first instance maybe subscribing to an ezine, just getting a feel for it before you actually advertise in it?

Yes -- that's a great idea. Definitely do that first.

And are there good directories of ezines?

There are. I don't know of any off hand.

I think there's [Ezine-Universe](#).

Sites like that -- yes.

There's so much choice now isn't there?

Yeah -- there's one site where this web master lists different ezines with advertising available and auctions off the space. You can get a bargain or two there.

I think that's [EzineAdAuctions.com](#)...

Yeah -- could be that one.

And finally about ezines ... if you were to use them ... would you ever use them to directly advertise an affiliate program?

Would you see a benefit in buying an ezine ad and pointing it straight to an affiliate program ... as in for example if I bought space in an ezine and then send everyone to your spider page through my link. Would you say there's value in that?

Yes. You obviously need to pick the ezines carefully and monitor how much money you make so I think the best way to do that would be to sign up with a different associate ID for each ezine ad you plan to run.

Obviously run this by the associate program owner first -- I have no problem people doing that for me in my program. But some people might not want you to take up 5 or 6 affiliate ID's.

If you can then put a different affiliate ID in each advert that you run, and determine whether it's profitable or not.

And if you run 5, maybe 4 will be profitable and you can repeat those 4 and from the affiliate commissions that you make you can then invest in other ezine ads.

So it's basically a numbers game -- some ads will be profitable, some won't ... and you want to make sure that you stay on the profitable side of things.

Would you say a better approach is where -- rather than sending them straight to a sales page because you're going to get a very small percentage actually buying, perhaps offering them something free in the first instance, even if you're advertising in somebody else's ezine that free item -- perhaps an article or suchlike promotes the affiliate program?

You mean to try and put a page in between your page and the affiliate link. Well that makes sense because you might want to try and capture the names of people before you send them across -- that could help build your list.

And also if you put in some kind of testimonial it might increase your response.

You have to test it though because you're also putting a page in between and that's obviously going to lead to attrition so people aren't going to click through to the affiliate link whereas if you put a straight link people are going to go straight to the merchant site so you want to make sure you don't lose too many people by putting a page or more in between.

So it's the mini-site concept again isn't it.

It is yes. But there's pro's and con's to doing everything. So you need to make sure that you do it in such a way that you don't stop people from clicking -- someone might put up a page with an enormous amount of content and people just don't scroll to the bottom or something.

Like we were saying previously -- if you use a small attractive page, and just explain to people what the product is and why it's such great value that'll probably be the best way to do it. And if you think about capturing people's names and building your own list that would be a useful resource to build as well.

- Creating eBooks For Affiliate Profits -

So if we can talk now about eBooks for promoting affiliate programs...

First of all a lot of people probably know this already but it may be useful as a brief introduction...

There's a lot of different types of eBooks isn't there?... There's free to distribute, there's ones with reprint rights, ones you can brand with your own links, and other types too.

Do you have any particular preference or do you feel they all have their good points and bad points?

They all have good points and bad points. Obviously if you produce a free eBook and give it away you're going to reach a large distribution base -- if you give it to your affiliates and your affiliates can give it away it's like you're trying to go after the viral mechanism of distribution there.

And rebranding -- offering the chance to rebrand the eBook and put the affiliates link in the actual ebook when they give it away gives them an added incentive to distribute it.

So the flip-side of that, the down side is that people don't usually see an inherent lot of value in free products. So are they going to open it once they've downloaded it? Are they actually going to read it and click through the links?

Or are they just going to disregard it because it's free and or no value? So there's two sides to the free eBook concept.

What would you recommend to combat that -- to actually get people interested in a free eBook?

Well what I did is put together [101 mini articles](#) from my ezine ... and the people that like my ezine, my newsletter ... obviously were downloading it and were excited to open it up because they knew the content was going to be valuable.

So if you make the content of a free ebook valuable... A -- you're going to increase the pass-around rate, and B -- people are going to open it up and read it and enjoy it. So that reflects well on you and your brand then.

Because there are a lot of free to distribute eBooks at the minute and as you say some are of higher value than others.

It really helps if you have a strong name first before you launch a free ebook because if you're an unknown person and you put together a free eBook and start distributing it, unless it's really high quality people are not going to be too interested.

Like when I announced my free ebook I think we had 4,000 downloads in the first week and I think that's pretty much on the strength of the fact that people knew what was going to be in it. They knew it was going to be valuable.

So if somebody doesn't have their name known yet, and they're putting together a free ebook to promote some affiliate links, what would you say they can do to actually help their chances of having the book spread around and paid attention to?

I don't think as a beginner it would be an avenue I'd pursue -- I think you'd be better off writing a top quality eBook and trying to sell it because then if you sell it you build your own customer list and you can build the affiliate links into the backend.

If someone's bought your eBook they're more likely to read it and they're more likely to click on the links and go and purchase whatever product you're recommending through an affiliate link.

So I don't know if as an unknown I would build a free eBook and try and give that away to generate affiliate sales.

Yeah -- just looking at yours as an example, and also seeing free ebooks I come across and which ones I pay attention to, I find a catchy title helps.

Like for example Terry Dean's "Traffic Virus" -- that captures people's attention. It's an interesting title. And it's good to have a little book cover that people can put up on their site as well -- just a small graphic.

And as you say good content ... and if they can brand it even better -- that helps it spread. But of course the downside is some people don't even read those books, so that's always a danger.

But on the other hand you're giving it away for free -- it's not costing you anything, you're not physically producing and shipping anything so if people don't open it that's up to them ... it hasn't cost you anything giving it away.

Yes -- and I think one of the best things you can actually do is just produce quality, because people like to share good products.

That's right. If you produce a free eBook but with high quality you have probably put in a lot of effort and a lot of time -- you would want to make sure you got back a return on that effort and on that time.

One of the best ways of doing that would be to have a second product which you control and sell that through the free eBook. Like in my free eBook it has newsletter articles and I'm sure several of them mention my products.

So if you go to the time and effort of producing a free eBook you might as well go to the time and effort of creating your own eBook that you sell as a back end product in addition to affiliate links because obviously if you're creating affiliate links you're trying to make sales through another merchant. You're only going to get a percentage of the sales -- you might as well go to the time and effort of creating your own product.

Okay, interesting. So obviously to really have success with a free to distribute ebook -- making affiliate sales through it, you have to get it really as wide as you can as quickly as you can because otherwise it can spread slowly, or lose all momentum anyway.

As in your case you have a large email list -- that helps. And would you recommend that people -- if they do create something like this and if they don't have their own big list, perhaps advertise it heavily through ezine adverts or other such methods?

Yes -- you could do that. I would suggest going straight to the source of the ezine, straight to the author or the editor and say that you've got this free promotional eBook and would they give it a mention.

And if it's good quality they're more than happy just to provide a link to it in return to mentioning it to their subscribers. So you wouldn't then have to take out an advert plus you'd get a better response because it would be an endorsement from the editor of the ezine.

And of course if they can customize it, even better.

Exactly. Say "If you sign up for [my free affiliate program](#) you can put your own affiliate links in" ... or even better get their details off the web site, sign them up, give them an ID, rebrand the book for them, and then say "Look I've rebranded this eBook, and it's available at this web page, you can download it and it's already got your affiliate link in it, and if you make any sales I'll send you a check".

So then they can give away a free content eBook plus it's already branded with their affiliate link ... because the easier you make it for these people the better.

Of course. Out of interest what software do you use for creating brandable eBooks?

I use [Activ E-Book Compiler by Sunil Tanna](#). It was a very professional one, and Sunil's quick to respond.

Apart from your PDF's of course, you use that for all your EXE style eBooks?

I mainly prefer PDF myself, basically because I get so many emails from Mac users otherwise saying "Why can't I open your EXE files -- is there a PDF version?" So personally I prefer to use PDF but with rebrandable products you can't easily rebrand PDF files so I just went with the EXE executable ebooks.

And any particular good subjects you would mention for a free to distribute eBook?

Basically -- what people are really interested in. Traffic is always a big people puller -- everyone wants to know how to get more traffic to their web sites.

Monetary considerations as well -- how to turn more profit from your web site and things like that. Just think about what people are interested in.

And it doesn't have to be about internet marketing either -- it could be things like ... I read that people are searching for dating agencies a lot online, and it's something I've never looked into but it would probably make a great topic for a free eBook.

And then put in links to dating agencies web sites and things like that. But just something that people are searching for.

So always make the links relevant within the eBook?

That's right.

Of course you need to know the market to actually make the eBook relevant and speak to that market directly.

So I guess if it's something you're interested in you're going to be happy to spend time researching it. You might even know the market already.

Something which I've found quite amazing which I've heard the other day ... you know Willie Crawford? He's making a small fortune [selling a cookery book online](#). He sold it originally as an eBook and a lot of people asked for it as a paper book and that's really been successful.

That's important -- to think that we get so bogged down with internet marketing and everyone thinks about the next internet marketing product ... when you look at the list of things that people are searching for, internet marketing products are way down at the bottom of the list.

Like I say people are searching for dating agencies or cookbooks or fitness programs or all these other things -- probably searching for them 5 times more often than for information about internet marketing.

Just have to use these same techniques to a different market.

I think we should also mention, if you give away an eBook for free, you have to realize that people who are downloading free eBooks are by and large freebie hunters ... and they're very unlikely to click on affiliate links and buy the products -- they're more likely to just take the free information and say thank you very much.

So people -- if they're going to package a free eBook and give it away need to have a realistic expectation of how much money they're going to make from it because you can make affiliate sales, but you're not going to be making thousands of them. Not unless you have a massive distribution of your eBook.

But sometimes -- those freebie hunters ... would you agree that as they get your eBook, and as you build a relationship with them through your newsletter ... as they become more serious about their business then they can actually start spending money with you so it could be the start of a more prosperous relationship.

Exactly. If you're looking to build relationships that's the best way to go, because people will get to learn what you do and that you produce quality information and will trust you.

But I was kind of referring to people expecting to make instant affiliate sales off the backend of this free eBook and that's a bit less likely to happen.

A very hot topic at the minute as I'm sure you know -- is free to sell books online. As in books which have master reprint rights -- as soon as you buy a copy you have rights to it as well.

And one of yours -- it's not exactly set up like that but people can buy rights quite easily -- it's [Yahoo Exposed](#). And in regards to making affiliate commissions and I know your Yahoo Exposed you can get it personalized to actually make some backend sales within your own program.

What would you say are the advantages and disadvantages of using that approach?

Well the advantage is that it's a great way to get straight into a market. You don't have to go and create your own software or create your own eBooks ... you can basically pay to have the privilege of selling someone else's.

And you can put up a web page ... some of these products even come with pre-written web-pages and just draw traffic to it and try and make sales of that eBook.

And then you don't have to split the revenue with anyone, so it's not an affiliate basis ... you don't split the money between the affiliate and the merchant. You are basically the merchant and you get to keep the revenues.

The big downside of it is that very quickly you can get over-exposure of any one eBook in the market. So unless it's well protected people will start giving it away with newsletter signups and they'll start giving it away in bundles ... you know you'll be able to buy 50 eBooks for a dollar or something, and then if they're giving away the eBook in that way you're very unlikely to be able to sell it for \$19.95 or \$49.95 or whatever the merchant recommends.

So you have to look at trying to get reprint rights to products that are in demand yet not over exposed. Like for Yahoo Exposed I sell the reprint rights for about \$50 and the actual book itself costs \$19, so if you want to buy the whole bundle it's \$69.

That's aimed at mass market that people would come along, buy the book and then just promote it to their lists and try and make some sales.

On the other hand my [Blueprint](#) product I deliberately went for the high end market and only made 20 rights available worldwide, ever. And no master reprint rights so people buy the right to sell the book ... they can't buy the rights to sell rights to the book.

And I had a sliding scale starting at \$400 for reprint rights and going up to \$3000 and at the moment the cost is about \$2,400 I think if you want to buy the reprint rights so that's a good example of paying top dollar, for a product that has been well protected.

Okay. Just one example of what you said -- Yanik Silver's two products ... Autoresponder Magic and Million Dollar Emails, there's no real limits on the rights, so as you say an awful lot of people are freely giving them away.

And people say that's some of the most overlooked information on the internet because the information is good ... they're good examples of winning emails and autoresponder sequences but because they're so freely given away they're just ignored.

Exactly. it's just so overexposed. I think that was a very shrewd idea by Yanik, I think he got the idea ... I haven't heard it from his mouth but I think he got the idea from Jonathon Mizel, that this was a great way to distribute eBooks and get his name known.

I don't know how well people have done selling the million dollar emails or autoresponder magic because as you say it's freely available with newsletter sign ups, or on download sites and things like this ... so you would struggle if you tried to sell that as a product now.

And Something very interesting Yanik said -- I spoke to him once about this -- was for a newer product he's made rights available to it but at a higher cost ... which is [33 Days To Online Profits](#).

Was that the one with Jim Edwards? I know he did one with Jim Edwards.

I think it was -- that's right. I think it sells initially for about \$29, with rights for \$99, and then personalized rights for about \$300.

And he said the affiliate signups for that were incredibly high because the affiliate programs are tied in so tightly with the process. With the 33 day process -- it's tied in incredibly tight.

And also there's the email follow-up sequence ... you can sign up to an email training course ... so he said that's worked incredibly well for affiliate signups. And of course as it is a higher price it's not over exposed.

I had someone email me about that. I think they paid the \$300 for the personalized reprint rights and they came to be and said "Why aren't I able to sell any?".

And I said "Basically because the book is very well known now". And that seems to be the problem inherent with selling reprint rights, without putting a number on how many you're going to sell.

That it still manages to get quite easily over exposed in the market. I think Corey Rudl's just released reprint rights to some of Bob Serling's products...

He's actually released reprint rights has he? Because I know he bought out Bob's business when he sold off all his products.

Yup. I think recently he's bought out reprint rights and was recommending that people sell them at \$179 or \$199 or something, and I saw these pages going up over the web advertising the same products and then gradually people were undercutting each other...

One was selling them for \$169, then \$149, then \$129 and you could just see the value of the product eroding in front of your eyes.

So that just illustrates the basic problem with unlimited reprint rights. And master reprint rights just make the problem worse because you then license people to be able to sell reprint rights. So that just adds another tier of complexity and even more people trying to sell the same product.

Obviously I don't know the in depth legalities of it, especially as it seems to be different in different countries, but in America I know you can't do price-fixing, but I read if there's a license before they buy it that says you can't sell it for less than whatever, they have to agree with that.

So it seems a bit of a gray area there -- since I know some people do sell reprint rights to eBooks but they say you have to sell it at this price. You can sell it for more, but you can never sell it for less.

Yeah -- I can't say without having consulted a lawyer in each of the different countries they try and sell into. So like you said it's a gray area there.

You would have the price fixing regulations in each country to deal with if you absolutely said you're not allowed to sell it below X -- it makes sense, but then price fixing laws are there to protect the consumer and you would have to make sure you complied with them in probably each country you tried to sell it to.

And that's the whole thing with digital reprint rights ... the well known course [Advertising Magic](#), there's reprint rights to that and that's a fantastic course.

And I think somebody was selling it for \$200 and even that was considered too low, even though that's not cheap, and that's very good value for money. As you say there's always these conflicts of interest.

I guess one of the final things about this subject -- you've covered a lot of these issues of having somebody else's book personalized with your affiliate links, against having your own book personalized with your affiliate links -- either free to sell or free to distribute.

Of course I would say your own product is generally better -- would you agree with that, and why?

Your own product is better because it gives you so much more control over what you do with it. You can't go up to Yanik Silver and say "That new product you've bought out, can I sell it on a joint venture basis to someone else?" -- because it just wouldn't fly.

But if you have your own product and someone says "I really like that product" you could say "Let's joint venture" or sell it to your list as an example of having more control over the product since you own it.

So I would say one of the main benefits of having your own product is that control that you exert over the product.

Okay. To round up this subject -- what particular tips would you offer for making the most amount of money with eBooks? Specifically with affiliate programs embedded within eBooks?

From the merchants point of view or the affiliates point of view?

Let's say from the affiliate point of view -- if they're considering creating their own product or somebody else's or whatever -- when it comes to eBooks with affiliate links in it, what would you say is the most important things for making the most money?

Well I would get back to basics and say that you need to have your own products. I repeat that like a mantra to people that ask me in emails every day what they should be doing, and I say you need to have your own products because then you can sell it and start building your own customer list rather than giving away someone else's eBook trying to make affiliate sales for merchant X and generating

customers for them.

Because the customer list is a very valuable list that you can come back to with your next product or even sell someone else's product to on an affiliate basis.

So firstly I would say you create your own product and either give that away or sell it. I would say sell it and then put in affiliate links that are relevant into the eBook such that your new customer then goes on to buy other products from other merchants and you derive your affiliate income that way.

One thing I've just thought of which is another very relevant topic that a lot of people seem to be doing is email training courses. Like seven day email training courses on a certain subject.

You sign up and you get a new lesson every day. What are your thoughts on those -- in particular towards making affiliate sales?

Well I think that's based on the psychological finding that you need to get your marketing message in front of your prospect about seven times before they buy from you so I think some wily internet merchant said "I know -- I'll create an autoresponder course and I'll send it out seven times at different intervals and then people will buy from me on average on the seventh message".

I tried it several years ago -- and I didn't see any great conversion ratio from it. So I dropped it and it's not available as a tool now to my affiliates. I assume other marketers are having good success with it because they've kept theirs going. Either that or they don't want to lose face by taking them down. But it didn't seem like a very successful avenue to me.

So you didn't find it helped affiliate sales in particular?

No. That's right, it didn't, no.

That's interesting. A reason that maybe comes to mind -- do you think it could have something to do with sheer over-exposure of so much choice, of all these email courses that people often don't read them?

It could be. But this is going back probably a year or so, so I don't know if then there was as much competition around as there is now. That might not have been such a big factor.

They were quality lessons but I've now bundled them all together into a PDF file called Impact Lessons and I give it away as a bonus with BluePrint.

And they were good lessons ... people sent me good feedback about them ... I don't know if they just enjoyed the lessons and then thought "That's nice" and didn't go any further, whether I didn't ask for the sale aggressively enough, or what.

But affiliates could put their ID codes in them and then say to people "Why don't you sign up for these impact lessons?" -- we just didn't see a brilliant return from it.

- Turning A Content Site Into Dollars -

Okay ... if we move onto content sites now ... well, your site in itself is a good example of a content site isn't it?

Yes -- it's a reasonable example.

One thing I've found about yours -- it's surprisingly extensive. You look at it -- and it's quite deceptive quite how much information there is there with your articles, and ezine back issues and so on.

So obviously you've built it yourself so that's a good example of a content site built by a single person ... that's really what I'm thinking of in this case.

So if someone was considering creating a content site specifically for making money with affiliate programs ... would you say that's a good idea?

Yeah -- it would be as long as they came at it from a novel angle because a lot of people think "Oh I'll make money from putting affiliate links up and what I'll do is just create a directory of all the different affiliate programs" and the only problem is that way back in 1998 Allan Gardyne had the same idea before anyone else.

I think it was him and revenues.com -- I don't know if they had the revenues.com site or if they had a sister site that was doing the same thing but they built directories of affiliate links at roughly the same time back in 1998 and I think Allan's is now the most famous at AssociatePrograms.com.

So you wouldn't just want to build a directory of affiliate links because the competition is just too intense ... so you would have to think of a novel way of making your content site stand out and still being able to weave in the affiliate links to make some sales of people going through the affiliate links from your content site.

And content sites of course are an awful lot of work. They've always got to be updated ... and I can only imagine how many man hours have gone into building your site.

You can get a lot of help from scripts that do quite a bit of automation for you. You know when you come to content sites that have a directory ... kind of like a Yahoo style directory that's usually run all by scripts, not individually made pages.

And people will just submit a listing to the database and you would just go round the administrators side and click whether to accept or deny the link. And then you would click "Build the site" and all those pages would be rebuilt automatically.

So when there's a directory of a thousand pages they're not hand made ... they're all dynamically generated by these scripts so it looks like a lot more effort than it is usually. But it's still not easy, you're right.

And would you say the best way for getting traffic is generally search engines, if you build it up enough?

That's right -- because the search engines have all these different criteria that they rank sites by, and one of them would be how extensive is the site ... that's where mini sites, or niche sites would lose out if they're just 5 pages.

Whereas anything that's added to a content site is instantly seen as more valuable so content sites in themselves get higher rankings in search engines just because they're seen as really useful resources.

But I think it's really got to be a labor of love if you want to succeed this way -- because you'll need a lot of work and a lot of time to actually get it noticed by the search engines and getting decent traffic.

That's right, but if you just add a couple of pages per day quite soon it will evolve into something that's quite a major player content site.

One of the best advantages, like we were saying before, is I have my sales pages basically as mini-sites within the [Scam Free Zone](#) domain name so my sales pages get the boost in the search engines by the fact that it's associated with a content site ... whereas if they're on their own as mini sites they would probably not get much traffic.

So I know if I write a page about something like Morpheus the file sharing system, and I put it on the Scam Free Zone it's instantly going to have a good chance of ranking highly because it's associated with a content site the search engines already like and it's likely to score quite highly.

So if you do build a content site you can then build like minisite pages or just one page and expect to have it ranked quite highly ... so it's worth putting the effort in.

That's interesting. One site I've done a bit of research on and I've heard a lot about ... it's quite amazing, I don't know if you've visited this site ... it's [FlamingoWorld.com](#).

It's this woman who runs it full time and she makes around ... I read this about a year or two ago ... it's now probably quite a bit more ... she makes just running it herself about a million dollars a year in affiliate commissions.

It's purely a special offers site to merchants. She basically trawls all the merchants and adds links -- like "Amazon -- 20% off video cameras" or whatever, and it's just pages and pages of that ... and it's a lot of work of course to keep on top of the special offers and she says she spends around 5 hours a day answering emails and all sorts, but that makes her a very good living.

I wonder if that was actual sales or if that was affiliate income profit. Because you know as well as I do if you send people to Amazon you can't expect to get a great return from selling books at Amazon so if you count the sales you might be doing very well, but if you count the actual income it might be a bit less. Because a million dollars from affiliate sales would be very impressive.

I'll have to read over it again -- but I think a lot of her discounted items are high value items so she does get decent commissions rather than just on books and tapes.

Because that's something to be aware of in general -- just the fact that people will say "Oh my site makes a million dollars". Okay that's great if your profit is 100%, and your profit is a million dollars ... fantastic.

But if your profit's only 5% then you're looking at a very small figure compared to the actual sale so people quoting their sales turnover is different to the actual money they take home in their pockets.

Just something to be aware of because lots of people will quote their turnover figures, saying "My web site makes..." ... they don't say in gross turnover or in net profits they just say "My web site makes x".

That was the whole problem with Enron. They had 90 billion in turnover but zero in profits.

There you go see. Exactly. You want to know what the profits are and not a lot of people will tell you.

Now especially not home businesses, it's kind of rude to ask as well.

That's right. They're privately owned corporations and companies so they don't really need to release those figures to any shareholders or anything.

Unless of course they're presenting themselves as an expert -- maybe it's good to have a bit to back you up.

That's right. Well some people if they're doing really well will show you the facts and the figures and they'll take screen shots and just show you because they're doing that well they like to prove it. So the ones you have to be aware of are the ones that show these big figures and don't back it up at all.

Or they've altered it in Photoshop.

Oh, who would be that devious Louis?

You show your income on one of your pages -- it's really good because it's evidence of what you do and it makes your case well and that's for the Blueprint. In your headline.

Yeah it is actually right up there in the headline. I say "Look, this is how well it was working for me and this is how you can do the same".

The whole point of [Blueprint](#) is it's a Blueprint for people to copy and so I might as well show them that it's succeeding.

- The List -- The List -- The List -

Moving on to actually one of the most important subjects of all online -- mailing lists.

**In the first instance what would you say are the different type of mailing lists you can run?
Because you can have a newsletter ... you can have as we've said training courses...**

I would say basically there was three big mailing lists that I have. I've got my newsletter list, my customer list, and my list of associates who try and resell my products.

In addition I have smaller lists of people who have submitted to the [Scam Free Zone](#) -- I've submitted their web site to be listed so they're like lists of web masters and the same at [IncomeMax.com](#) -- there's another list of web masters there.

But mainly the three lists I work with are my customer list, my newsletter list and my affiliate list.

Okay. And how do you communicate with those subscribers?

The newsletter list obviously get a newsletter sent every Friday. That goes out to 35,000 people every Friday. They get that and once in a while there might be a solo promotion but I've kind of backed away from them.

The associates I try and email twice a month with more sales copy and more hints and tips of how to get better sales ... and the customers I also email twice a month with snippets which are customer-only information such as little points that I've found that help boost your internet marketing profits and I think they'd really like to know about. I send those out to the customers.

So it's two a month to the customers and the associates and every week to the newsletter subscribers.

And everyone who works online seriously at all says you have to have a mailing list. What would you say are the advantages and disadvantages of having one?

Well the obvious advantage is that you can contact a large number people instantly so if you hear about a fantastic product you can turn round, and within 5 minutes send an email out to the newsletter subscribers or the customers or the affiliates and let them know about it.

Okay it might just be something really useful for them to know or it might be promoting a product that I think is really valuable and I would get commission on if any of the affiliates, or newsletter subscribers or customers go and buy the product.

But I kind of don't do that very often unless it's an absolutely fantastic product since you don't want to over-expose your list to promotional offers -- they'll wonder why you're doing it.

They will start to be suspicious of your motives, and you don't want them to think you're motivated by profit, you should really be trying to build a relationship that's going to last 20 years with these people.

Yeah -- it's a bit crude simply using it to advertise.

That's right -- but lots of people do. They go "I've got a list of 2,000 people now I'm going to mail them an offer every week" and then they wonder why their lists disappear and people keep unsubscribing.

So you should really focus on building a relationship and only recommending something that's really worthwhile once every couple of months maybe. And in the mean time keep in touch offering them quality information.

That's what really makes me wonder about these solo ad lists -- they say "We send out a solo ad to 20,000 every day ... \$50 to advertise" ... I can't believe anyone actually reads it.

Yeah, I don't know how they work either. I put an advert in one of those lists a long time ago and it turned a profit ... it wasn't a fantastic profit but to actually get visitors to come through and buy the product and make a profit compared to the cost of the advert -- I was quite surprised.

Because like you say if someone sent me an advert every day, day in, day out I think the first thing I would do is click on unsubscribe.

Of course. Sometimes I get them every day but I don't read it, I read it maybe once every two weeks just out of sheer curiosity. Maybe it's just people who just forget to unsubscribe.

Maybe. Or maybe it's the proportion of the list that's new, and hasn't become jaded by seeing a sponsors email every day.

That's true. One interesting thing I read ... a good few years ago actually -- as you say building relationship and in a way honoring people's inboxes.

Because the difference of course between email mailing lists and a postal mailing list is through the post you're paying, whereas with email generally the person receiving it pays through dialup or whatever. So it's a whole different thing, you've got to respect your subscribers.

Absolutely. You were going to ask about the downside of having a list -- I guess we've kind of touched on that...

One of the downsides would be if you don't respect that list and don't look after it it's not going to be a list of yours for very long.

Some people do get into internet marketing and build up a list and then think "I can milk that list for tens of thousands of dollars like other internet marketers told me to do".

And then wonder why their list has disappeared and they have to start at square one again. So it's a very powerful resource to have but if you shoot yourself in the foot with a very powerful gun, you're going to know about it.

I think it was an article you ran last Friday in your newsletter -- you covered that subject and it got me thinking about building the relationship and of course nobody can really predict how the internet's going to develop but I was thinking it's good to approach people in a way that you can still be approaching them in five years time.

As in: with good information, politely, but I feel a couple of sponsors in there just to help pay your costs.

That's right. There's next to no advertising in my newsletters -- there's just three 2 line adverts and if you subscribe to any ezines online you'll know that's the bare minimum and then of course the snippets I send to customers don't have advertising in them either, and the emails I send to my associates don't have advertising.

So unless I'm making a promotional offer which is quite rare they usually only get the content, the meat in my emails but I am quite concerned that the internet in general and email in general ... the response rates might drop over the coming years as there's more and more and more spam in general and then there seems to be more and more and more spam from internet marketers.

From the people who don't respect their lists and just blast out these messages saying "I'm going to send you a great message in three days" then blast another one saying "I'm going to send you a great message in two days" and then "We're in pre-pre-launch" then "We're in pre-launch" then "We're in early phase launch and you can still jump in on the ground floor".

All this nonsense I can see the response rates of all marketers suffering because of the spam that's happening online now by generic spam and by internet marketers spam.

So that's one of the reasons why I thought it'll be great to have a private site where people can come and shelter from the storm if you like and learn internet marketing in a nurturing environment where they can share ideas and set up joint ventures and read articles without having to wade through their inbox and all the spam in their inbox to try and find useful information.

I've just been thinking about that actually and it seems having your own forum is a very good way to go because if you build it up ... any news you want to make available you just put it up on your forum. You don't need to keep sending email blasts or whatever.

Exactly. Like I was saying I think email is suffering and probably will continue to suffer so a forum is basically a mini version of a private site where people can come and exchange views.

So if you think of the idea of a water cooler where people meet for five minutes and exchange their news and their gossip and stuff ... if you can do that in an internet marketing sense and exchange the latest ideas at a forum or a private site I think that has certain benefits and might certainly be the way of the future.

Of course an awful lot of people visit [Tony Blake's board](#) and it is very heavily trafficked, I think I checked the Alexa ranking the other day and it's like 1,200 or something -- it's quite incredible.

He's not ahead of me surely? I'm going to have to check on this. I'm going to have to go right now and have a look, because mine was updated today to 2,100.

Does repeat traffic have a lot to do with it -- because you must get a lot of repeat traffic?

Absolutely. These people that have their Alexa plugin turned on ... Anthony Blake's forum is 3,065.

I must have been thinking of someone else then.

There you go, put my mind at rest.

It's not bad though for just a forum.

No, it's fantastic. It used to be the top 10,000 was desirable but since they changed the way they index things it looks like it's more the top 5,000 now, because they used to count every sub-domain as a different web site so there were a lot "more" web sites, and then they truncated it all so the domain name was just the web site whether you had sub-domains or not, so mail.yahoo.com and web.yahoo.com and directory.yahoo.com all became just yahoo.com.

Basically the number of web sites that Alex saw halved overnight so your ranking went from 20,000 to 10,000 without you doing anything ... just basically because they chucked out all the sub-domains or basically incorporated them all into the domain name.

So instead of being in the top 10,000 being desirable I think it's the top 5,000 or if you want to look at it the top 100,000 became the top 50,000.

Interesting -- however you think about it Tony Blake's just got an incredible resource there.

The problem with Tony's site is that it turns over so quickly. If you put up a post and if it doesn't spark interest straight away it gets buried because he has so many posts in one day.

Okay it's a fantastic forum and I visit it quite often but I do prefer mine which is lively but not as hectic or frantic as Tony's.

Actually, this is very important, and I think it's going to be of interest to an awful lot of people -- I know this is a huge subject now so obviously we can't cover it in all the detail it deserves...

Planning or building up your email list if you don't currently have one, maybe the first part of that question is -- you need an email list if you're serious about your online business ... so how would you suggest someone actually approaches it? How would you suggest someone actually gives it a unique angle and something that people would want to subscribe to?

It's quite straight forward actually. You've got several steps that you would go through...

If you have an idea for a product such as an ebook, or a service such as graphic design or something like that, go ahead and create the product and then on the web page where you sell the product ask people to sign up for your newsletter which is directly related to that product.

So if you're going to sell graphic design as a service have a graphic design tips and secrets newsletter because obviously you'll get great signups from that and it's a subject you'll be happy to write a newsletter around.

And if you don't capture people's sale on the first attempt, you can at the very least try to capture their email address and then follow up with quality information from there and try to convert them to a customer at a future date.

If you don't have a product or service idea then I suggest just going to the search engines -- say the pay-per-click search engines like [Overture](#), and research a niche that is making a lot of money and a niche where the first couple of key words are expensive, and that would indicate a profitable niche in which you can just go after the money and create a product around that niche...

Try to make sales and again associate a newsletter on the same theme or the same topic and then once you have your product you can start your second list being your associate list.

You can ask people if they would like to resell your product for you and once you're selling your product you're obviously building your customer list at the same time so all three lists spring from the same theme of starting a web site and selling a product.

So for content in a list, what would you recommend ... News? Opinion? And how do you differentiate yourself from -- in the example you gave graphic designing, how would you differentiate yourself from other graphic design newsletters?

Well first of all you would want to make it all original content. My newsletter has been all original for years now.

When I first started I would put in articles from other publishers that they would send you once in a while by email and I'd copy and paste it in there thinking "You know -- how lazy is that? Your readers, your subscribers might have seen that article already -- they're not going to be particularly impressed if you send it out again".

So I figured I would create all original content -- even if it's just short. Even if you start off once a month with a short newsletter it's much better to be once a month with original content than to be once a week with recycled content.

And I would make it original short articles around your niche theme or topic, and if you can weave in themes like headlines on graphic design -- I don't know if there is such a thing, or certainly if you're a news content site and you can weave in news headlines or latest resources from other web sites or something, that might be useful, but just so long as it's fresh content and preferably original content.

Like of course yours, as you've been running it for so long -- there's a good example for people to pay attention to.

Obviously just on one subject matter but the same sort of template can be applied to other subjects.

That's right. I had someone almost copy identically the pattern of my newsletter. I don't mind if they model it ... I think Corey Rudl said "You can model my success but don't go stealing from me by copying it -- that's just the lazy way and it won't work".

I don't mind people modeling how my newsletter looks because to be honest I modeled mine to a large extent on a synergy between Jim Daniel's and Allan Gardyne's.

And basically it evolved from there. This is going back a few years when I was trying to research other ezines and which ones were successful and mine evolved over time to be shorter and shorter, punchier articles, as opposed to writing thousands of words which no one's going to read.

A few people write to me every week and say "That was really good that one -- it really struck home and I really like your ezine because it's one I can actually sit down and read because it's short enough".

Three short mini articles in each issue. As opposed to someone else's that will come in, you'll go "That's really valuable content I'll file that to read it later" and you know you never get time to read it.

So I don't have any problem with people modeling the style of my ezine but I don't like people blatantly copying it.

That's the thing with the whole online world. Everyone's got a short attention span basically because there's so much going on.

Right. And it's only getting shorter. If you delete 50 spams and you're going "Is that one good or not?" the 51st ... and your finger's hovering over the delete key or your mouse button's hovering over the delete key and it's got half a second to catch your attention.

Obviously one of the good points about a newsletter is if you send it every week and it's valuable content then just the subject, or just the fact it's from Neil Shearing or from Louis or from whoever ... if it's recognized as quality content that will stop people deleting it straight away. And then if it's good content they'll go on and read it.

I've noticed with your newsletter you always have an eye-catching headline. And often quite controversial in a way. Deliberately a curiosity piece, or something that grabs the attention.

Yeah -- I use two angles. The first is that it always looks as if it's come from me. I think it always says "Neil Shearing" in the from field.

And then in the subject line it always says ... first of all the number 151 or whatever, and then "Internet Success Newsletter" ... so that's always standard so people will know what it is.

And then I will have some kind of catch, or some kind of hook to actually try to get people to open it and read it. But there's the standardization so people know it's from me and they know it's the newsletter. And then there's the hook to try to get people to open that specific issue.

Plus, you take a very good disciplined approach. You actually publish it every Friday.

That's right.

Some people, including myself sometimes are a little more haphazard.

It is difficult. There can be times when I'm sitting down and thinking "What the Dickens can I write about this time?"

It's quite valuable to me to be working full time online because I get so many ideas just coming in daily and my problem is just writing them down. Because I go "That's a great idea for the newsletter -- if I don't write it down I'll forget it".

Just writing it down on a little cue card or something and then coming back to it on a Friday evening. Writing the newsletter, and sending it out.

You actually write it on the day do you?

Oh yes. I usually write it a couple of hours before I send it.

Again - this is a huge subject but if we can cover it fairly concisely -- how to build up a mailing list? I guess for people with a web site, or even if they don't have one yet.

Well if you don't have a web site I think you're going to struggle to build a mailing list because your web site is your central focus usually online ... I don't know many people that are making living's just through email or just through placing adverts in other people's publications or through placing banner-ads on other people's web sites. Usually everyone has their central focus web site so I would say that's the first thing to do is to build up a web site presence.

Even if it's just a single page for your ezine?

Yes -- even if it's just a single page for a product, or a single page to sell the idea of your ezine or just to capture signups.

And because then you can in every email you send say "Visit my web site at www.whatever.com" and it's your kind of centralized focus. Your centralized place online that people can go and check what you're up to.

So I wouldn't try to win the marketing game or win the internet game and make profit online without a web site. Basically if you take free web space which is still available and that's how I started it doesn't have to cost anything anyway.

I wouldn't recommend it now days because it's so cheap to get a domain name -- it used to be quite expensive to get a domain name. It used to be you used to go to Network Solutions and I think their minimum was two years ... so \$60 or \$70 I think it was per domain name and then you had to get web hosting on top and the price of web hosting has decreased substantially over the years with more and more competition.

So it used to be a lot more expensive to sign up -- I was looking and comparing ones online recently -- domain name registrars and I use [Bulk Register](#) which is \$12 a throw.

They have a sign up fee -- if you don't want to pay the sign up fee ... at the moment it's \$79 ... you can go to something like [000Domains.com](#) where it's \$13.50 per domain name, per year.

So that's a substantial decrease in the price of a domain name. So I wouldn't recommend taking free web space now because it's now so cheap to get a domain name and get a bit of professional web space and then you have a much more professional identity -- you have a much more stable web site and you don't have people putting up their own popups and their own banners all over your site.

And also things like Geocities are notoriously unreliable.

Exactly. Because what obligation do they have to provide you with web space if you're not paying for it? Very little. They know they're not going to make a fortune from you by putting a few popups up.

And I know people just pick up throwaway accounts.

Exactly, so they're not particularly interested in any one individual. They're interested in signing up millions of people, so they can show millions of popups and that's not the way you want to run your business. It's the way I started, but I wouldn't recommend it now.

So let's say they've got a web site -- even if it's just purely for ezine sign ups, what would you recommend for people to build their list?

The way I found that works best for me is to put a popup on every entry page and I use a certain snippet of JavaScript code which you just copy and paste into the header tags of your web site.

I think you can get it from ScriptSearch.com or JavaScripts.com and what it does ... every time there's a popup it puts a cookie on the person's computer and it checks that cookie if they go to a different page on my web site ... so if the cookie exists it won't show another popup the same day.

So I think that's quite important -- you don't want to show people a popup on every page every time they load one of your pages because they'll go mad and call you up and start swearing at you.

So you want to do it tactfully because popups do work but they only work if they're done tactfully. So the way I did it was to do a popup that only appears once per day per domain name -- say for the Scam Free Zone. And then I have a little ezine signup subscription on that popup and it gets about 100 signups a day.

So do you know the ratio for views to signup?

I could work it out for you Louis, but I don't know it off the top of my head.

Just curious how jaded people are becoming to popups...

I don't think people actually mind popups. I don't mind popups if they appear, and they appear quickly and they're relevant -- it's like when you have these popups for the X10 camera or for selling you cars or something and you're on a web site about news, it's like -- okay, if you popped up a popup about "Subscribe to this news web site at a discount of 50%" I don't think people would argue.

It's when they're irrelevant and get in the way. And especially the new breed of popups that seem to zoom around your screen and you can't get rid of them. Eventually it stops in the middle of your screen and flashes at you -- "Go away for goodness sake!"

So providing you're not advertising-revenue driven with the popups and you make sure it's targeted and it loads quickly, then I haven't had any problems with people saying they didn't like the popups on my site.

And you use incentives to provide a stimulus for people to sign up?

That's right - yes. I have a catchy little headline that says "Congratulations -- you've won a free subscription to my ezine" and I've put a dollar amount on it -- I say it's worth \$197 a year.

I would personally charge a lot more for the content and the quality it is so I just picked that as a figure and I also give them a free report to put in their name and their email address and they click to sign up and by email it says "Thanks for subscribing to the Internet Success Newsletter ... here is where you go to get your free report".

So they don't get an instant issue of a newsletter or anything -- so you want to say "I really appreciate you signing up -- here is something instantly that you can appreciate". I used a free report to do that.

So that's the main tactic you suggest -- purely having popups?

Well that's the way I do it actually. I don't think there's any other way people subscribe to my site or subscribe to my newsletter. That's the way I've found most effective.

Some people actually have a sign up to their newsletter in the middle of their sales copy. I'm thinking "If people are interested in your product, you don't want to distract them and get them try and sign up for the newsletter -- you want to get them to keep reading and then buy the product at the bottom of the page".

I think they might do that because some people I guess use software that kills popups so they're trying to get a second bite at the cherry there -- if the popup doesn't load, then they might catch your email address actually in the sales page.

But I think like I said that's got inherent problems in your stopping people in the middle of your sales copy saying "Why don't you sign up for my newsletter?". I wouldn't recommend that -- so I'm quite happy with the way popups work.

And of course it works well for you because you have a high volume of traffic. What are your thoughts on -- would you recommend buying subscribers through a service like [World Wide Lists](#) or such like?

Well, I'll tell you -- I've just started to try that in the last couple of days. It was recommended to me by someone I respect online and he said that there's this service that is really top quality -- the lady that runs it is vigorously anti-spam because that's obviously one of the main concerns -- you don't want to import into your list a bunch of emails that have been harvested from forums or something because there would be hell to pay.

So you have to make sure if you're buying subscribers you're paying for the quality of the subscriber that you bring into your list because you want to avoid at all costs bringing in anyone that would be upset.

So I've just in the past couple of days started paying for subscribers from this one service and I don't yet know how it's worked out.

What I did, when I thought about bringing in subscribers that I've paid for -- I went to my list host and I said "Are you happy for me to do this?" -- and they said "Yes -- we trust you to do it but we'd like to see the list the first time before you import these people".

So I think that's something you want to think about is getting the okay and getting the all clear from your list host because if you have a spam complaint and you haven't told them you've imported a list of 1,000 subscribers, and they find out the next week that you had one spam complaint or two spam complaints and that you in the last week bought in 1,000 subscribers, then they're going to go "Okay, he's obviously decided he's going to start spamming people".

And you don't want to lose your list account because obviously then you can't send out your newsletter. Not until you move it anyway. So it's fraught with problems and I'm taking it very carefully to pay for subscribers.

Interesting. Yeah -- I've been using a service WorldWideLists.com and actually went through the subscription process myself to see how it worked, and I like how it works, and you can choose between single and double opt-in ...

And it's basically just an ezine directory that people can visit and check the ones they want to subscribe to and enter their details.

It works well -- and because they can subscribe to multiple ezines they sometimes forget they've subscribed to you, so I put in my introductory email "You've come here either by clicking OK at one of my web sites or through World Wide Lists" and people are okay about it.

It's very clear how to unsubscribe -- sometimes they just reply saying "Please remove me" but I haven't had any problems actually if you specify they came through World Wide Lists.

Right -- so do you think it's been profitable? Pretty hard to tell isn't it?

It is -- unless you mark all the subscribers as coming from there and then see what sort of purchases they make and so on.

Just thinking about it -- they're going to be very similar to people who just visit your web site and click okay. Those people are going to be interested in free stuff anyway -- they come and visit your web site and they just happen to subscribe manually.

These people just express their interest in a different way -- and as with all things people check out your web site and unsubscribe if they don't like it.

But it's worked pretty well -- it does concern me there's a lot of Yahoo and Hotmail addresses ... always worries me they're somewhat throwaway accounts that people don't really read. But you also get proper ones like AOL and other ISP's.

Right. Because that's one of the things this service stipulated that I signed up with -- No Hotmail, or Yahoo or Juno ... no free accounts.

Interesting.

So that would probably decrease any chances of spam and on the other hand actually increase the chances of you actually mailing to someone.

That's the thing -- I specify they're double opt in. People have to confirm the email address. And I've had interest from people from Yahoo and Hotmail -- even though it does have a bit of a stigma about it some people do actually pay for those -- for bigger mail boxes or whatever. So some are quite serious about it, they just happen to have a Hotmail account.

That's right. And some people prefer to use a Hotmail account so that when it does get flooded with spam after a couple of months they move onto the new Hotmail account so they use them like spam filters.

And they can also mask their identify so they'll pretend to be a complete newbie when they buy the product, and actually they might be some high-powered person with lists in the tens of thousands. But they don't want you to know that at the initial contact stage.

I've had people say "That was good customer service, by the way this is my web site" -- and your jaw just hits the floor that they run some...

CNN?

Not quite that big, but people do try to mask their identities by using free Hotmail accounts as well. You can't just write to people and say "I know you're Bob Nobody in your Hotmail account -- leave me alone" because it might be your next biggest customer.

That's the thing. Maybe people who aren't interested in reading it get lumped in with those who are so it's always a bit of a danger. Just out of interest -- you say you're still testing this ... which service is it?

It's called Optin Frenzy. OptinFrenzy.com

Who runs it?

Laurie ... it was recommended by Mike Merz and he's at the forum all the time -- he has Im4Newbies.com.

I think Laurie Rogers is her name and she's a contributing editor to this web site. She contributes articles about anti-spam so I'm thinking "If she's doing that she's not very likely to be pulling the wool over your eyes with these new subscribers".

Yes -- World Wide Lists was actually recommended to me by Ted Ciuba who's a very serious marketer online -- I think other people use it as well so it did come recommended but you've got to approach it the right way -- you've got to make it clear they subscribed through that, otherwise people can get quite upset.

Yeah -- I think something else to say would be that you wouldn't want to use a service that pays people to join lists because they might pay people two or three cents to join per list that they sign up for and you pay six or eight cents for that subscriber because obviously you're just paying people that are paying people for signing up to try and earn money ... so I would think they'll be next to useless those accounts. So I try to make sure beforehand the people that are joining are not being induced to join or they're not incentivised to join the list.

That's a good point actually. Because I know some services -- they give you credit for clicking through links ... whereas with World Wide Lists -- if someone hasn't been there they can't really picture what I'm saying, but it's similar to Overture in a way ... the more you bid, the higher your ezine appears. It goes from about 13 cents to 30 cents.

Wow, that could add up quickly.

Oh believe me -- yes. A funny thing I found was I got the same number of subscribers whichever one I chose. 30 cent subscribers was getting pretty hefty and I was spending quite a lot every day -- whereas with 13 cents a day, I was still getting very similar amounts, but obviously at half price or even less.

And I've found it's best not to have your ezine pre-checked, because then they might not realize they're subscribing so they might not actually be interested and again the same problems.

That's really interesting. I'm just looking at it now.

If you go to the Small Business section you should see me there. Right down the bottom.

I've actually just clicked on Internet and I see "All the Secrets" -- Phil Wiley's about half way down bidding 17 cents per subscriber.

So it's just like you said -- just like Overture. Or the old Goto.com with bidding for however much ... and then you can have it checked or unchecked. That could get really expensive.

So you can't actually click to find out who's behind that list then? You can click to email them or click to signup.

I don't think anyone's ever emailed me through that. Yes -- you just sign up and if they've chosen double opt-in you get a confirmation email and you can choose to have it added every day, every couple of days, every week, but I find if you leave it more than a day already people forget.

When I was signing up quite a few -- it was my first task each day. Even at 13 cents a subscriber, if you don't put a monthly cap I was adding about 70, 75 a day.

I'm just a natural cheap-skate -- that would seem like a lot to me.

It's good to get the momentum going and just to see what kind of return you get and just build it up from there.

So you're 15 cents cost to publisher then? The Info-Profits e-Letter.

Yes. So you're going to subscribe to it then?

No -- I'm not going to cost you money. I'll sign up somewhere else and make sure you didn't pay 15 cents for me.

It's actually 13 cents, I don't know why it doesn't list it as 13. But I've put a cap at the minute, just to keep my costs down -- I'm only getting a couple of dollars a day and that's maybe 15 a day or so.

Right. Because this service at OptinFrenzy.com -- I think I paid \$100 for 2,000 signups. I think it was 5 cents each. I don't know if it's double opt-in.

That's very affordable.

It's some special promotion -- they've got some competition with people like World Wide Lists so I think it was 5 cents each.

Have to have a look at that...

But that was a special offer she was just making to affiliates -- it would be half price. I don't know if she's still doing that or not. I think otherwise it would be a minimum of 10 cents each. Which is closer to what you're paying.

And another one of course is [Lead Factory](#) run by Marty Foley.

So this would make a great niche site wouldn't it -- comparing and contrasting these companies?

That's very true actually.

Because I've only really found out about it and tried to get some information about it and if there was a really good little niche site about this I'd be all over it at the moment.

That's very true. And they all offer affiliate programs. [Lead Factory](#) I think offers quite a decent percentage. But they're only single optin and they're more expensive.

Whereas for World Wide Lists you only get a single \$20 referral per signup or something like that. Your list is steadily going up isn't it?

Yeah -- mine's steadily going up. And I haven't been buying anyone as of yet. I haven't imported anyone that I've paid for. But when I did buy the web site IncomeMax.com I got 10,000 subscribers from buying that web site and I imported them.

The only problem is your list keeps going up gradually and then they do a purge of all the dead email addresses and it drops by several thousand. And then you work your way back up again.

And obviously there's attrition with every email you send out -- every newsletter you send out you lose a percentage of your list and if your list is 150,000 like some people's it must be quite difficult and I would imagine quite expensive to keep importing the number of subscribers you would need to, to keep maintaining a list of that size.

Exactly. Unless you add more between mailings ... I'm finding each time I send an email out I lose between one and two percent.

Right, and one and two percent of 150,000 is an awful lot of people.

Yeah -- it's over 1,000 people.

So it's a new way of looking at lists the fact with that size list someone might actually be paying to maintain the size of that list.

That's very true actually. I think it's one of those things that the longer people stay, the longer they seem to stay. They just get into the habit of being subscribed. It seems to be the newer people that unsubscribe the quickest.

Okay -- so to sum this up ... what ways would you recommend of making affiliate sales with your mailing list?

Well presumably if you've gone about it the way we've gone about earlier you'll have a mailing list that is built around a specific niche. The same niche that your product is built around.

And then the way you would make affiliate income is to find targeted products that that niche would be interested in buying.

And you would presumably test the product first by buying it and seeing if you like it and if you think it's a great product you offer it to your list and if it's targeted enough the list would go across and a percentage would sign up and buy the product. It's not something I would recommend doing every week -- I recommend doing it every couple of months.

So you're talking about a solo mailing?

Yes -- I'm talking about a solo mailing, or if you do have advertising space just going free you can always put affiliate links in the advertising space in your newsletter.

Just as a sponsor. And do you sometimes do recommendations as well -- would you recommend that?

Yeah -- I've done recommendations but I do them very rarely because they will result in probably your biggest unsubscribe rate because people don't like getting just solo promotions even if they are recommendations. They will unsubscribe if they're not happy and if you keep doing that too often you will lose a percentage of your list.

Or even as part of a mini article? Talking about a subject -- and then referencing something as a recommended product? I notice Allan Gardyne does that quite a lot.

That's right -- but he always does it as content. He very, very rarely sends a solo about anything.

And I don't think you could buy a solo ad off him, if you paid him in tons of gold I don't think he would do it, just because it's one of the easiest ways to lose credibility.

So what he does is he weaves affiliate links in with his content and that's usually the best way to be doing it.

And what he seems to do is partner very tightly with certain merchants -- he works very closely with [Site Sell](#) ... he mentions it in nearly every ezine ... [Site Build It](#) and working examples -- he gets his staff to use it to build sites and then talks about how the site is making sales.

Yes. Ken phoned him up right at the beginning as soon as Ken's sites launched and tried to get Allan on board. And because of the quality of Ken's products I think Allan was happy to sign up as an affiliate and to promote Ken's products -- they are very good products that Ken releases.

And rather than just say "Ken's released Site Build It -- it's great, go and buy it" -- what Allan did is like you say passed a version of Site Build It to one of his colleagues who knew nothing about internet marketing and said "See if you can get a web site together around a niche topic ... get traffic from Google and see if you can make affiliate sales".

And he reported the results that the guy had built a great web site, it was getting good traffic and it was making affiliate income and then Allan recommended that people could basically do the same thing if they picked up [Site Build It](#) -- so it was a brilliant example of pre-selling a product.

Interesting. And one thing about Ken's program is his affiliate site, it has a huge amount of information that basically walks you through all the affiliate concept ... the program ... and he doesn't really like offering ready-made ezine ads or whatever ... he tries to push the idea of endorsements and writing your own material.

Yes -- I completely agree with him on that. I really don't like those copy and paste template emails that people say "Just paste this into your newsletter list and just send it out and sign your name at the bottom".

How much credibility does that carry -- especially when I saw five same template emails yesterday and I get another ten tomorrow? I just see you as trying to take advantage of me.

So if Ken doesn't do that -- we're thinking along exactly the same lines because to my knowledge I've never released one of those to my affiliates.

Maybe one thing that still keeps your credibility but makes it easier for affiliates is just having a proven ezine small classified ad -- maybe five lines at 60 characters across.

That's not quite so bad and people can ignore it if they want ... and otherwise it makes it easier to fill up space and make money from their ezine.

That's right. It's true, but then again if I created them as the merchant they're going to be quite generic whereas if you actually write something in your voice your list is much more likely to respond to it.

And you're much more likely to put a twist on it that appeals to your list ... so as you're going to look at the graphic design angle and make a mention of why it's good for graphic designers -- why you've sent it out to graphic designers.

Well that's going to do a lot better than me as the merchant just writing a generic template ezine ad and saying "Copy and paste this". So still the same principal applies.

- Popups -- Yes Or No? -

So moving onto a topic which is I guess quite controversial but it is a fact of internet life and we've talked about it a bit already ... is the whole popup business.

Pop-ups, pop-unders, and exit-popups as well ... all the different types -- as you say some appear in different ways depending on the cookies, they can appear either once a day, or every single time you visit a page which is quite maddening.

Would you say they work in any sense for making affiliate sales or promoting affiliate programs? What would you say their advantages and disadvantages are?

Well, it's a fact that popups work. They do work -- they do grab people's attention when you hit a page and a popup appears. Obviously because it's appearing in front of the regular page so it does get people's attention first.

It's also a fact that people don't like them -- but they don't dislike them in a blanket sense, they don't like them if they're used wrongly. So you have to put yourself in the mind of the visitor and like I was saying previously if a popup appears and it's relevant and it's targeted to the offer -- it matches the page whatever the offer is on the page ... the popup is related to and maybe it offers a discount and says "This discount is only good for Wednesday's -- you'll only see this popup on Wednesday's -- it's good for 50% off the product that is selling".

Then who's going to object to that? Who's going to say "That's a popup and I'm just going to close it and I hate it". They're going to miss out on another 50% saving.

So as long as popups are used responsively and you think about your visitor and how they would react, then I think they're great -- I think they work very well.

As for making affiliate sales well the same applies -- as they're a targeted promotion then you shouldn't have much of a problem. Obviously an affiliate product is going to be a little bit more distant than if it was your own product you were promoting or your own newsletter you were promoting ... then the popup is much more relevant.

For example if you put a popup for [Marlon Sanders' Amazing Formula](#) on your web page that's about web design it's going to be a lot less relevant than if you put up your own popup about your own ezine signup page or your own product -- so you've going to have to be a bit more careful with affiliate links because they're going to be by definition a bit less targeted.

So if you did have a popup for an affiliate program ... would you popup the whole sales page or would you maybe create your own page -- a sort of in-between page again like the minisite concept of pre-selling or something along those lines?

Yes -- the only popups I do are small ones. So they're like a quarter of the page because then people can see it and they can also see the page under it -- they know if they get rid of the popup they're still going to see the page.

But full page popups are I guess they're quite akin to interstitial adverts where you show a complete web page advert. That masks completely the content underneath it and I imagine from a visitors point of view would be a lot more annoying and a lot more of an interruption in the flow of their browsing through different web pages.

It's the whole pop-under network concept ... you've said yourself for the statistics you've had for your own products if people buy 10,000 pop-unders for one of your products they'll be lucky to make a sale because people don't pay attention to them.

Well that's right, because pop-unders suffer from the fact that they appear behind the content page and they will only be seen when people close the content page.

So then they see the pop-under page and by that time they're already thinking about going off making a cup of tea or doing something else. So the pop-under suffers from the very fact that it slides underneath the content page.

I don't use them -- I use popups because I want people to see that they can signup for my free newsletter and then their choice is to signup or get rid of the popup. After that they're left alone to either buy the product or do whatever else they want to do on the web site. So I don't think pop-unders work very well as a concept myself.

- Turning Articles Into Affiliate Income -

I'd like to talk about articles now ... and how people can use them to make affiliate commissions using articles.

Obviously I'm not really talking about just taking an article from somebody's affiliate program and just pasting it into your own ezine -- and you can't really take somebody else's article and submit it as your own to another ezine.

So what would you recommend if somebody wanted to make affiliate sales using the article route?

Well the easiest way -- the most obvious way is to write your own articles and weave in an affiliate link and send it to your newsletter list.

That would get the biggest response because people in your newsletter list are interested in hearing from you, reading your original content, and then acting on the affiliate link.

You could also if you wanted to approach other people with ezines and say "Look, I've written original content -- would you be interested in running it in your newsletter?".

But that's not going to do as well because when that ezine author sends it out it's non-original content to his list ... it's something you've written ... not something that they've written.

I've noticed some ezine publishers even with big lists do like to publish other people's articles ...

They do, but I think that's probably a slight amount of laziness. It's a lot easier to copy and paste someone else's article ... and people email me every day with two or three articles -- saying "I've just written this article, would you like to run it in your ezine?"

And I keep having to write back and say "Sorry, my newsletter is all original content". But it would be very easy just to copy and paste -- it's just whether your subscribers would accept getting that kind of content, which is not original content that you've written.

So you would say writing articles just related to a particular affiliate program -- and then putting it in your own words from a unique point of view ... adding the link maybe throughout and at the bottom...

Where would you submit that -- maybe to ezine publishers? But are there other places as well? If you're not running it in your own publication that is...

I think there are syndicated web sites that will accept your article and then people come and browse looking for articles they could copy and paste in and include a credit to your or your signup at the bottom when they publish it.

It's not something I've ever done -- I've just signed up people from my newsletter putting original content, and let it spread by word of mouth. I haven't syndicated my articles.

Plus of course when you decide to syndicate your articles you might get more exposure but then they're in the public domain so you couldn't really then bundle it up as an ebook or try and sell it or anything -- you could only bundle it up and give it away because you've already given away the articles themselves.

That's one thing with your own articles which you've done with [your 101 book](#) -- it's a bundle of your articles and they do mention affiliate programs, just as part of the article.

And I think I remember you mentioning -- I think it was in your newsletter that just through that eBook every day you wake up to a few [ClickBank](#) sales.

Yes -- considering I gave out thousands and thousands of copies it's not an incredible income that I derive from it but it is nice in the morning to go through your emails and see a few ClickBank sales or affiliate sales.

It's nice for doing nothing ... and it's out of your hands now.

Exactly. It's being spread by other people who've rebranded it and given it away and it has generated quite a few sales.

That's good. And you're careful about the products you mention -- I know that. And they're all related to the subject in hand.

And people wouldn't promote the book if they didn't benefit as well -- it's the whole win-win situation.

That's right. I've promoted a few eBooks in the past from people that I really respect such as [Michael Campbell](#) and various other eBook authors, and obviously my ClickBank links or my affiliate links are maintained in those articles when they're distributed in the free eBook across the net so it does make residual income.

It's only a small income stream compared to other sources online just selling your own eBooks and things like that. To survive online you don't want to just be selling one eBook -- you want multiple income streams and if you put together lots of little income streams you do derive a substantial revenue from that.

One thing [Phil Wiley](#) mentioned in his newsletter which really got me thinking -- I was trying to understand exactly what sort of numbers he was talking about ... he mentioned in his newsletter that he was traveling around Europe for a month or two....

Yeah -- I actually met him.

And he said just from his second tier affiliate sales he was covering the costs of his boarding and holiday -- something along those lines.

Yeah. It does show he's making money off the back of other people's efforts.

Obviously he's done well with it and he's got quite a unique approach -- really brings people's attention to new programs.

Yes -- because you do need to keep ... you'll make a lot more income from promoting products directly than you ever will from signing up other people to benefit from their efforts.

I remember someone writing to Allan Gardyne as we mentioned earlier and saying "You keep promoting Site Sell products -- I hope you're happy making so much income off the efforts of other people".

And Allan wrote back words to the effect of "Yes, okay I do make a small income from the efforts of other people but the large percentage of the income I make from Site Sell are direct sales".

And he's signing up tens, hundreds, maybe thousands of people to the Site Sell program ... I don't know. But it's a lot of people and you would expect him to be making substantial revenue, but still it's dwarfed by the amount he makes in direct sales.

- Forums For Fun And Profit -

Okay -- I guess it's maybe one of the easiest ways to get started -- it won't really leave a huge impact but it'll be interesting to talk about briefly anyway ... is making affiliate commissions with forums.

You can obviously add a little link at the bottom of your posts, and as you run a forum you have very experienced first-hand knowledge of it ... so I just wondered what your thoughts on that was?

It's a really good way firstly get your name out ... and secondly to get a small piece of advertising that is accepted.

Basically you would use your signature file link which could be to an affiliate program, or could be to your own web site, providing you're there being useful and posting relevant contents such as answering someone's question or helping out in some way...

It's expected and permitted that you will put a little two line or three line signature file in your post, that would link to your website, or it could link straight to an affiliate program or whatever you would like so that's a good way of being able to advertise online without it being frowned on because if you go to the free for all sites and try and blast your promotion you'll usually end up in trouble.

And putting a link at the bottom of a relevant post on a forum is one way of being able to advertise discretely and properly.

At some of these forums you do see the same people posting again and again and they build up an online personality and often offer good information -- they have their own opinions and people often really pay attention to what they say and more often than not reply ... so you get the whole debate going.

Absolutely. People have made livings out of doing that -- out of being really helpful at a big major portal such as AskMe.com -- they'll be a resident expert for their topic and obviously that builds an enormous amount of credibility.

And if someone asks them a question, and they answer it and they're helpful then they can say "By the way -- have you seen my web site?" And at their web site they promote a couple of their books or whatever.

So it's a very worthwhile way to advertise. I've seen people post to the forum often and in a helpful manner and change the little tag signature link to one of three different addresses -- so they're obviously testing the response from the forum at the same time as they're posting helpful content.

Would you have any recommendations for making a signature more effective?

Yes -- I would make it small. And just make it relevant if you can.

When you say small -- not more than a line?

I would say one line for text explanation and one link, so...

"Neil Shearing: helpful advice at the ScamFreeZone" and then ScamFreeZone.com. Or something like that. Something along those lines.

And if you're posting in a forum about -- let's say pop-unders, and you have written an article it would be a really good signature file to say "Learn more in my article on popups (or pop-unders or pop-under advertising)" and then a link. So if it's targeted it's more likely to get more interest and more people across.

It's true. It's also a good way to promote free to distribute eBooks as well. If it's related.

I tried that once just in a forum -- and I got the same amount of downloads as people viewed. It's quite incredible that everyone who viewed the post, downloaded the eBook I linked to.

Right. So that's a really good market because you would expect if you're marketing to internet beginners they wouldn't know how to download something. And you'd really have to walk them through it.

But people on forums -- and in my case internet marketing forums, they're people who know what they're doing. If you say "Download this eBook" they'll download it and take a look. You don't have to walk them through 15 pages before they get the eBook open.

- Your Affiliate Income Plan (And Beyond) -

The final section ... I guess pulling everything together ... really building your affiliate plan.

Let's start with "How to create your affiliate income plan"... would you have any recommendations for that?

Well, the way I look at it is as I've said before that affiliate income and affiliate marketing is just a way to get your feet wet.

If you want to just get a couple of extra dollars a month then by all means just promote affiliate programs ... but most people are interested in making a living online.

That's the idea, that they sack their boss, and live full time online with a decent amount of money. A decent revenue stream. And that's generally not going to come from working affiliate programs ... or solely affiliate programs.

I see working affiliate programs as just a way to get your feet wet and get traffic to a web site and send it on to a merchant and get an affiliate check. And if you get a check in the post you can show it to your spouse and say "Look, it really does work -- all that effort I've been putting online is starting to pay dividends".

But then that is a stepping stone to creating and releasing your own product.

So my plan ... I've got a seven point plan -- I call it "Seven Vital Steps to make a living online". And the first one I would put would be to create your own goods. I would kind of jump straight to creating your own products if you're serious about, and really want to stay at home and make a living online.

When you say create your own products -- you mean info products?

Yup -- that's the second point. The second point is to create digital goods such as info-products ebooks, and maybe even a members site or software. Because digital goods are best suited to the internet such are services such as graphic design and something like that.

So the third point is to create multiple products because I read once that no one ever got rich selling one product online. And it's very true. One product may pay the bills but it won't make you rich.

But as soon as you release product number two and product number three ... if product one still pays the bills then the other two are pure profit. And that will substantially swell your bottom line.

I have "start a newsletter" which we discussed earlier. Because then you can contact that newsletter list and offer them free advice -- build your credibility and then try and get them to buy your products.

Start an associate program which we also spoke about because if you start an associate program you increase the number of potential visitors coming to your site and if you only pay them per sale you can't lose.

Obviously you can't pay them if you don't make any sales -- you split the revenue if they do make sales so that's extra money in your back pocket.

Point six I've got is to work your lists. We spoke about that as well -- you know your subscriber list, your associate program list, your customer list. And you keep in contact with them ... offer them future products and affiliate links to other products.

That's really where affiliate marketing can make you lots of money. When you become a super affiliate. Because if you promote affiliate links to your list, and you can create ten sales at the drop of a hat, you become recognized as a super affiliate and that's when affiliate income can really add to your bottom line.

Rather than just doing it as an affiliate -- you do it as kind of a merchant with products, and with customers, and with lists you can endorse affiliate products too.

And finally I've got build respect. It's a long term journey ... you're not going to make money overnight and when you work these lists if you provide them with content and quality articles and quality information they'll be happy to buy based on your recommendations.

So that's where I see affiliate income fitting in and I see it firstly as a way of getting your feet wet as an absolute beginner because there's no risk associated but if you're actually going to make a living online, I see it more as a backend income stream.

That's a long answer.

That's really interesting. What would you actually say defines a super affiliate?

Basically the ability to create sales at the drop of a hat. So basically you're talking about people who have lists or have very, very high traffic web sites. So on any given day they could email their list or put a new banner on their site and show it to millions of people such that they can generate a dozen sales in a very short space of time.

So what would you suggest as proven ways to outsell your affiliate competition?

In other words -- what we've already spoken about ... really what will make you stand out of the crowd because I've heard this before ... and I think you've mentioned it as well: maybe 5% of affiliates ever get a check.

Right. So the question is basically the fact that if I have 4,000 affiliates in my program how would they go about selling my internet success blueprint when they've got 3,999 other competitors?

I think we've covered a lot of that already, so maybe a better question -- as an example one of Marlon Sanders' products ... I think [Gimme My Money Now](#) -- I can't imagine how many thousands of affiliates he's got, and he's got quite a few super affiliates promoting his products ...

I know one is Phil Wiley and he's got a little site based around Marlin's Products and what he does -- he says ... going from memory here ... "If you buy the product through this link I'll work with you through unlimited email access to help you profit with the ideas".

So that's more incentive to outsell, even all the other super affiliates who are also promoting this product.

Right. Well firstly no one works in a vacuum. If Phil's mailing his list and promoting "[Gimme My Money Now](#)" then that is direct competition for every other affiliate.

So the way you would try and distinguish yourself is to add on something different. So in Phil's case he's saying he would work with people if they bought "Gimme my money now".

Another way to do it would be to actually read "Gimme my money now" and come up with an extra eBook or an extra little info-product ... it only has to be a text article or something and say "This is my bullet point list of what I got out of Gimme my money now" and save that and offer it to anyone that buys through your link.

So you're differentiating yourself by improving the offer against what other people are offering if they just use a regular text link. So I kind of did that in the past with [Site Build It](#) -- I said "If you buy Site Build It through this link I'll give you my three products for free" ... and it sold quite a few copies of Site Build It and we spoke about problems we had with that offer so I don't make it anymore ... but it is a way to distinguish your offer from every other affiliate's offer of the same product.

I saw Terry Dean promotes Monique Harris' Paperless Newsletter -- he bought the reprint rights to it and instead of just selling the product which everyone else would do he wrote an accompanying ebook on how he sells basically his equivalent of a paperless newsletter which is his members site.

And so he said "This is the product -- you can have Monique's product and this is how I do it and you can have that as well if you buy the Paperless Newsletter from me".

So that's a really good way of adding additional value and distinguishing yourself from everyone else who is selling the Paperless Newsletter. I don't know how many there are but it distinguishes your offer from other people's offer.

That's very true. I think there were 20 licenses available -- if I remember rightly.

He quoted his own product -- talking about his own [membership site](#) which is hugely successful. I think he's got about 1,000 members now.

Well finally ... I guess I can break this up into two questions ... would you say it's possible for a small business, home business person to make a full time income from affiliate programs?

Possible, but very, very difficult.

Why would you say that is?

Simply because you're not getting the full revenue from making the sale. The merchant will maybe pay you half or if it's an Amazon book they'll pay you five or ten percent.

And so in order to generate a full time revenue, a full time income, you will have to sell a lot more of someone else's products than you would if you were selling your own.

So instantly there you have to put in twice as much effort ... or if it's ten percent -- maybe ten times as much effort and like we were touching on earlier the best digital products will have a lot of affiliate competition.

I mentioned digital because they'll pay you the most profit ... so if you sign up to sell my [Blueprint](#), I'll pay you 50% ... but because I'm paying 50% that product has a lot of affiliate competition.

So not only do you have to make a lot more sales than if it's your own product ... you also have a lot more competition. So it's difficult. It's not an easy thing to do.

So really you would say it's an add on in a way -- to create a bit of extra revenue but don't focus on it exclusively?

That's right. Because if you're going to put in enough effort to make a full time income as an affiliate ... why wouldn't you want to put in the effort to creating your own products?

I don't understand that. And then if you sell your own products you can then use affiliate links as back-end additional revenue.

So the only way really to create full-time affiliate income if you did choose that is to basically combine everything we talked about, especially work with your list?

That's right. And you would have more difficulty building your list if you don't have your own products ... if you're just working on an affiliate basis because you would have to try to somehow either intercept the customer before they go to the merchant and collect their email address or save their email address.

Or you would have to say once you've signed up "Send me your receipt and I'll send you a free bonus" and that way you would capture their name and email address after the event.

But either way it's more difficult than just being a merchant and making the sale and adding the customer to your customer list.

I can understand that. I know Frank Garon of InternetCashPlanet.com ... he works quite closely with Terry Dean ... and until very recently he made all his income through affiliate programs ... and network marketing online as well. And he was making into six-figures a year.

I'm a subscriber to his ezine, and I'm a customer of his as well, and he works very closely with his subscribers ... he spends time on the phone with them helping them and suggests products ... so it is a full time job getting that income through affiliate programs and he works closely with merchants getting special deals so he can make that special deal to subscribers.

Right. I've heard of Frank ... but can you name anyone else who's making a full time internet income from affiliate programs?

I think there's Brian Garvin -- actually he has quite a few products as well ... he won the [Host4Profit](#) 1,000 signups free holiday ... so it sounds as if he's pulling ten grand a month from Host4Profit signups.

That's interesting. Because the first person you mentioned -- Frank, may be making money from network marketing, so the money he's making from network marketing is basically from the efforts of others.

So that's not direct affiliate sales which is what I had in my mind when you were talking about "Can someone make a living online?" -- I was thinking more about through direct sales rather than them being at the top of a network marketing plan.

That's what I was thinking of as well. I couldn't tell you what the percentage difference is between what he earns in network marketing, and what he earns in affiliate marketing. I know he's making tape sets available now as well.

Right, and what was Brian doing -- something different as well ... not direct affiliate sales?... Oh yes -- the [Host4Profit](#) would be I assume residual income?

That's right. \$10 a month for each referral.

So those are two things you would probably have to build into the concept if you wanted to make a full time living from affiliate income -- would be firstly, residual income would be important and secondly the possibility of trying to make money using the other tiers in a program.

So additional tiers would be additional revenue, the repeat sales would be more sustained income, and that would be useful because you wouldn't have to keep making the sales volume every month.

Again, it's not guaranteed of course and you're depending on another company ... but you would say that gives you more predictability?

Well, if I was going to do it I would sign up to several different companies and I would use a network like a said before, like [ClickBank](#) or [Commission Junction](#) because the odds are if you sign up for seven maybe one goes bust ... you would have the seven other merchants working with you.

Whereas if you put all your eggs in one basket and just go with one merchant and that guy decides he's going to give up internet marketing or the company decides they can't sustain the program any longer, then you really are in trouble.

That's the thing -- you are always depending on a merchant.

That's right. I still think it would be more effort to make money through affiliate marketing rather than just go ahead and create your own products.