

A Beginner's Guide: 5 Simple Steps to Start Making Money with Affiliate Programs



By Nicole Dean

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Your level of success or failure will vary as a result of the many factors related to your experience, education, skills and time involved.

There are no guarantees that you will make any money. And, in fact, there is always a possibility that you could lose money as a result of embarking on any business endeavor.

You must do your own due diligence to determine whether you have the skills, personality and perseverance to succeed in this business.

That being said, I hope to hear your success story some day.

About the Author



I'm Nicole Dean, and I've been an online business owner since 2001, and have, over time, earned a full time living online and now earn a comfortable living online.

I teach tested and true strategies that help you to build a solid business that will make you money for years and years to come.

Those that know me know that I don't believe in chasing after the "latest and greatest" thing online or cheating to get the quick money. I help people to build online businesses that they can be proud of. I will help you to make the internet -- and, hopefully the world, a better place by tapping into your skills and talents and passions and helping you to feel confident in the fact that you do have a message and you can help others.

Now, just to clarify... your passions may not be the best way for you to make money, but you may be able to develop your passions and get the word out about causes that you believe in once you do find your voice online and have an audience of people who are listening.

For instance, a cause that is dear to my heart is [Suicide Prevention](#). My online business is not built around Suicide Prevention at all, but right here, right now, you are listening to me talk about it. Suicide has touched my life and the lives of people that I love dearly.

I beg you to take seriously all concerns you may have about a teen or adult who expresses hopelessness. Any offhanded remarks about being better off dead may be a cry for help. Please help. The guilt of finding out too late is not something that I wish upon anyone.

See? I got to talk about one of my passions. Perhaps someone who needs the information will click through the link above and save a life.

I have many websites that are geared towards helping others to succeed in reaching their goals, whether that is an extra \$50 each month of "fun money", an extra \$200 each month to keep a roof over your head, an extra \$2000 each month to replace a lost income... or more.

It's all up to you. With hard work and perseverance, people do make money online.... and I'll be cheering you on along the way.

Step One - Get Your Own Blog (Cheap & Easy)

I earn about 1/3 or more of my income from affiliate marketing. If you're new to the concept, affiliate marketing is simply "referral marketing". You earn money by recommending products and services to others. When they buy those items, you earn a percentage of that sale.

Logic Check

I'll bet that you're an affiliate marketer already. You're just not getting paid for it.

Let me ask you which restaurant is your favorite and why?

Now, what movie should I see in the theaters?

See? You already make recommendations to your family and friends - you're just not getting paid for it yet.

Yes, affiliate marketing is about making recommendations, but it's not about talking to people one at a time and selling to them, like direct sales. It's much easier (in my opinion) than that, although I have absolutely nothing against network marketing and I know many people who do quite well with it. I'm just saying that affiliate marketing to me, doesn't involve the face-to-face selling, which I don't personally enjoy as much.

And, if it sounds "scammy" - let me tell you a few places where I earn money from affiliate marketing - Amazon.com, Fredrick's of Hollywood, Organize.com, and **Net Nanny**. So, this isn't some back-alley method of making money. Those are known brands who gladly pay ME to advertise for them.

For instance, let's say you have a **Flip Mino** since they are very hot right now and want to talk about how much you love it. Well, you'd use a special link that Amazon.com provides you and, when your friend buys the Flip, you'd earn a percentage of the amount they spent. Why would amazon do this? Simple. You're advertising for them. You brought them a sale. You get a percentage of that money that they may not have otherwise gotten.

It's very similar to a Real Estate Agent. They receive a percentage of the sale of a house by helping to facilitate that sale. They bring a buyer and seller together so that they both end up happy.

You can do that, too, from your Computer in your jammies. It's not "easy" money, but it is real money, especially when you do it the way I'll teach you in the next few days.

Step One in this Process is ...

To reach a large audience by setting up a Word Press Blog. It's all well and good to tell your friends about how much you love the Flip, but you'll make a heck of a lot more money if you expand your reach.

So... Choose a group of people that you'd like to talk with on a daily basis and a topic that they're looking for help with.

For example

Moms who scrapbook who need supplies and tips

OR

parents of high school kids who need help finding money for college

OR

pregnant women who want to stay in shape.

It can be anything where people need information and they are willing to spend money. You think scrapbookers spend money? If you don't, you've never been at a Scrapbook Party. YOWSERS! They do.

Now I know that we're all on a budget these days, so I'll give you the cheapest way to get started that actually works.

Watch this video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyhK8rBXWFE> for instructions or follow the steps below.

1. Go to [Reliable Webs Free Blog Installations](#) - On that page, you'll see there are several prefilled blogs to choose from or you can create your own.
2. Click on the Mini Hosting Plan (which is under \$10/month).
3. On the next page, enter your preferred URL (the website you'd like to set up) and click "search". Make sure the URL is short and specific and memorable. Try to avoid numbers and dashes and abbreviations. We recommend only a .com, not any other option. You may need to type in a few as some are not available. This is assuming you do not already have a domain purchased elsewhere. If you already own it through GoDaddy or another registrar, then you can enter it at this time and click "search". (If you need help at any step in this process, email support@reliablewebs.com)
4. Once you find an available domain (or URL) you'll click on "Register Domain" and "continue" which will take you to the next page. (If you already own the domain, then you'd instead choose "Self Management" and "continue".)
5. Follow the directions on the next page, choosing your usernames and

passwords. And, then pay.

Now you're on the road to having a LASTING online business that will grow with you.

Once step one is finished, you may move to Step Two.

→ Feeling overwhelmed? I recommend you check out [this course](#) to walk you through the steps involved. (Including step-by-step videos.) ←

Step Two - Find Targeted Quality Affiliate Programs to Promote.

Step Two involves figuring out your categories and keywords (doing some basic research) and choosing affiliate programs to promote. Makes sense, right? You need to have an idea what you'll be promoting before you start.

Now, this could get into a huge long discussion, but I'm giving you my "get it going now and revise later" method, so that you can have a business at the end of this report. You'll have the opportunity to revise it and make changes forever. Let's just get you up and running for now.

ok. Keywords. Don't go run off on me. You now know what your topic is and who your audience is. Now we just want to get a good idea of what they are looking for regarding that topic.

Here's an easy way to get a snapshot:

<http://freekeywords.wordtracker.com/>

If your website will be about weight loss, for instance, then, you'd enter diet, weight loss, lose weight, or any other terms common to that topic.

And, you'll get a list that looks like this...

- 4797 diet
- 2431 free diet plans
- 2261 south beach diet
- 1965 atkins diet
- 1883 beach body diet
- 1750 american heart association 3 day diet
- 1418 free online diets
- 1412 diets
- 1251 diabetic diet
- 1153 diet pills
- 1142 cabbage soup diet best recipe
- 1128 american heart association diet
- 1086 free online diet plans
- 1052 cabbage soup diet
- 1014 raw food diet

982 american heart association diet plan online
977 free diet programs
944 how does the jenny craig diet work
933 grapefruit diet
928 free copy of 3 day diet
926 3 day tuna diet
885 high blood pressure diet
877 dash diet
836 free diet meal plans
822 mediterranean diet
804 diabetes diet
792 what is the cost of the jenny craig diet
744 low-fat diet
648 healthy diet for athletes

That will give you a peek into the market.

First thing, first. Look through the lists of keywords and key phrases that you receive from WordTracker and start looking for patterns and/or logical categories from the searches.

Definition:

Keyword is a single word.

Key phrase is two or more words together.

What will your readers be looking for and what can you provide them? Now, while “free diet plans” might look good, you'll want to consider what they're planning to do once they land on your site. Hmm... grab free information and run? And, how will you make money with that?

In the list above and in clicking around, I see the term “diet plans” quite a bit and “diet review” so you could easily create a section on your blog about diet plan reviews.

Now, how to monetize it.

Before I get into that I'd like to explain some terminology when referring to Affiliate Programs.

Pay Per Impression - You get paid for the number of times an advertisement is viewed on your website. These are hard to find until you're established.

Pay Per Click - You get paid every time someone clicks on a certain advertisement. The most popular type of these programs is Google AdSense. (Free course: www.ShowMomtheAdSense.com)

Pay Per Lead - You are paid every time someone signs up to receive information about a certain product or service. There are pay per lead programs that pay anywhere from 25cents all the way up to \$20 or more.

Pay Per Sale - This is the most common type of affiliate program. You get paid a % of each sale that you send to the company. Amazon.com, Clickbank.com, etc. run on this model.

Recurring Affiliate Commission - The holy grail of affiliate programs. These are affiliate programs that pay you month after month after month.

Ex: ReliableWebs.com hosting pays commission for every month that your referral keeps their hosting account. I don't know about you, but I really dislike moving my hosting companies so I do that as seldom as I have to. That means that you can continue to be paid for a referral that you made for 5 years or more. (We like these kinds of programs!)

Let's go back to our example. If you're creating a diet plan blog, you might add some Google AdSense to see how it does on your blog.

One obvious affiliate program that you'd want to sign up for, would be Amazon.com. You could offer reviews of each diet plan and then offer the "Official Book" for sale at the end. I have every single book ever printed for the South Beach Diet, so I know that people do spend money on them.

Some diet and exercise plans are not available on Amazon, but are on Clickbank.com and you'll find products to promote in their [marketplace](#).

You may also want to sign up for CJ.com as they oftentimes have programs that are a natural fit for your market. I do well with them. You just need to look around a bit and find the perfect affiliate program.

And, I also offer an [Affiliate Network for Moms](#) ← that you might check out.

Some tips when choosing affiliate programs to promote.

Select quality products always. Never ever promote something on your blog that you wouldn't personally recommend that a friend buy.

Make sure the product is highly targeted to the minds of the people who come to your blog. (You never know which page someone will land on when they come to your site from another site, so always make sure that they get an immediate feel for what you're offering in less than 5 seconds of being there.) - For instance, don't offer pet food ads on a blog about scrapbooking. Yes, people who scrapbook may have pets, but that's not what they are looking for on your blog. Capiche? :)

Here are some more tips for [**Choosing a Quality Affiliate Program**](#).

Your assignment is to firm up your niche, get your blog up and running if you haven't already, set up a few categories based upon your research at WordTracker, and go find some quality affiliate programs to promote.

Next we'll talk about what to write about and some shortcuts.

Move to Step Three after Step Two is Completed.

→ For step-by-step videos as well as real-life examples of blogs that are making money, I recommend [**this course**](#). ←

Step Three – Quality Content Makes the World Go Round

Welcome to Step Three.

In Step One, I showed you how to get a blog set up and running for under \$20. So, basically less than ordering pizza for your family, even with good coupons!

In Step Two, I showed you how to figure out which categories to set up and where to look for targeted products with great affiliate programs to promote.

Well, I'm back with Step Three. And, this is the ongoing part that people tend to get stuck with.

What Do I do Now? What should I write about?

Well, let me start by saying this is not nearly as difficult as you'd think.

You can write your blog posts yourself of course. Or you can borrow or even buy blog posts from other places.

Let's Start with Ways to Borrow Content

Guest Columnists

One way of getting content on your website is to get guest experts. Now, before you start thinking that there's no way someone would want to contribute to your brand new blog, there are a few ways around that issue. ;)

They don't call me a content expert for nothing.

Free Reprint Articles & Audios.

Go to places like www.LadyPens.com and you'll find articles written by experts on a variety of topics. The authors are screened prior to being accepted so there is no junk allowed. You may grab any of the articles on the site and post them on your blog, just as long as you include the author bio/resource at the end. It would say something like...

Nicole Dean is the mostly-sane online business coach and mom of two. Are you a Work at Home Mom looking for ways to get more traffic? Take Nicole's Web Traffic School tutorial - Free!

www.WebTrafficBasics.com

I always recommend that, when you use articles from places like LadyPens.com or EzineArticles.com that you add an intro to the beginning of the article so that your blog page is a little different than the one at the article directory.

So, basically, if you can copy & paste, you can have guest experts from LadyPens

on your blog.

If you notice, at LadyPens, you can also grab free reprint *audios* that you can post on your blog. ;) Where else do you see that going on?

Free Affiliate Articles

Similar to LadyPens.com, there are experts who will allow you to use their articles on your blog, but there's a cool twist.

In the author resource bio, instead of linking to the website like you normally would, you can sometimes link to the author's website using your affiliate link for their product or service.

Cool, isn't it? Of course, you can search through any old article directory and ask the authors if it's ok for you to do this. Some will say "yes" and others will say "no".

Or, you can go to www.FreeAffiliateArticles.com and find a bunch of authors who have already agreed to allow you to reprint their articles with your affiliate link inside.

Interviews

I do interviews all the time. In fact, I normally do 1-5 per week – a combination of written and audio interviews. Why? Because, again, I get to reach a new crowd of people who may like me and want to learn more from me.

If I do interviews, you know that other people do, too. In fact, just go to www.BlogTalkRadio.com and you'll find a whole slew of people who are being interviewed day in and day out.

Audio interviews are great, but, text interviews are even easier. Just write up a few questions and email it to someone who your readers would enjoy learning more about. (If that person has a product or service that you can recommend with your affiliate link – even better!)

Authors, experts, speakers – everywhere you look, you'll find people who want exposure. Since you're now a blogger, you can help them to get it, while building up your blog as a valuable resource for others. Need an expert in working from home or online business – ask me!

Excerpts

I'm an Affiliate Manager. What that means is that I Recruit, Train, Motivate and Manage affiliate programs for others. I'm not taking clients anymore, because I've found my perfect job. I've been the affiliate manager for [Jimmy D. Brown](#)

who is an amazing mentor and friend.

Well.. where this is going is that we offer excerpts of his most popular courses in our affiliate center at www.InfoProfitShare.com for affiliates to use to promote his programs.

I'm sure you can find other affiliate sites in your niche that would be willing to do the same.

Videos

Oh, how I love YouTube.com. It's full of fresh content for the taking. You can embed most of the videos that are displayed on YouTube.com and other video sites into YOUR blog.

You can even grab mine here: <http://youtube.com/user/NicoleOntheNet> (So sorry about the limited number of them... I'm working on that.)

Heck, if you want to talk about your favorite products and services and post the video on your blog with a link, you can certainly do well with affiliate marketing.

Let's Move On to Ways to Buy Content

Now, I'm kind of flying through this since I don't want report to be so long that no one reads through it. So, here are two ways to buy blog posts...

Ghostwriters

A ghostwriter is someone who writes for you, as you. They take no credit for the work and you keep it forever.

The benefits of this are obvious. Less work for you!

The drawbacks are – money out of your pocket and finding a great ghostwriter.

Where can you look? Check out Shelancers.com

PLR Content

This is one of my most favorite inventions. This is similar to hiring a ghostwriter, except that the articles are sold to multiple people.

Here's what I mean. I could find PLR articles about just about any niche, and buy them for approximately \$1 per article. The owner of the PLR site sells the same articles to anywhere from 25-2500 other people, so you can get them pretty affordably. (Less expensive than hiring a ghostwriter to write them for you.)

Once you have the articles, you then use them as drafts for your blog. I always encourage you to edit them to make them your own. Change the title, add your

thoughts, add examples that are specific to your niche.

The only real drawback to PLR is finding quality articles. Luckily I have a good source for you: www.EasyPLR.com

Next we'll talk about how to get people to read your blog.
Move to Step Four after you've added some content to your blog.

→ If you'd like more help, including step-by-step videos,
I recommend [this course](#). ←

Step Four – Start Promoting the Snot out of your New Blog.

Welcome to Step Four. By now you should have a blog set up, you've found affiliate programs to promote, and you've got lots of ideas for getting content.

This is where the rubber meets the road. A lot of people start blogs, and get excited about making money with them, but then when it comes to marketing the blogs – the wind goes out of their sails and they lose momentum.

If ANYONE ever said that starting a blog for profit was easy, I'm here to tell you that it isn't. Earning an online income takes work. It may involve getting out of your comfort zone, but it certainly can and does work. I'm proof of that, and you'll find several others who are, by either listening to my [Success Online Podcast](#).

So, adding content and including promotions is a great start, but now it's time to get as many eyeballs reading your blog as possible. You'll do that by marketing or promoting your blog in a number of ways.

However, this post is probably not going to say what you think it will say. I'm going to actually give you a LOGICAL way to start promoting your business, not one magic bean to grow a pot of gold.

First, before I recommend HOW you promote your blog, I'm going to ask you a question -

"What do you enjoy doing the most? Writing, Networking, Talking on the Phone, or Making Videos?"

Your answer to that question will determine which direction I point you first. The problem is that there are a limitless number of ways to drive traffic to (or get advertising for) your new blog. However, instead of telling you what you should be doing, I'm going to tell you that most of the methods you've heard about work quite well when done consistently. (Some are just scams so stay away, but most are valid methods of marketing.)

So, instead, I will recommend that you find the few methods of marketing your new blog that you'd actually enjoy doing (or do without tears) and do THOSE daily. Not weekly. Daily.

If you are unsure what I'm talking about, I'll point you to my free course about getting Web Traffic: www.WebTrafficBasics.com ← a course for beginners.

You can do article marketing and guest blogging, which is similar to what the women at LadyPens.com are doing. (Learn more about Article Marketing

at www.EasyArticleMarketing.com)

You can do interviews or start a Blog Talk Radio show to drive traffic. If you're a natural and love to talk on the phone, this could be a great fit for you.

You can network and use social media for traffic. Comment on other blogs, participate in related forums, and schmooze your way into traffic.

You can create videos for traffic. If you enjoy videos, then do that. Submit to all of the video sites and get them spread all over the net.

Yes, they ALL work. However, if you're the type of person who really dislikes writing articles, then do not use article marketing to promote your blog – at least not at first, because I know you won't do it. Am I right? Instead, choose something that you think you'd enjoy. Do that. Every day.

From there, you'll take steps into the other areas, but at first, just stick to one thing, learn it and do it well. Branch out from there.

I'll actually blurt a little secret to you. Once you have your blog up and running and you've promoted it a few months, check out your web stats in your hosting account or Google Analytics.

See where you're succeeding at getting traffic. Do that more.

What's not working? Stop doing those things.

Why don't I tell you what exactly will work and what won't? Simple. It varies by niche. What works for my recipe site is a different than what works for my internet marketing sites. So, throw seeds out there and see what grows. Let your website tell you what areas are getting traffic and which aren't. Let it tell you what keywords the search engines love you for and which you're not even close on. You've just got to listen and it will tell you where the money is.

It's as easy as that. If you sit and think about it for weeks at a time, you'll never get started, so just pick three ways to market your business and do those daily for a few months. Then, look at your stats and see what's working. Revise and get back to work.

There's no need to overcomplicate things, guys. Just take action and adjust later. That's all there is to it. It'll never be perfect. The time is NOW. Go get that traffic!

→ If you'd like more help, I recommend [this course](#). ←

Step Five – Set up a Way to Bring them Back for More.

Now, this goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway. I'm no Superwoman, and I don't expect you to be Super-Human either. These are steps in the process, and step 2-5 are ongoing, so I don't expect to get them all done today. You'll work on those as long as you keep your blog.

So, please don't get overwhelmed and go nuts trying to do everything in one week. That's certainly not my goal. Take your time, reread the last few steps and just soak it in.

On to the final step in having a MONEY-MAKING blog. It's time to talk about setting up a mailing list/ecourse/ezine/online newsletter. Whatever you want to call it - you need one.

Why? Because it brings your visitors back to your website again and again and again. The more they come back to see you, the more they can get to KNOW, LIKE, and TRUST you and buy the products and services that you recommend. Otherwise, they're like *Vanilla Ice* (remember him?) and are a one-hit wonder.

I know it's a bit overwhelming, but consider this...

Sally comes to your blog, reads a bit, clicks through a link and then disappears forever.

OR

Mary comes to your blog, reads a bit, likes what she reads, signs up for your newsletter, comes back week after week, and forwards your newsletter to friends, tweets about your newest blog posts, and becomes your #1 fan.

I choose option #2! I want all my blog visitors to be "Mary", don't you?

ok. We've established that you need a list, but ... ecourse vs. newsletter. Which to choose?

Personally, I really dislike tedium and commitment. So, rather than setting up a newsletter that runs forever, I tend to lean towards an ecourse.

What's the difference?

Well, an ezine or newsletter is normally sent weekly to your readers, and is full of information.

An ecourse, on the other hand is a series of messages that are sent via autoresponder starting with #1 and ending with the last one. For instance, I

mentioned my ecourse www.WebTrafficBasics.com – well, that's a series of about 30 messages that are already written. If you signed up yesterday, you'll receive message #1. Those who signed up six months ago are probably receiving message number 20 about now, and those who signed up last year have gone through the entire course. See the difference?

You can choose whichever you'd prefer.

BUT... (here's the big BUT) – make the list very very (did I mention VERY) targeted. Do not set up an ecourse entitled “Tips for Moms” please, because that spans way too large of a crowd and you'll never quite know who you're talking to.

Is it the mom with the newborn who needs sleep or is it the mom of teens who needs to know how to talk with their kids about touchy topics like drugs and sex?

There's no possible way you can keep them both happy by sending “Tips to Moms”. If you try to make them both happy, neither will be. Trust me. Been there. Done that.

In fact, the more targeted you can make your list (or lists) – the better. If you've got a cooking site, are you talking to college students, new moms, large families, or even grandparents? Are the people looking for fast, frugal, gourmet, or diabetic recipes? Unless you're very specific before you set up your ecourse or ezine, again, you'll end up missing the mark.

So, what next? Geesh. This is kind of a hard topic to cover quickly.

Sign up for this really good free ecourse on the topic www.ListProfitSystem.com by my mentor Jimmy D. Brown. He'll ask you to buy his full list course and I do recommend it, but either way, grab the free report and read it and reread it. It's quite good.

You'll get a better picture of list-building basics by starting there. :)

The one thing you'll eventually need when you start building your ezine or mailing list is a good autoresponder. The one that I've used since 2005 is [Aweber](#).

ok, guys. That's really all there is to starting a money-making blog. It just comes down to doing it and doing it again... and again... and again.

Add content. Promote. Build your list. Repeat, repeat, repeat.

Then, after you've done that awhile, take a break to assess. See what's working. Adjust. Repeat, repeat, repeat.

And, most importantly, take **everything** that you're doing now and consider that

you're learning ON THE JOB. This one website does not need to be your be-all, end-all, and it may not be. But, everything that you do is teaching you internet marketing skills, and also helping you to realize that you can do this!

Warmly,
Nicole Dean

Recommended Resource:



The image shows a screenshot of an email from Jimmy D. Brown's website, "Affiliatenaire". The header features the name "Jimmy D Brown's" and the logo "AFFILIATENAIRE" with the tagline "Make Money Selling Other People's Stuff in 3 Hours Or Less" and the website URL "www.Affiliatenaire.com". A navigation menu on the left includes links for Home, FAQ, Affiliates, Contact Us, and Join Now. The main content of the email is a promotional message for a program. It starts with an attention-grabbing line: "ATTENTION: I'm looking for absolute beginners who want to earn extra income on the Internet by test-driving the easiest way to get paid online." This is followed by a bold question: "Can You Set Aside Just 1-3 Hours Every Week To Complete One Simple Assignment?". Below this, it says "If yes..." and then another bold statement: "Let Me Show You How To Get Cash In The Bank Without A Website, Experience Or Even An Idea!". A handwritten-style note follows: "Plus, see details below on the *NEW* 'Resources on Demand' program where I hand-deliver anything you need for the next 365 days!". At the bottom, it identifies the sender as "From: Jimmy D. Brown" and the subject as "Re: Becoming A Cash-Producing Affiliatenaire™".

[Click Here For More Details](#)