

Finch Sells

The Affiliate Marketer's *Survival Kit*

An Introduction to Affiliate
Marketing in 2012

Please note: This affiliate guide was written in July 2012 and some of the techniques discussed may now be out of date or irrelevant.

The most recent version of this Survival Guide - updated and expanded to over 28,000 words - was released on Kindle in February 2013, and is available on Amazon.

<http://www.amazon.com/Affiliate-Marketing-Survival-Guide-ebook/dp/B00BCQT8ZE/>

The Affiliate Marketing Survival Guide 2013 went straight to #1 on Amazon's Marketing Bestsellers.

You can grab yourself a copy for less than five bucks.

In the meantime, here is the free guide. I hope you enjoy it!

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Introduction: Who The Hell Am I?

Hello, bonjour, hola and welcome to my Affiliate Marketer's Survival Kit.

I am Finch, a twenty-something Brit who makes money while fiddling with his balls in dark shady corners of the Internet.

This guide is designed for anybody who wants to get started with affiliate marketing. And considering at least 97.8% of the population is interested in 'making money online', that's a lot of people.

This guide is also written for anybody who has read my blog and silently questioned just what in the name of the Anti-Christ I do for a living.

Please don't feel alone if that's the case.

You're in the same boat as practically everybody I've spoken to in a pub after seven pints.

This kit will do away with the confusion and reveal me for the scumbag I truly am, along with the many others making a living from affiliate marketing.

I hope the information to follow gives you a clearer picture of whether affiliate marketing is right for you. If you've already tried making money from affiliate marketing to no avail, well, there should be something for you here too.

We'll be looking at a lot of common mistakes, and some of the logical fallacies that doom affiliates to failure from the very start.

Okay, that's enough of the introductory bollocks.

Let's jump straight in to the good stuff.

The Basics of Affiliate Marketing

I'm sure many of you will be reading with a fairly accurate image in your heads of what affiliate marketing is. But given the foundational nature of this guide, I'm going to assume nothing and ram the point home just in case.

Affiliate marketing is a middleman's game.

Companies want customers, right?

But companies aren't always highly skilled at attracting - or even finding - those customers. Similarly, the companies that *are* highly skilled in this regard recognise that attracting even more customers is a worthwhile pursuit. Everybody loves business growth. And most companies love getting more customers.

Affiliate marketers are the bridge between company and customer. We are traffic and lead generation experts. We specialise in connecting companies to customers, and usually in that order.

The more reputable affiliates, those with souls and the ability to smile every once in a while... they connect customers to companies - a very big difference in thinking.

Unfortunately, 'customer care' is rarely associated with the big bucks where affiliate marketing is concerned.

Many of us spend our days concocting new and creative angles to coax users in to registering with the companies we act as traffic agents for. We are too often guilty of neglecting the customer's best interests. Yet it's a dog-eat-dog world, and in reality you have to be aggressive to succeed in this industry.

There are two types of affiliates:

Affiliates who primarily spend money on advertising.

This involves the guy who spends \$5 advertising on Facebook in the hope that he'll be able to convince a user to sign up to Company X. If he succeeds, he receives \$10 in commission - thus doubling his money.

We call this the arbitrage game. You're buying traffic with the intention of selling it for more. Hit the sweet spot and you can make a lot of money in a matter of days rather than months.

Get the game wrong and, like many affiliates, you'll lose money. *(And your god damn marbles in the process.)*

Affiliates who spend time building web assets.

Many of the world's largest websites are glorified affiliate marketing machines.

For example, you could develop a sports betting site that pulls in the latest odds from multiple external companies (all of which have affiliate programs). When a user clicks through your site to

find the best odds, then signs up through the third party company and places a bet - you get commission from that company.

These kinds of affiliate marketing projects are long-winded and steeped in challenges - but they offer the ultimate prize of (relatively) passive income if you succeed.

Once the asset is built and the traffic is flowing, you have no costs other than what it takes to keep that asset online.

A Very Divided Industry

Whether you decide to become an arbitrage affiliate who specialises in quick coups, or a future-minded affiliate who seeks to build long-term assets, there is no easy path to success.

My blog has traditionally focused on the CPA side of affiliate marketing (that's the arbitrage game). But I am increasingly leaning towards the development of long-term assets.

I'm certainly not alone.

2 or 3 years ago, arbitrage affiliate marketing was all the rage. Millionaires were being churned out almost overnight.

Advertising on Facebook and Google was dirt cheap, and it presented few of the challenges that you and I face today.

As a result, the web became plastered in "*Make Money From Google*" ads, and "*Get Ripped with Acai Berry*" pop-ups.

The sudden rise of CPA affiliate marketing ran almost parallel with the dramatic outpouring of complaints from users who had been duped or misled in to these scummy offers.

The industry became *too big to succeed*.

Since those easy money days of 2009 and 2010, Facebook and Google have been rolling out advertising guidelines that have tightened the noose around affiliate necks, making it harder and harder to succeed as a middleman.

The CPA affiliate marketing industry you see blogged about today is a shell of the monster it used to be. And while there is still huge money to be made playing arbitrage, that money belongs to the truly creative and dedicated affiliates who are patient enough to deal with initial failure. And I warn you; it can take *a lot* of 'initial' failures before hitting success.

Many CPA marketers who lined their pockets at the height of the arbitrage boom are now scurrying to develop long-term assets.

Realistically, we should all be looking to add value to the world. To be a helping hand rather than a raging nuisance to the customers we meddle with.

Affiliate marketing has spent the last several years in self-correction mode. The industry that stands before you today has as much potential as it always did. Yet more than ever, we need to be looking at ways to bridge the relationship between customer and company. Not the other way round.

Affiliate Marketing as a Career Choice

Let's get it out there early...

You would have to be mildly sadist to choose CPA affiliate marketing as a career choice for the rest of your life.

CPA is an incredibly fast and scalable way of making money, but its drawbacks are significant. The industry is volatile as all Hell.

The biggest problem is that so much of the arbitrage game is out of your control.

Think about the risks...

1. A network could go out of business and not pay you (a worrying sign of the current times, I might add)
2. Your advertising account could be banned overnight for no reason other than the fact that you're an affiliate. Companies like Facebook and Google don't want to work with flimsy middlemen companies (i.e. Us.).
3. The offer you're making money from could disappear overnight, or decide to cut you from the program if your leads aren't backing out. This is rampant. It happens to hundreds of affiliates every day.

4. Your lack of knowledge towards the offer could lead to you marketing deceptively and running balls-first in to the FTC. Some affiliates don't even try to understand what they're promoting - and the FTC invariably gobbles them up for breakfast.

5. Everything about the arbitrage affiliate model is designed to be effective in the here and now - it rarely concerns itself with tomorrow. If your ad costs rise, or your payout is chopped, how will you pay the rent then? Many arbitragers simply don't have backup plans, and that desperation leads to the kinds of murky tactics that put a bad name on us all.

Let me put it to you clearly: CPA affiliate marketing is a fantastic way to make money. The best I've ever discovered. But it's not a healthy recipe for a long-term business.

Whatever money you're making from the arbitrage game should be reinvested in to the development of long-term business assets - those that are in your hands.

And yes, affiliate marketing can still be a fundamental part of those long-term assets. The only difference is that we should be striving to generate the traffic through means where we don't have to pay a company like Facebook or Google.

To put it in layman's terms, you want to be appearing at the top of Google in the free listings *not* the sponsored listings. You want to be appearing on Facebook as an item that a user has shared, *not* as an ad on the sidebar.

If you can develop websites, apps and scripts that achieve this feat, you can leverage the powerful monetization aspect of affiliate marketing to make an absolute killing AND still get to sleep at night.

The challenge is to offer value to the user.

It all comes down to value, whereas value never entered the equation when I was getting started in this industry. Much to the dismay of affiliate marketers, but probably for the good of the web, things have changed.

And so must we.

Any career in affiliate marketing needs to be reconsidered as a career in value creation.

What Currently Works

This is always a hot topic in my inbox.

“Hey Finch, I’ve tried X, Y and Z. They all bombed spectacularly. Can you tell me what actually works? I need to make money to pay for the mansion I just bought. PS. I just quit my job LOL”

I think it’s important that I use this chance to give you an idea of what is currently working, so you don’t spunk a fortune and a small part of your life on what was profitable in 2009.

Many newbies read the holy motherload of blog posts and forum threads before putting any of their scrambled thoughts in to action. While I certainly do suggest that you read enough to learn from other marketer’s mistakes, you must learn to take in to consideration the variable of Father Time.

I launched my blog back in 2009 and it’s fair to say that the first 2 years of posts are now pretty much irrelevant. The industry changes that quickly.

The same applies to any other affiliate marketing blog, and especially to forum threads on places like the Warrior Forum where it’s fucking rare that a poster knows what he’s talking about in the here and now, let alone as a marker legacy for the future.

If you've been reading about the glory days and wondering how to launch a massive Google campaign for a skincare product, or a Facebook campaign for JustHookup.com - think again.

The goalposts have shifted.

Here's an idea of what's working now (as of June 2012):

1. International Facebook campaigns in unsaturated markets.

Advertising to the USA, or even the UK, is pretty much dead. If it's not dead now, it probably will be by the time you read this post. There is still good money to be made playing the arbitrage game on Facebook, but you're going to have to operate in markets that you're naturally unfamiliar with. Think mainland Europe, Asia and South America.

One of the strongest Facebook markets for affiliates right now is South America. It's a good time to learn Spanish or Portuguese. These markets are rocking and they're only going to grow.

2. Plentyoffish with plenty of angles.

Plentyoffish is a hugely popular entry point in to affiliate marketing for many newbies. The platform has a massive amount of targeting variables, making it possible to setup a campaign for just about anything. Of course, the majority still choose dating.

Similarly to Facebook, Plentyoffish has been hurt by the massive influx of advertisers driving up click costs.

You can be successful here - and I recommend it as your first traffic source - but you're going to need to create truly unique angles to sell your offers. Think outside the box and avoid what the majority of affiliates are doing.

I also recommend that you experiment with non-dating campaigns. These are eye-catching simply for being a break away from the norm.

3. Mobile traffic is exploding.

Notice how the majority of new offers being brought on to CPA networks are mobile? That's because mobile is hot, and it's only going to get hotter.

The rise of tablets and smartphones means that more and more consumers are getting used to carrying out their usual web habits on a mobile device. The opportunity to advertise to these users is one of the rare few bright spots of affiliate marketing that has that 2009/10 potential to boom overnight if you hit the sweet spot.

The downside? Mobile offers require a religious dedication to tracking. It has to be your holy grail. You also have to be prepared to lose a lot of money on campaigns that were never meant to be... for reasons that you simply can't predict.

Some offers convert like wildfire on a particular carrier, but will bomb on others. Some handsets aren't compatible for CPA offers. But you're only likely to discover this when your dollars are already floating down the drain.

Mobile is a demanding but lucrative opportunity for affiliate marketers.

Crucially, those who do find success on mobile... make a lot of money without a fraction of the campaign burnout that many of us associate with Plentyoffish and Facebook.

If you nail it, you really nail it.

Use this [excellent compilation of mobile resources](#) on PPC.bz to guide your initial efforts.

One of the reasons why mobile is seen as a tough nut to crack is because it goes against the grain of what many web-based marketers are used to. If you're new to the industry - this is your competitive advantage.

You can tackle the market with a fresh outlook and an unbiased attitude. You'll still need skill and patience. But you won't be tempted to crack your skull against a sizeable Oak tree when all you've learnt before counts for nothing!

4. Adult dating has become easier than Mainstream Dating

I've been bitching about the lack of fresh mainstream dating offers for a while now.

Note: By mainstream, I mean offers that aren't branded with classily gender-neutral names like 'Local Slags' or 'Shag a BBW Tonight'. I can see the women just queuing at the gates...

If you're finding that the mainstream dating offers are not working out, or that Facebook is refusing to accept anything less than Match.com, then I recommend exploring the adult market.

It's easier to get profitable, and you can scale a monster campaign by combining awesome Photoshoppery with a wise grasp of your stats.

Traffic sources like [Traffic Junky](#), [Exoclick](#) and [Juicy Ads](#) are the easiest entry points.

*Note: If you are trying to crack affiliate marketing from the comforts of your lunch break in a busy shared office, let me be the first to say: **DON'T TRY THIS NICHE AT WORK!***

You are going to be dealing with endless collections of titties and monster 12-inch savalloys. If a colleague checks your Recent Tabs, it's going to be goodnight to that career, Sherlock.

5. Capturing traffic to increase long-term worth of traffic.

There's a saying that remains true about our business: "*The money is in the list.*"

As the margins of the arbitrage game squeak tighter and tighter, more affiliates are realising that they need to capture their traffic in a mailing list. They need to increase the long-term worth of the traffic they're buying. And it's true. The strategy is a winner.

Instead of buying ad space for \$5, then redirecting a user to an offer for \$10, why not capture that user in your own mailing list?

If you can get the user to sign up to five offers in the future, that \$5 has made you \$50 instead of \$10. Plus it's an asset that is yours.

Building lists is now a crucial part of CPA marketing. It's the only way to counter the escalating advertising costs. You can't keep improving your CTR forever, right? No, you have to think about long-term value.

There's no reason why you can't integrate list building with a short-term strategy. For example, somebody signs up for your list, then gets redirected to the \$10 offer straight after. That works.

Not only does this tactic improve conversion rates, but it also offsets the usual short-term loss of capturing emails.

This guide that you're reading now is an example of list building. I give you some free information that can help your business, and in return you subscribe to my list so that I can reach you if I ever have something important to say (could be a long wait, guys).

It's such a simple but effective strategy. And you know the incredible thing? Many arbitrage affiliates are still neglecting it! They refuse to accept that the arbitrage game has changed, and their margins are diminishing by the day.

Do yourself a favour and implement this strategy from Day 1.
Don't just buy ad space for other brands. Build your own asset
first; look at ways to reduce the short-term loss after.

What Will Work in the Future

Want to know my number one recommendation for succeeding in the future?

Okay... Build your own traffic source.

Yes, it's the sort of advice that you're pissed off to hear. But it's so important as we move in to the next generation of Internet Marketing. It will be a generation where those who have the loyal traffic are the ones calling the shots.

Plugging offers in to your own web assets is the only way to guarantee a healthy return. You're not going to lose money when every click is free.

Spend nothing to make something. The way forward, right?

That's if we're to assume that the hours of blood, sweat and tears lost building a valuable web asset is 'spending nothing'. But in monetary terms, it makes perfect sense.

Would you rather be Plentyoffish... or advertising on Plentyoffish?

Would you rather be Facebook... or advertising on Facebook?

I'd rather the asset was mine, and the ad space was shit for other affiliates to squabble over. And that's why my business model has completely changed in the last 18 months.

A large slice of my time goes in to developing value-driven websites where users come back time and time again. I use my affiliate marketing expertise - primarily how to monetize - to squeak every last dollar out of my traffic.

If I invest my time in to new features and capturing user emails, the growth creates a snowball effect. It's quite unlike the arbitrage mindset where you start every day from scratch.

In my opinion, building your own traffic source is one of the best ways of creating lasting success for the future.

But let's be honest. Not everybody reading this guide is fully sold on the long-term picture. Some of you just want to know what types of CPA campaigns are going to be making money next month. That's fair enough.

Look for regions of fast stable growth.

The economy in Europe is royally shagged. Now is certainly not the time to be promoting high-end products to the people of Greece (although maybe it's a good time for a cheap bizopp offer?!)

There are, however, lots of economies that are faring better than the popular markets like US/UK/CAN/AUS that most affiliates choose to target. It's the rapidly growing economies that mark some of the best opportunities for arbitrage.

I've already mentioned South America as a lucrative market. I'm seeing tons of offers being rolled out for Brazil, and it's

becoming one of my favourite places to operate. These offers convert just as well as their American counterparts, mainly because there's less saturation and the costs of advertising are *cheap, cheap, cheap*.

Will they stay that way forever? No, but it will take a long time for the saturation levels to catch up with those we are seeing in the Western world.

So, now is a great time to learn Portuguese, or hire somebody who can read and write it, then pummel Brazil.

If we're going to look at the potential of economies, we have to look at China.

China is a difficult country to tackle at the moment. There are very few CPA offers targeting this market, and there's a huge culture gap that needs to be bridged before you can translate your best techniques to such a different audience.

Expect a lot of CPA opportunities to emerge in China and other Asian markets. There is huge potential there.

I've been developing my own assets to monetize Thai traffic and I've seen first-hand that the demand is red hot. You just need a product to sell to them.

Moral of the story? If you can't find a suitable CPA offer, build your own!

If sites like the Daily Mail are to be believed (Life protip: They're not), the Western world is about to implode under a firestorm of broken economies and the damnation of living beyond our means. That spells trouble for anybody earning an honest wage in countries like Greece, but the beauty of our job is that we can switch to a different economy overnight.

Keep a close eye on the fastest growing economies ([list here](#)) and strive to pin them to new CPA offers as soon as those offers become available.

The advertising costs will be low and the audience will be hyper-responsive. Trust me, this cocktail results in the stuff of an affiliate marketer's wettest dreams.

Self-serve platforms attract competition. It's time to wheel and deal.

The beauty of platforms like Plentyoffish and Facebook is also the reason why we fall out of love with them. They make advertising so simple that *anybody can do it*.

The low barrier to entry means that you are competing for traffic with stumbling bumberclarts who don't even know what to do with it. There's a bottleneck.

What's the easiest way to avoid such bottlenecks? What could you do right now to avoid the competition and make easy money with relatively little red tape? ***Go direct to webmasters!***

Some of the biggest ROIs I've seen in the last year have not come from Facebook, Plentyoffish, Google or PPV. They've come from finding niche tailored sites with excellent targeted traffic and a slightly clueless webmaster.

Generally, if a site is running Google AdSense, it means that the webmaster is not actively looking to squeak every last dollar out of his property. That or he doesn't know how.

Do you know what these webmasters absolutely love?

They love receiving emails from direct buyers like me offering to stump up a fixed sum for a monthly placement. And they especially love the idea of receiving that money instantly by PayPal.

If you stumble across a site where the audience is highly targeted and the monetization is poor, it should be seen as a gaping opportunity to put money in your bank. Approach the webmaster for their traffic stats and get your offer placed.

It's probably the easiest way to make 200%, 300%, 400% ROI. And do you know why it will be successful in the future? Because it requires more initiative than you need on a self-serve platform.

It requires getting off your arse, doing some research and approaching people directly. Yes, *talking to people*. God forbid.

Skills You Need to Learn

It's sickening how many people think they can make money from the Internet without having the slightest hint of a skill-set. Truly sickening.

Affiliate marketing is like any industry in the world. There are good affiliate marketers, and there are many more bad affiliate marketers.

How successful you are will depend on a combination of your ability to combine some admittedly pretty basic skills, with the mindset that we'll be looking at in the next section.

So what are the basic skills you need to learn? What is the absolute minimum skill-set for somebody looking to profit from affiliate marketing?

Basic HTML and CSS

It goes without saying. You need to be able to understand the most basic parts of a webpage. Thriving as an affiliate marketer without knowing HTML is the equivalent of a world-famous novelist not knowing how to spell. Pretty bloody unlikely.

The good news is that learning HTML and CSS is really easy. You can pick up most of the basics in a day. And within a week of trial and error, you should know most of what is necessary to get by on limited technical ability.

FTP, Domains and Web Hosting Technology

I've tried teaching affiliate marketing to those who have no comprehension of web hosting and FTP. It's an uphill struggle. Before a task like uploading files comes naturally to you, operating a profitable CPA campaign never will.

You should know how to setup a Wordpress, and how to upload a landing page. You should be familiar with FTP clients. You should be capable of registering and configuring a domain.

You don't need to be able to manage a dedicated server by yourself. Christ, I would have been bankrupt years ago if that were the case.

My own expertise is not great in this department, but I know enough to get by. You simply have to learn how to get your landing pages on the web and manage them.

If this is a bottleneck to you, go away and learn the basics of publishing a website. Once you're confident, affiliate marketing has less chance of giving you a stroke.

Good copywriting

There's a reason why good copywriters are paid a lot of money. They are worth their weight in gold.

Selling through storytelling is a fundamental part of affiliate marketing. We are middlemen. We are creating the link between

customer and company. The way that we do this is by selling the product and creating incentives that jump off the page.

You don't have to be a great copywriter to succeed, but you do have to be 'workmanlike'. You can't be awful, and you have to understand the basic principles.

I can probably get to the bottom of this for you by asking a simple question:

What's the difference between a feature and a benefit?

If you're not sure, it's time to go to copywriting class.

(Answer: Features don't exist to a good copywriter. Only benefits.)

Basic Photoshop skills

I say basic and I mean basic. You don't need to be a professional photo-editing wizard to succeed as an affiliate.

But you do need to know how to resize, optimize and crop the imagery that you've jacked from Google Image Search.

And you *do* need to know how to add nasty green flashing borders to mess with unsuspecting eyeballs.

I'm by no means a Photoshop expert. But I've been to Scumbag School - where ordinary people learn how to create truly horrible banners that you can't help but grimace at, and then click.

Good mathematics

I wrote an epically long piece in [Premium Posts Volume 5](#) about how an experienced affiliate marketer learns to pick out the best offers. Well, one of the most vital skills is good mathematics.

Let's simplify this quickly so you know what I'm talking about:

Imagine you're looking to promote an offer on Facebook, which has a payout of \$5, and an EPC (Earnings Per Click) of \$0.50.

For every 10 clicks, you're getting a conversion.

If you know through past experience that your best Facebook ads have an average CPC (cost per click) of \$0.60, you can say right there and then that the offer is a non-starter.

Your anticipated costs are higher than the anticipated earnings. You're spending \$6 to make \$5.

Yes, we are dealing with projections and projections are sometimes full of shit. But it's a methodical approach to numbers that will save you from wasting thousands of dollars in pursuit of a profitable campaign that was doomed from the outset.

There needs to be some method to your madness. That brings us nicely on to the next section...

Adopting the Winning Mindset

You get nowhere in affiliate marketing without a mindset that is suited to affiliate marketing.

I can't stress this highly enough. You could be the most talented web-based engineer in the universe, or Steve Jobs The Second, if you are not blessed with the right mindset, you won't succeed.

The winning mentality can be broken in to three qualities:

Patience

I was posting on [Stack That Money](#) just recently about the time spent waiting in this industry.

Isn't it crazy how much time we spend doing nothing?

- Waiting on affiliate managers to reply to our emails.
- Waiting on networks to approve us for an offer.
- Waiting on networks to approve our creatives with the merchant.
- Waiting on traffic sources to approve our ads.
- Waiting on traffic to start flowing.

- Waiting on enough data to accumulate to make sensible decisions.
- Waiting to do it all over again.

Time spent waiting is one of the number one reasons why affiliate marketers get lazy and try taking shortcuts to beat the system.

- Instead of speaking to an affiliate manager, we'll pick a random offer and hope that it's doing well.
- Instead of waiting on a network to approve us for an offer, we'll run the same offer without approval elsewhere. Maybe it'll come back to haunt us when the network gets stiffed for poor quality?
- Instead of waiting for our creatives to be approved, we run a misleading ad and get kicked of the offer, or not paid.
- Instead of waiting for Facebook to approve our re-submitted ads, we simply won't bother after the first rejection.
- Instead of waiting for traffic to start flowing, we'll scrap the campaign and call it a dead demographic.

- Instead of waiting for enough data to make sensible decisions, we'll make rash decisions after 1000 impressions and trash what would have been a profitable winner.
- Instead of waiting to do it all over again, we'll give up and tell people that affiliate marketing is dead.

Sound familiar?

I'm not picking at individuals here. If you suffer from any of the above, you are certainly not alone.

Patience is a virtue and staying patient ain't easy when you're leaking money left, right and center.

Not only does a winning mindset demand that you stay patient through all the failed campaigns, but it means controlling your urge to take shortcuts. You must attack each and every campaign from the top.

Attention to detail

The best affiliate marketers know how to track their campaigns like a hawk. I'm not implying they sit in their basements refreshing stats every 5 minutes. I mean they have software and organization in place that enables them to extract meaning from their campaigns - even when those campaigns are losing money.

They pay attention to the data and they learn from it.

Let me ask you, if you spend \$100 to make \$1, would you consider that campaign a success?

The average newbie marketer would shake his head in disgust, put a fist through the earning report, and scream, “*DIE!*”

But he’s missing something important.

It’s pretty irrelevant if we spend \$100 to make \$200, or \$1. What matters is how we use the data to increase our chances of improving the process tomorrow morning.

Even if you spend \$100 and lose \$99, there is still information to be gleaned from that campaign. Which banners saw the highest CTR? Where did the solitary conversion come from? Is there any way of isolating the small win and cutting out the massive loss?

It’s this attention to detail that produces a truly great affiliate marketer. Data is your currency.

Even when you’re losing money, the real investment is the lessons you learn from your data. As long as you’re learning something to prevent the same mistake happening again, it’s money well spent.

Persistence

I sometimes feel guilty when I talk about persistence.

I got my first big break in affiliate marketing with literally the first CPA campaign I launched. It brought in 100-200% ROI despite having massive room for improvement.

This was back in the Wild West days where even the most moronic clustertards were capable of profiting from CPA.

I didn't need to be persistent. It just happened for me.

Make no mistake; those days are long gone.

The majority of readers who take action on this guide will try, try again, and then give up.

Only a small handful will try, try again, try a few hundred more times, and eventually succeed.

It sounds like I'm setting you up for some kind of useless business opportunity deal. They all talk about the lucky few percent who 'use the system correctly', right?

I don't believe there's such a thing as a lucky few percent in affiliate marketing these days. Not like there used to be.

Those who succeed do so through enormous persistence, avoiding shortcuts and a hawk-like attention to detail.

I think persistence goes hand in hand with passion. You don't necessarily have to be passionate about affiliate marketing. Because, come on, let's face it - who the hell is? But you do need to be passionate about the idea of making money from nothing.

I will never forget the first time I turned \$15 ad spend in to \$35 commission. That's not because I love affiliate marketing. It's because I love the entrepreneurial thrill of making a tangible profit without spending the hours in a day job to earn it.

Even though I could have earned more money simply by working for somebody else, it was the determination to make something for myself that made a smaller return a bigger reward.

That's often what separates a successful affiliate marketer from the mildly interested cubicle worker who thinks that moonlighting in this industry will give him a few extra pennies to spend at the end of the month.

There are much easier ways to make extra money if your only passion is to spend it.

You've got to *want* to succeed for at least *some* of the right reasons.

For anybody who isn't completely dedicated, there will be no shortcut to success. You have to embrace and enjoy the challenge before you stand any chance of making money from it.

Achieving Your First \$100 Day

One of the biggest landmarks for any affiliate to crack is their first \$100/day in profit.

It's a very modest target, but until you hit it once, it can seem like a million miles away.

The good news is there are plenty of options for achieving this \$100/day target.

I believe if you can make \$10/day, you can make \$100 comfortably. There's not a huge difference in the required approach, other than your willingness to scale and build on initial success.

I get many affiliates asking me for the simplest way to find that initial success. From the most suitable niches, to the most newbie-friendly traffic sources, right the way to the exact landing page copy they should be using.

Well, I'm not going to get in to specific landing page detail, but I'll give you my honest assessment of the easiest traffic sources and niches.

Plentyoffish is still King for learning the ropes.

Say what you want about Plentyoffish as a traffic source. But if every traffic source had the targeting options that Plentyoffish has, we'd all be very rich indeed.

The reason I recommend Plentyoffish to nearly everybody getting started in this industry is because you can drill down and target users in a way that almost conjures their inquisitive little faces in your head.

Where else could you launch a campaign as laser targeted as this?

Gender =	Female	Remove
Age Between	25, 35	Remove
Country =	United Kingdom	Remove
Body Type =	A Few Extra Pounds	Remove
Education Level =	Some college	Remove
Smoking Habits =	Often	Remove
Hair color =	Blond	Remove
Pets =	Dog	Remove

Now, you're never going to scale this campaign to the point where its making \$1000/day. There's not enough volume.

But if you aim for lots of small victories - lots of tiny campaigns with a high ROI - you can easily amass \$100/day in profit.

The fastest way to get profitable on Plentyoffish is to run with dating offers using micro-niches of your own creation.

Pick a subset niche - let's say single mothers aged 35-45 who live in Scotland - then create ads that are super-relevant to those users. You're sure to nail a high CTR.

Providing your landing page does an effective job of bridging the gap between the angle you've chosen and the offer you're promoting, the ROI will be high.

A winning campaign might only produce \$10/day in profit. But by scaling, multiplying and porting the concept to different demographics, you will soon have a portfolio of winning campaigns. \$100/day is easily achievable.

I'm not going to delve too far in to Plentyoffish. If you are interested in tapping this platform, I suggest you check out [Volumes 1 and 3 of my Premium Post series](#). There's plenty to keep you busy in there.

Let's take a look at some other options for carving your first \$100/day (or not).

“Should I Start with Facebook?”

Very simple answer to this one...

No.

Not unless you smell an opportunity that hasn't already been beaten to death on the many blogs and forums.

If you're absolutely dead set on using Facebook as your entry point in to affiliate marketing, I suggest you stick to foreign markets and get your ad copies translated on either [Fiverr](#) or [One Hour Translation](#)

As appealing as it may be to launch a campaign in mainstream America, you're highly unlikely to be successful unless you have a very unique take on the offer - or a massive testing budget.

Low Payout Offers on PPV

PPV has a reputation for being 'cheap traffic' simply because the numbers start out low. In reality, it's some of the most expensive traffic you can buy.

Note: If you aren't familiar with PPV (Pay Per View), it's how we refer to the many pop-up and pop-under networks where users can be targeted if they have certain software installed. If a user visits MyLittlePony.com, we can serve a pop-up that tries to sell them a little pony. As you would expect, most affiliates aren't so cute in their choice of campaigns.

The beauty of PPV is the creative freedom. There are less of the Nazi-like advertising guidelines that plague more reputable traffic sources. For example, you're not going to have your campaigns iced for an abundance of cleavage, or for selling an offer that might not do what it says it does.

I recommend [Lead Impact](#) as a good starting network for PPV. The quality of traffic isn't as high as TrafficVance, but the initial deposit is lower. Most new affiliates will run a mile from the idea of depositing \$1000 with no guarantee of success, but if that thought doesn't terrify you, feel free to sign up at TrafficVance.

Using Lead Impact, the deposit is only \$200.

Something I always suggest to new affiliates is to *walk before you can run*. Start with low payout offers.

On PPV, I suggest you start with offers between \$2-\$8. These will convert much better than the \$30+ offers, and they generally make for an easier sell on PPV, which you have to remember is a form of interruption marketing.

Low payout offers also require less money for testing.

Zip and email submits convert easily as long as you're picking URL and keyword targets that are super relevant to the topic. I suggest avoiding offers like "*Win a Free iPad*", and going for slightly more niche versions - like "*Win a Free Samsung Galaxy III*"

I generally have more success with these because you can avoid the 80% of marketers who will go straight for the Apple shit. In doing so, you'll find users who are less blind to the phrase that starts "*Win a Free i...*"

With any PPV campaign, you need to be tracking like a demon to weed out the non-converting targets. [I use CPVLab](#), which is pretty awesome for just about anything PPV-related.

Achieving your first \$100/day with PPV is probably going to require a bunch of 'small win' campaigns. Scaling is not always easy with low payout offers because our first instinct is to cull the targets that aren't profitable.

Once you have a winning campaign, rinse and repeat as many of your processes as possible. Find a similar offer, and go again.

Tip: Campaigns can burnout quickly if the frequency cap is set to show the same ads to the same users over and over again. If you have an option to show the ad only once in a month, use it. You will stay profitable for longer.

Find a demand, setup a blog and write, write, write...

I've already spoken about the benefits of building your own traffic source. In my opinion, there are few easier ways of reaching \$100/day in profit than by setting up a blog in a popular niche, and writing like a maniac.

The secret to profiting in this way is to target low hanging fruit. Use the [Google Adwords Keyword Tool](#) to sniff out ***demands within a niche***. Find topics with lots of traffic and low competition - but remember to research beyond the Adwords Tool.

Once you've cornered a small part of the market, you need to be blogging and writing every day until you've built up a significant presence in that market.

You then monetize the space using CPA offers, and by funnelling the users in to your mailing list.

It's vital that you choose a topic where the users that land on your site are going to be in *taking action mode* rather than browsing the night away. Creating a niche website on antique

rocking chairs is probably not going to cut the mustard. But cornering one of the many sub-interests of the dating niche possibly will.

This is a topic that I covered in detail in [Volume 5 of Premium Posts](#). And it's one that I'll be coming back to again.

If you don't have the money to invest in paid traffic, there are plenty of ways to skin the cat that only involve the currency of your *time*.

Valuable Tools and Resources

It's not easy to sift through the bullshit and find valuable affiliate marketing tools that are actually worth your time.

Our industry specialises in two types of resources - those that focus on making a fast buck from affiliates, and those that actually aid affiliate marketing. I'll let you guess which category most affiliate tools fall under.

Keep Your Costs Low

It may seem counterproductive for me to tell you to keep your costs low when I have an entire raft of products that I'd love to sell you - but it has to be said. The most valuable investment is data.

If you have the choice between spending \$500 on a comprehensive training course, or spending \$500 on campaigns, go with the campaigns every time. Use that money to get data, and use the data to create better campaigns.

The sooner you start fronting your cash on actual affiliate marketing rather than training materials, the sooner you'll stand a chance of making money.

With that said, here are some valuable tools that are worth the investment - *but only if you still have enough money to start collecting data.*

[CPV Lab](#) - I use CPV Lab to track all kinds of campaigns, not just those on the PPV traffic sources (which the software is primarily designed for). CPV Lab is fast, stable and packed with useful analytical tools. If you plan to do anything with PPV, it's a must-have.

Note: You will need at least a virtual dedicated server to run CPV Lab efficiently. And a fresh domain. Check out [Beyond Hosting](#). They have a partnership deal with CPV Lab where they install it for free and deal with all the upgrades.

[Prosper202](#) - The free alternative to CPVLab. It's a popular tracking solution that many affiliates have turned to, and it can be modified to serve multiple purposes. Whether you go with CPVLab, Prosper or your own custom solution - you need *some* way of tracking your campaigns.

[iMobiTrax](#) - A brand new mobile tracking solution that's backed by the IMGrind guys (who seem to be just about everywhere). I haven't used this, but from most accounts, it's looking tasty. Grab a license if your mobile marketing career takes off.

[Crunch Accounting](#) - This is only relevant to those of you in the UK. It's the accounting solution I use to stay on top of my taxes and deal with invoicing. The flat rate is something like £70/month. It's cheaper than hiring your own accountant, and by far an improvement on the 'DIY approach' that many new affiliates screw themselves over with.

[Stack That Money Forum](#) - There are tons of paid subscription forums where you can learn the affiliate marketing trade. For reasons that I've already explained, I don't recommend signing up at *all* of them. There's such a thing as too much information and you will only end up distracted. Distracted with less money for your campaigns.

If you're going to register anywhere, go with STM. I say that because I'm a moderator there and I'll be on hand to give you advice. Private and cosy advice.

[Aweber](#) - An email marketing service where you can build your own mailing lists for a decent price. Some prefer [MailChimp](#), but I've been using Aweber for a while now. Pick one and use it to capture traffic for your own good. Don't rely on arbitrage marketing forever.

[The Millionaire Fastlane](#) - This book has little to do with affiliate marketing, but it features one of the most important kicks up the arse for anybody looking to carve out a career online. The first half of the book is terrible. The second half is perhaps the best entrepreneurial advice you'll ever read. [I posted a review here](#).

The Premium Post Collection

I hope you've enjoyed this introduction to affiliate marketing. I hope it's aligned your expectations with reality. If you have any questions, feel free to drop me an email at finch@finchsells.com.

I can't promise a quick response, but I do try to get through all emails. Eventually.

I'm also going to use this chance to nudge you shamelessly towards my Premium Post collection. The material that we've covered in this guide has been primitive and basic, more about mindset than it is about the meat of your campaigns.

The Premium Posts are very different, which is why I'm not giving them away for free. They deal with the specifics of making money. They tackle the many campaign angles I've used to make a living from this industry.

Here's the collection so far...

[Premium Posts Volume 1](#)

'Plentyoffish still turning Plenty of Profit'

Aimed at dating affiliates struggling to get profitable on Plentyoffish. Additional features include how to ban-proof your Facebook account, scandalous ways of making easy money on Craigslist and one niche that's about to explode.

Since its release in October 2011, the inaugural edition of

Premium Posts has achieved widespread acclaim as one of the most innovative and detailed dissections of what it takes to succeed on the Plentyoffish advertising platform.

The official Plentyoffish blog has praised Volume 1 [as one of the very best info products for tackling the platform](#), while a host of other top marketing sites have praised the material.

PPC.bz: ["Take Finch's best posts, multiply it by 10x, then put it in a PDF."](#)

Money Machine Factory: ["Get this shit while it's hot"](#)

It's the shortest Premium Posts to date, but it's jam packed with advice that will help you make a killing on Plentyoffish.

The second half of Volume 1 looks beyond Plentyoffish and puts forward some adventurous tips on other ways to make money as a CPA affiliate - including a controversial but all too easy way of gaming Craigslist for \$xxx/days of profit.

Which concepts make money on Plentyoffish? Which dating offer converts like wildfire? How can anybody get a profitable campaign in the space of a few days?

[For all the answers, grab your copy of Volume 1.](#)

* * *

Premium Posts Volume 2

'Facebook is Dead, Long Live Facebook'

Aimed at Facebook marketers looking to boss the platform with innovative strategies. Improve CTRs, EPCs and CPCs in one hit. Most advice is designed for Facebook, but equally transferable to other traffic sources that aren't currently on your Shit List.

Reviews on Volume 2:

PPC.bz: "There are very few things in the affiliate marketing space worth spending money on. 99% of ebooks and courses are generally rehashed shit. But Finch is doing it right by providing excellent, fresh content for a fair price."

Money Machine Factory: " You start reading the first page and you simply can't stop (I usually stop reading after the first line of an email, not to talk of a PDF). If you consider Affiliate Marketing your career, or want it to be, buy this NOW"

Need Facebook guidance?

[Get your copy here.](#)

* * *

Premium Posts Volume 3

'My sleaze-ridden blueprint for making money from dating'

Aimed at dating affiliates looking for inspiration and an improvement on their bottom line. These tips will guide you through recommendations for Facebook, Plentyoffish, PPV and various adult traffic sources. See my own dating campaign strategies in all the gory details.

[Get your copy here.](#)

* * *

[Premium Posts Volume 4](#)

'Outside the Box Marketing'

What does it take to become an awesome affiliate marketer? This volume looks at 'outside the box marketing', how to avoid the status quo, some excellent new (and old) moneymaking opportunities, and lots of tips on skyrocketing your conversion rates.

[Get your copy here](#)

* * *

[Premium Posts Volume 5](#)

'Maximum ROI Marketing'

Are you determined to make money online, but lacking the budget to compete with other top affiliates and big spenders? Maximum ROI Marketing is designed for you. This is a

comprehensive collection of tips and tricks for anybody looking to grow an online business on a shoestring budget.

Volume 5 reveals affiliate marketing strategies that are perfect for high ROI and rapid growth - from Plentyoffish and Facebook advertising, to the lucrative gaming market, to some non-affiliate ventures that are incredibly profitable. Maximum ROI Marketing will inspire you to get serious about turning your online dream in to a reality.

[Get your copy here.](#)

Note: If you're new to the industry, I recommend this volume above the others as your starting point. It will show you how to make the most out of every last dollar spent.

Finally...

As a special thank you to any brave soul still reading this guide, you can use the coupon **KIT101** to get 25% off *any* of your purchases from the Premium Post collection.

Cheers for reading!

PS. Don't forget to check out the new updated, extended edition of this guide, a #1 Marketing Bestseller on Amazon.

<http://www.amazon.com/Affiliate-Marketing-Survival-Guide-ebook/dp/B00BCQT8ZE/>