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50 THINGS I WANT AFFILIATE MARKETERS TO KNOW

**LESSONS LEARNED AFTER
10 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE**



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I've been an affiliate marketer for over 10 years now and have made more than \$2 million in that time.

My journey hasn't always been easy.

I've made a lot of mistakes and there have been times I've overthought things to the point of completely freezing up.

Fortunately, I'm pretty good at kicking myself back into gear (an absolute necessity when you're the sole breadwinner for your family!).

I have also received well over 15,000 email questions from others working their way along a similar path.

Many of my responses to those emails included ideas, tips, or motivation that were shared with one person but that I'd wished I'd shared with a larger group.

Now's my chance. Below are 50 things I want every new affiliate marketer to know.

If you're a beginner I hope you'll find at least one thing that brings you peace of mind and motivates you to move forward.

If you've already got experience under your belt I think you'll still find a tip or two that will help you think bigger and better as you grow your business.

1 – Yes, You CAN Make Money as an Affiliate Marketer

It just isn't going to happen overnight

It's going to take some time to learn the skills necessary to be successful.

Don't expect things to come together right away.

Allow yourself the time to learn and don't be too hard on yourself. No affiliate marketer is perfect right out of the gate!

I spent months trying to make my first affiliate sale and when it finally came through I was beyond myself with excitement. You will never forget that first sale no matter how small it might be.

That first sale is your "proof of concept". It's the validation that you're on the right track and where there's one sale you finally know there are more to be made.

Set the proper expectations and give yourself at least 6 months to make that first sale. It can be done sooner but a lot depends on how much you already understand affiliate marketing and how much time you can put into growing your website. Not everyone has the same time available to them.

2 – Your Writing Can Always Improve

Don't let a fear of writing slow you down

If I showed you some of the content I wrote early in my affiliate marketing journey you'd laugh yourself silly. It was bad. It felt stilted and out of touch with the topic. It was flowery without saying anything. It was embarrassing.

But if I'd let that slow me down I wouldn't be where I am today. I just knew it was something I had to work on over time.

And that horrible writing didn't stop me from making sales!

If you can at least get the right target audience on your website and show them the right products, some of them are going to click your affiliate links no matter what your writing is like.

You'll get better as you get more comfortable publishing content online and you can always go back and revise older content.

3 – Read the Rules of All Your Tools

Legalese is boring but a necessary evil

As an affiliate marketer you're going to put in some effort.

Wouldn't you kick yourself if all your hard work was taken away because you didn't read the rules about the tools you use in your business before you got started?

Every time you sign up to with an affiliate network, a tool website, a service, or buy some software to use with your business please read the Terms of Service and Privacy Policy.

If something doesn't make sense in those documents figure out how to contact the support department and ask for clarification.

4 – Focus on ONE Project at a Time

Splitting your time only slows you down

You have no idea how much you have to learn and the best way to learn is to keep working on ONE thing until it's successful.

Once you start making affiliate sales with that one project you're golden.

You will have a wealth of learning and real data behind you to help guide you in the right direction to further grow your income.

Splitting your time between too many projects only pushes your success further away.

5 – You Can't Be Worried About the Competition

Because they're not worried about you

If you do the right prep work in advance of choosing a niche for your affiliate marketing website then stop worrying about the competition.

Everyone faces competition. The biggest online sites were once the small guy trying to make a name for themselves. They just chose to keep going forward.

Do the same.

6 – Its Okay to Start Out on Shared Hosting

No matter what anyone else says

Many people will tell you that you can't be successful with a website on shared hosting and that you should sign up for more expensive hosting.

Yes, there are benefits to a dedicated server or WordPress managed hosting but you absolutely do not need that to get started.

Think big but start small.

Keep your costs to a minimum. You can always move your website to a new hosting plan in the future once you have more traffic.

I start every website I own on [Bluehost's shared hosting](#) (*my affiliate link). I'm still able to keep my sites secure, get good page speed (with the right plugins) and rank well in Google.

Once a site is receiving traffic of more than 10,000-20,000 visitors a month I move it to Bluehost's Managed WordPress hosting. (Yes, I have two hosting accounts with the same company.)

7 – Someone WILL Try to Hack Your Website

Securing your website is well worth your time

The very first WordPress website I built was hacked within two weeks. It wasn't even an affiliate marketing website.

It's not that hackers are targeting you – they're just running bots that scour the web for information about existing websites and run programs to break into sites that might be vulnerable to attack.

They don't care what the site is about or who you are.

Take the time to read about [how to harden WordPress](#). There are security plugins available for free and you should be using at least one. I use the free version of [iThemes Security](#).

8 – Sometimes You Go Backwards

So did Michael Jackson when he moon-walked and it didn't hurt him

You might do a bunch of work at some point and then find you've done it all wrong and have to do it all over again.

Affiliate marketing isn't the only place this happens. You've surely run into this before.

The plumbing in our kitchen island sprung a leak and resulted in mold behind the cabinets. We decided to do the work to replace our island ourselves.

We ripped everything out, treated for mold, and rebuilt the entire island only to find out we'd measured one piece incorrectly and the whole thing had to be torn down and redone.

To say we were frustrated was an understatement. It wasn't easy to rebuild it the first time!

But, we did it over again and ended up with something we liked even better because we changed our paint and stain colors.

Sometimes you have to go backwards to go forwards. Just pick yourself up and get it done.

9 – It Does Help to Learn a Little HTML

But you don't have to be an expert

Somewhere along the way you're going to run into some HTML code. Don't run.

The biggest two things you'll need to know are how to format an affiliate link and how to embed an image into your website posts.

Some affiliate networks give you the full HTML you need and you just have to copy and paste it into your website.

Others might only give you an affiliate link and you have to do the formatting yourself by adding a little HTML to make it a clickable link.

However, most of the tools you'll use for building a website (like WordPress and Blogger) make that pretty easy without you having to know HTML.

It's when you want to make any customization to the way your affiliate links or images look that having a little HTML knowledge can help.

That's when the [W3Schools.com](https://www.w3schools.com) website comes in handy.

10 – Website Themes Can Hurt You or Help You

Choose wisely

Your website can perform better in Google if there are some SEO items built into the code of the theme.

If you're using WordPress you need to have a theme on your site. The theme not only controls the appearance of your website but it also handles many of those behind-the-scenes SEO items that help Google understand your site.

Some themes are created by designers who are great at website **appearance** but completely miss those necessary **SEO pieces**.

If you're using such a theme you may not rank as well in Google as you would if you had a theme with good SEO built in.

At a minimum, I want my chosen WordPress themes to have:

- A unique <h1> tag for each URL on the site
- A unique meta description for each URL on the site
- Good site speed

I've grown to love the free versions of [Magazine Basic](#) (hasn't been updated in awhile but still compatible with the current version of WordPress) and [Stout](#).

Both deliver my minimum requirements and while they don't offer a lot of glamour they're simple and run fast.

Add a header image and you're off and running.

Once you learn a little CSS you can always customize the look of either one.

11 – You Don't Have to Be a Salesperson

Selling without "selling" is an easy way to start

When I first started affiliate marketing I was concerned about my ability to make sales because I consider myself the worst salesperson on earth.

I've never worked in sales and anyone who would hire me as a salesperson would be setting themselves up for failure.

Then I read an internet marketer's blog post on how to sell without selling and it all clicked. I wish the post was still available online because it was pure gold but this was years ago and the owner took the site down and moved on.

In a nutshell, the post explained that showing people how to do something and then using affiliate links for the tools one would need to buy to actually do the same thing being described in the post was a very easy way to sell.

And it's true.

So, if you know how to do something write a great post on how to do that thing and include your affiliate links.

If you know how to make a princess birthday cake by hand, how you dig out the best keywords using a paid keyword tool, how you paint a house, how you fix a car dent – whatever it is you know how to do that requires some sort of tool, supplies, or software – write about that thing.

12 – Start with Something That Works

Then put your own spin on it

There are lots of how-to guides out there that can get you started as an affiliate marketer. I designed my [AZON Breeze](#) product to be just that.

But once you've mastered the basic techniques you should put your own stamp on what you're building.

At some point you need to stop blindly following a set of instructions and start putting some of your unique vision into your business.

That's what will make your site really shine!

13 – You're Going to Like Some Parts of the Job and Not Others

Just like most other kinds of work

It's not all roses and puppies when you're an affiliate marketer. There are tasks you're not going to enjoy as much as others but they have to get done.

Maybe you don't like making images for your website or the idea of being on Pinterest makes your skin crawl but if something can help you get more traffic and earn more commissions you need to find a way to get it done.

Either outsource those tasks or find a routine for getting them done that you can live with.

14 – You MUST Back Up Your Sites

Accidents happen so be prepared

You can't *easily* break a WordPress site to the point of its being unrecoverable from within your WordPress dashboard but you could erase posts by accident and you could do some serious damage from inside your hosting account if you weren't paying attention.

The best way to protect all of your hard work is to take regular backups of your website.

Your hosting account dashboard may offer options or tools for scheduled backups, you can take a backup manually, or you can use a plugin. I use the free version of [Duplicator](#) to take regular backups of my sites.

15 – You WILL Make Mistakes

How else are you going to learn?

You are going to mess up because, well, you're human.

After all my years at this I still make mistakes. Sometimes it's an accident and sometimes it's because I didn't know any better.

But when you figure out your mistake and find the way to fix it you've learned a lesson that is going to stick with you.

Don't beat yourself up. Instead, embrace those mistakes. They're part of your personal journey to success.

16 – Everything Changes

And sometimes that is going to irritate you

Stuff that worked five years ago doesn't work today and not everything that works today will work a year from now.

Some things change even more rapidly.

I can publish an ebook that includes instructions for configuring a WordPress plugin and an update for that plugin might come out a week later that makes my instructions inaccurate.

Amazon could change their commission percentages and your monthly income might go down.

Google changes their search algorithm regularly and maybe your website won't rank as well as it did.

Your favorite keyword tool might stop being supported and you have to find a new one.

A new law might require that you make a change to your website.

As with any business you need to deal with the change. Do not dwell on the change or stew in frustration. Find a solution and keep plowing ahead.

17 – We All Get Distracted

Get off of Facebook and game apps

Distractions are everywhere – your email is filled with new offers, your Facebook feed tempts you with funny videos, a new season of your favorite TV show has just started, or you are about to level up on Panda Pop.

What's a person to do?

Set your priorities.

It's not that you can't have fun now and then but if you're spending too much time on distractions you'll never reach your full potential.

18 – Reports are Your Friends

Learn to love them

If you're one of those people who hates reports or numbers or spreadsheets or anything called "data" you're in good company. Not everyone likes that kind of thing.

But if you really want to consider your website a business and you want it to deliver strong results the reports available to you are your best ally in getting that done.

You are going to have lots of reports available to you for free – your hosting account has statistics about your bandwidth usage, your affiliate networks have reports about clicks and sales, Google Webmaster Tools (aka Google Search Console) and Google Analytics have a boat load of valuable information for you but if you don't learn to read and understand them then you're missing out big time.

If you're overwhelmed by reports take it one, tiny bit at a time. Start with one number on one of those reports and study any available help document about that report until that one number makes sense to you.

You want to understand not only what that one number means but also *what it's telling you about your site*. Is it telling you things are good or bad? If the number is headed the wrong direction search for articles that will help you turn that one number around.

When you are comfortable you understand what that one number means pick the next one and repeat.

19 – Choose a Niche You Love

Or you're going to lose interest mighty quick

Don't choose a niche just because you heard there's money to be made in it.

Choose a niche because **you** like that niche and have a personal interest.

You don't have to be drop-dead passionate about it but you need to be interested enough that you're willing to become passionate about that subject.

Otherwise, you're going to build a website you don't enjoy around a topic you don't like and the whole thing is a waste of time.

20 – Your Target Audience MUST be #1

Pleasing them is your first priority

Starting with a goal of making money as an affiliate marketer is fine but once you get to work focus on your target audience.

Measure yourself based on how well you're helping them and the money will follow.

21 – You Don't Have to Be a Spring Chicken

You're never too old to get started

There's a segment of my email list that are preparing for or are in retirement. I have worked with quite a number of affiliate marketers who didn't start until they were in their 70s or 80s.

I love them!

Life experience is a great tool for affiliate marketers. When it comes to writing content age gives us more stories from which to draw and use as material in our content.

Don't let age be a roadblock. This is one of those times when it can be a benefit.

22 – Make Your Site Look Good

Blah-looking websites send your traffic away

You have just a couple of seconds to make a good impression on your website visitor. If they don't like what they see they're clicking that back button and they're gone.

So put a little something into it – a professional looking header image and a good color scheme at a minimum.

You don't want your site to look boring, out of date, lackluster, dull, or even too wild and crazy.

Don't trust yourself entirely in this department. Have a friend or family member you know will be brutally honest take a look at it and give you some feedback.

23 – If You Want Traffic From Google Don't Try to Game the System

It's a recipe for disaster

If you don't care about getting traffic from Google because you're going to buy your traffic or use some other method, fine – do what you need.

However, if you are counting on getting traffic from Google then please play by their rules.

Others might tell you that following some black-hat system or other is the way to make money fast. And it might be...until you're caught.

And you will be caught.

So unless you're prepared to deal with the cycle of building and losing sites on a regular basis just don't go down that path.

Google doesn't hate affiliate marketing sites. They just want to make sure they deliver quality sites to searchers.

Read [Google's advice for affiliate marketing websites](#).

How much better can it get? They're telling you exactly what they expect to see.

Do it right the first time and your income source will be with you for the long haul.

24 – Affiliate Marketing CAN Become Your Sole Source of Income

But it takes a lot of work

The question I'm asked most often is "How much can I make with this or that strategy per-day/within-a-month/every-year?"

I can estimate how much **I** can make from a strategy but it's really hard for me to tell someone else what they might make.

Do you like your niche? Do you like to write? How hard do you work? How often are you going to work on your site? How good is your content going to be?

The honest answers to those questions could determine your potential and my telling you what I can make might not really help you at all.

What I do know is that if money can be made with an affiliate marketing strategy then the **potential** income is probably much higher than what you'd be happy with because there's always room to grow what's working!

25 – I Sometimes Think I'm Horrible at This

Everyone questions themselves at times

You will, too, and that's okay.

It's you alone at your computer working at a thing your friends and family probably don't understand and that is the perfect storm for you to start doubting yourself or the potential to make affiliate sales.

Some of the most successful affiliate marketers on my email list are those who threw in the towel many times...but they always came back to it and, eventually, something clicked.

If you've started a website about a niche you liked, then stopped, then picked it back up again, then stopped, then started again...you LIKE the idea of affiliate marketing – you just wish you could see success more quickly.

And if you like the idea and you don't mind the work there's probably just some minor tweaks that have to be made to your approach to bring things together.

If there's something inside of you that won't let go of affiliate marketing then keep pushing at it – success is probably right in front of you and waiting for you to catch up.

26 – The Publish Button Can be a Scary Thing

Don't let it intimidate you

Yup, once you push that publish button for a new post someone might read it and the idea that you've written something that people won't like can be overwhelming for some people. (Others have no problem with this step and I admire them!)

But I've been there.

I *still* get queasy when I push the send button on an email to my list. What if my information is wrong? What if people are irritated by what I wrote? What if I came across as pushy? What if there's a big, embarrassing typo? (And there probably is....)

But if you don't publish content online you're going to have a hard time getting clicks on your affiliate links, right?

Three things help me get past this anxiety.

First, I remind myself that unless my website is already getting heavy traffic no one is going to see my post right away. It's not like I'm going to push the publish button and someone is going to immediately add a comment calling me an idiot.

Second, I remind myself that I'm tougher on myself than others are on me so I might be overthinking things.

Third, I click the publish button and walk away. I give myself a little pat on the back for getting something done and then I'll go get some coffee, watch TV, take a walk or even take a nap.

That little break eases my mind but it also often results in ideas for making my post better so when I get back to my computer I'm ready to make a few fixes and feel even better about what I've published.

27 – Managing Yourself is Hard Work

Commit to a schedule

The freedom you get when you work for yourself is nearly indescribable. I could go on for hours about the benefits.

But it is NOT easy. It's way too tempting to take a few days off or decide that the laundry is more important than working online.

There's no one setting your schedule but you so you have to be diligent about setting that schedule and sticking to it.

If you're doing affiliate marketing part-time while working a full-time job elsewhere it's even harder because you're tired already from the one job and, on top of that, you have household or family responsibilities.

Find a routine that works for you whether that's working online only on your days off or before you go to your other job. Hold yourself accountable.

28 – Your Work Doesn't Have to be Perfect Right Away

Start as best you can and improve along the way

Expecting perfection can be a huge roadblock to success.

If you spend unnecessary time rereading and revising what you've written before publishing you're simply delaying the traffic that post could bring to your site.

It's okay if your work isn't 100% perfect. You can always go back and revise posts after they've been published.

29 – Your Work Will be Copied

Even if it's bad

There's a whole industry out there that lives by scraping content from other sites illegally and putting that content on their own site.

You could drive yourself nuts trying to stop it or requesting copies of your material be taken down from those sites but it's probably just going to crop up somewhere else.

It can turn into a game of whack-a-mole that you can't win.

Fortunately, copies of your material are probably not going to hurt your own rankings because as long as your post is in the Google index before any copies are indexed then Google knows where the content was first published. It knows which sites are just copying you.

It's okay to use a WordPress plugin to reduce the ability for others to copy your content but unless there's an egregious violation of your material don't spend too much time worrying about scrapers.

30 – Building an Affiliate Marketing Site is Like Making a Snowman

Patience is a virtue

Have you ever made a snowman? You start with a small ball of snow and you roll it and roll it....and roll it...to make the base.

At first, it seems like you'll never get that small ball as big as you need but the larger it gets, the more snow it picks up with each roll.

That's when things really start to sail!

You may publish post after post on your new affiliate marketing site without seeing any results but eventually you'll have a pretty big snowball and traffic will start to ramp up fast.

Lots of new affiliate marketers get frustrated during that stretch of time where they're not seeing results and they quit.

Then, as time passes, Google catches up with the site and starts sending traffic.

Sales start trickling in while the site owner has stopped paying attention.

When the affiliate marketer discovers sales have started to come in they realize they'd be making even more sales if they hadn't quit.

Don't quit until your snowman is actually making money.

31 – Your Family and Friends Will Think You're Crazy

But you'll be considered a genius when you finally make it

When I told my family I was leaving my six figure a year, corner-office management position with one of the largest banks in the country to become an affiliate marketer I didn't exactly get a ton of high-fives.

My husband was afraid we would lose our house. My children were afraid we wouldn't be able to buy new toys (they were still young – you can see where their priorities lay) and while my father didn't tell me I shouldn't he did suggest – several times – that I really think through my decision carefully.

While I was building my business no one liked how much time I was spending on the computer.

But building a business is a time-consuming task.

Once several years had passed and we were still in our house and the kids saw that life hadn't changed, everyone thought I was brilliant. That's only because I was able to do something they thought was impossible and they only thought it was impossible because they hadn't researched the subject as much as I had.

My family still doesn't totally understand what I do but no one rolls their eyes at the subject any more.

32 – Get Good at Searching Google

You're going to use them a lot

The high-level explanation of affiliate marketing sounds kind of easy: Create online content that contains special links (affiliate links) you get from affiliate partners and networks.

But you're going to have a million questions along the way and Google is one of the best places to find answers.

Get comfortable searching in Google and finding sources *you can rely on* to give you accurate information.

33 – SEO is a Real Thing

Study up

SEO stands for [Search Engine Optimization](#). It is the process of setting your website up so that it is best read and understood by Google.

Google doesn't tell us everything that goes into their search algorithm but they do give information that implies what is important to them.

Plus, experts in SEO are surveyed each year or two and their thoughts are summarized in various studies available online. These studies tell us what experts think are good SEO moves at the time the study was conducted.

But too much of a good things is usually bad. It IS possible to overdo your SEO.

If you come across a piece of SEO advice and you think it makes your website look funny to your site visitor then it's probably bad advice.

For example, there's no need to put an internal link in a website post that links back to that very post just so you can have a keyword as anchor text in a link for that URL. That just doesn't make sense. The site visitor doesn't need that link – they're already reading that very post!

34 – You CAN be an Ethical Affiliate Marketer

Honesty and integrity go a long way

You don't have to be something you're not to be a successful affiliate marketer.

You don't need to say you've tried something if you haven't.

You don't need to pretend to be an expert when you're really just learning a skill.

People don't like to be misled and there are ways to tell the truth without giving the impression that your information isn't helpful.

Suppose you're recommending a product you haven't actually used yourself.

Instead of saying you *have* used the product when you *haven't*, you could say that you haven't used the product **but** that you verified the product by reading the description, reading the reviews, by talking to someone who has used the product and/or by questioning the maker of the product (as long as you've really done those things).

You can research a product before recommending it and then use what you found in your research as the validation that the product has merit.

35 – Your Website is Never “Done”

There is always more you could do

There’s no point where you’ve exhausted every possible topic you could write about for your niche.

If you’re struggling to come up with ideas to further grow your site you may need help with brainstorming and creating a growth plan.

An affiliate marketer with a review website about vacuum cleaners who has reviewed every vacuum cleaner currently on the market could start writing about vacuum cleaner accessories, comparisons of popular models to each other, future technology enhancements coming to vacuum cleaners, vacuums that are being designed or have been announced but aren’t yet for sale, and interviews with vacuum manufacturers and housecleaning specialists.

They might even start buying the vacuums they’ve reviewed and create demonstration videos and comparison videos.

They could survey site visitors about features they would like to see on vacuum cleaners in the future.

Find an idea person and pick their brain.

36 – Find Your Unique Website Proposition

Differentiate yourself from the competition

USP is a business term that stands for Unique Selling Proposition. It refers to the one service or feature of a company that most distinguishes it from competitors.

When you know what you do better than anyone else you can use that in the branding of your product or service to draw attention to your business.

As an affiliate marketer, you can use the same concept.

Find the one thing you can offer on your website that will help your site visitors more than any other affiliate marketing site in the same niche.

This could include things like:

- Providing the MOST detailed reviews
- Creating a unique product comparison tool for your niche

- Offering a one-on-one consulting service to help site visitors find just the right product
- Creating and showing 360 degree photos of the products you're promoting
- Showing each product you promote in action by way of a video
- Offer a weekly newsletter that gives an overview of news in your niche

You probably won't come up with your unique website proposition right away. It might take you time to figure out what you can do to upgrade the visitor experience of your site but keep this on your long-term goal list.

37 – You Can Add Other Income Streams to Your Affiliate Marketing Site

Diversify your income

As an affiliate marketer your goal is to make money by promoting the products of others and you should focus on that until you're seeing success but that doesn't have to be your only income stream.

For your website niche you could:

- Create your own digital products to sell
- Create your own physical products to sell
- Start a paid coaching course
- Add a paid forum to your site
- Add pay-per-click ads (like Google AdSense) to your site

Get one income stream working well and then add another.

38 – Time is Your Friend (and Your Enemy)

How you spend it is what matters

As I mentioned earlier, it takes time to rank in Google. The passing of time is often going to be a benefit to you because your work will eventually start to bring in traffic.

But none of us has as many hours in the day as we'd like.

If you're limited on time then spend it on the *most productive tasks*.

Creating content is the most important thing you can do to make affiliate commissions.

This is especially true for new affiliate marketers. Don't get too hung up on where your posts are ranking in Google and how many visitors you're getting.

Spend at least your first month simply publishing as much content as you can.

39 – Affiliate Sales Really do Go Up in November and December (for some networks)

Physical product sales skyrocket before Christmas

If you're an affiliate for retailers of physical goods (like Amazon) then your sales should increase significantly in November and December *even if you don't have more traffic*.

That's because consumers spend more money as Christmas approaches. This starts about the middle of October and goes right up until about Christmas Eve.

Whereas the rest of the year a visitor to your site who clicks an affiliate link might buy only the one thing you were promoting in your post, during the holiday shopping season they have other things on their shopping list they want to buy (gifts, holiday supplies, decorations).

This means that *more* of the people who click on your affiliate links are going to buy something **AND** *more* of them are going to buy more than just one item.

Depending on the affiliate network you're promoting you should get a commission on everything they buy while your tracking cookie is live so your sales go up.

40 – Affiliate Marketing Means Different Things to Different People

Know the difference but take from both

Affiliate marketing is literally the promotion of products created by others in exchange for a portion of any sales generated (a commission).

These products could be digital products, physical products, or services.

The job is the same no matter which kind of product or products you promote – getting people to click on your affiliate link.

When I talk about affiliate marketing I am usually referring to the promotion of physical goods (things people can buy at online stores like Amazon – my favorite affiliate program).

However, I also read blogs by people who promote only digital products, too, because we have the same overall goal.

That means that sometimes information that might be helpful to you is being written by someone who promotes different kinds of products than you do.

Don't ignore tips you might get from people who operate a slightly different business model than yours.

41 – You Can Learn a Lot by Studying Other Affiliate Marketing Websites

Keep your eyes open

While doing research for your niche (or even when you're doing some personal shopping online) you will come across other affiliate marketing websites.

You can find inspiration by taking the time to study those sites.

What kinds of header images are they using? Do they have social media profiles? What's in the sidebar of their site? What's in the footer? What kinds of topics are they writing about? What affiliate networks are they promoting? How have they set up their navigation menu?

All of these things might give you ideas for improving your own site.

42 – You're Never Done Learning

Grow yourself

Because the tools, terms, consumer landscape, and technology related to affiliate marketing are always changing, you need to continue learning no matter how much experience you've gained.

If you don't continuously grow your knowledge your affiliate marketing techniques may become stale and less effective over time which means your income doesn't grow as fast as it could.

43 – Investing in Your Affiliate Marketing Site Can Be Good

Just be smart about it

You can spend money on amazing tools and add-ons for your website – software, images, custom programming, writers, and more.

Sellers of these kinds of items are going to make it sound like you can't live without the item or service – that's their job.

However, your job should be to spend with your head and not with your heart.

Spend money on the things that are really going to save you time or help you make more affiliate sales.

44 – Don't Get Trapped in the Digital World

Great ideas for affiliate marketing exist in the real world

Since your job is to draw attention to products, paying attention to how brick and mortar stores around you showcase their products can give you ideas for content for your affiliate marketing site.

The next time you're out shopping look at product displays and store banners:

- What new products do you see that are related to your niche?
- What intriguing words are retailers using to describe products either on displays or on packaging?
- What products related to your niche are getting paired with other products?
- What products seem to be the most popular?

Use your cell phone to take notes or photos that you can refer to when you get back home.

45 – You WILL Get Better Over Time

Practice makes you better and faster

Every step a beginning affiliate marketer takes seems to require a huge amount of time.

It might take you a week or more to write your first website post and at that rate it's normal to wonder how on earth you'll ever make enough money to meet your financial goals.

The more you work at it, though, the more comfortable you get with the steps and you will eventually get faster.

What used to take you a week will soon take you just a couple of days and what took a few days may soon only need a couple of hours.

Soon, you'll notice more, complete more in less time, and come up with ideas in your head even when you're off doing other things like eating dinner or watching TV.

46 – Very Few People Have Any Idea What They're Doing When They Get Started

It's okay to be confused

Feeling lost? Welcome to affiliate marketing!

When I first started I had never heard of WordPress, I didn't know how to buy a domain name, and I had no idea how to choose (or even sign up for) a website hosting company.

All I knew was that I'd read an explanation of affiliate marketing somewhere and it sounded very interesting.

Getting from "I want to try this" to actually doing it was a HUGE learning curve.

I spent weeks at a time chasing information before I could take even a tiny step forward.

For the record I suggest you start with these steps:

- Choose a niche
- Choose a domain name

- Get website hosting (you can buy your chosen domain name when you register with a hosting company)
- Set up WordPress

If I can do these steps, you can, too. It might seem very technical and complex at first but it's not really that bad!

47 – Affiliate Marketing is Not for Everyone

There are lots of other ways to make money online

I've been binge-watching a show called Scorpion. It's about a team of high-IQ experts who solve crimes and prevent disasters.

In one episode, the team causes a blackjack dealer to get fired because his small hands are resulting in a loss of income for the casino.

The dealer is obviously very distraught about losing his job but when the head of the team runs into the dealer later in the episode, he tells him not to worry – he can analyze his skill set and features and set him up on a better career path.

Just as dealing blackjack is not for everyone, affiliate marketing is also not ideal for everyone.

My husband is the perfect example. He hates to write, barely tolerates social media sites, and would never, ever want to create a website. He is not a good candidate for affiliate marketing.

If you like the idea of making money online but you hate all of the tasks that are required of affiliate marketing then you should explore the many alternatives available to you.

Assess your skill sets and hobbies and research how they might better fit in the online world.

If you like programming you could offer your services to website owners.

If you like photography you could upload your work to stock photo sites that website owners use to find photos for their websites.

If you are a Pinterest fanatic you could offer your services managing the Pinterest profiles of other affiliate marketers or businesses.

There are many paths to the top – find the one that suits you best.

48 – Your Journey Will Be Unique

No two paths are the same

Don't expect to see the same results as another affiliate marketer or to see two websites you own achieve results at the same pace.

Each affiliate marketer and each affiliate marketing site travels a unique path all their own.

One website might take longer to rank than another because there's more competition for the one niche.

One person might not see their first sale as quickly as another because they have less time to spend on their site.

Affiliate marketers also learn things in their own time and in their own order. One might be focusing only on content while another is working on improving the number of clicks they get from current site traffic.

Each path in the woods has a beauty all its own. Enjoy yours.

49 – Friends & Family Can Help

Even if they don't understand what you're doing

If I went to one of my family members and asked them to help me with WordPress when I knew they didn't have a clue what WordPress was, well, that would be a waste of time.

But if I had written a website post about baking a pie and had my mother, the ultimate baker in our family, critique the article for me, that would make sense, right?

Or, if I asked my father-in-law, a very good hobby photographer, to take photos for me to use in a website post that would also make sense.

It's not just about asking the right person to help with the right task, it's also about how you ask.

If I started my request with "I'm creating this post for my WordPress site so that I can promote pie plates..." my father-in-law's eyes might glaze over. However, if I said "I need 5 professional images of my ceramic pie plates, could you help?", I bet I'd get a yes.

You don't have to bore your family to tears with the details behind what you're doing but you can call on them for help with specific tasks when that person's expertise would be a benefit.

50 – Grasp the Basic Steps & Dig Deep

An orange is more than just an orange

The basic steps to becoming a successful affiliate marketer make sense at a high level but underneath each of those steps are lots of small details that, when best understood, make all the difference in your results.

The basic steps are to choose a niche, build a website, create content, include your affiliate links, get traffic, get clicks on your affiliate links and make sales.

Here's a look at the deeper layers within each step:

- Finding a niche
 - What is a niche?
 - Should I target a broad niche or narrow one?
 - What niche is best for me?
 - How will the selection of a niche impact my earning potential?
- Building a website
 - Should I own my website or build on a free platform like Blogger?
 - What hosting company should I use?
 - How will the choice of a hosting company impact my site's performance?
 - What risks are there in choosing the wrong hosting company?
 - Can the choice of a hosting company hurt or help my website's rankings in Google?
 - What are the differences between the various hosting plans offered by hosting companies?
 - How do I choose a domain name?
 - Should I use WordPress or an alternative?
 - What settings should I put into my website?
 - How do I set up my site's navigation menu?
- Creating content
 - What is "content"?
 - What kinds of content should I create for my niche?
 - What defines good content and how do I create it?
- Including your affiliate links
 - What are the different ways I can include affiliate links?
 - How can affiliate links be formatted?

- Does positioning or appearance of my affiliate links impact how often the links are clicked?
- Is there a minimum/maximum number of affiliate links I should have in each post?
- Getting traffic
 - What sources of traffic are available to me?
 - Does paid traffic make sense for my niche?
 - Should I drive traffic from social media sites?
 - What can I do to get the best rankings in search engines?
- Getting clicks on your affiliate links
 - What makes site visitors click on a link?
 - What can I do to get more visitors to click a link?
- Making sales
 - What drives people to buy after clicking an affiliate link?
 - What can I do to improve my click-to-sale conversion rate?

There are lots of decisions to be made as you work through each step. The more time you spend understanding the choices you have and how your decisions play a role in your final results, the better you'll do.

Remember, though, you don't have to be perfect right away. You can always go back and improve on what you've built.

If you find that you're using a WordPress theme that is hurting your search engine result rankings, you can replace it with a different one.

If you find that your content isn't up to par, you can rewrite it or add new content to your posts.

If your affiliate links aren't getting clicks you can change their appearance so they're more obvious to your site visitors.

If you have too many affiliate links in a post you can remove some.

I don't want you to get hung up on these steps! Do your best and move to the next one.

If you don't know where to start my [AZON Breeze package](#) will get you through the basic steps as quickly as possible.

I only want you to understand that if your site isn't making sales then going back through these decision points for each step can help you find and fix the problem.

That may require some additional research on your part but each new piece of information you learn is going to help you become a better affiliate marketer.

Time to Work!

Now it's up to you

I know I covered a lot here – sort of a brain dump of information. Phew!

No matter what brought you here I hope you found a) some motivation to keep going and b) some tips to help you become a more successful affiliate marketer.

If you have any questions, please feel free to add a comment below or use my [Contact](#) page to send me an email.

Thanks!

Wishing you the best of success!

Sincerely,

Erica Stone