

Types of Affiliate Websites

There are many types of websites and as you improve your affiliate marketing skills, you may want to try out different kinds since they all meet different marketing objectives. If you're new to affiliate marketing, please don't feel overwhelmed. We're breaking it down so that you can see the different types of affiliate website, their characteristics, benefits and drawbacks.

Opt-In Mini-Site: A Great Starting Point

An Opt-In Mini-Site, sometimes called a name-squeeze, newsletter sign-up page, etc is simply a page that includes information about your free mailing list and a subscription box. Its main purpose is to get an email address so you can follow-up with your visitors.

Items you'll want to include in an opt-in mini-site:

- **An Attention-Grabbing Headline:** Draw them in to tell them how you're going to solve a problem, teach them how to do something, etc.
- **Bullet Points Showing What is Included:** Tell them what they will receive by signing up for your mailing list.
- **Subscription Box & Spam Notice:** Give them a box to sign up and ensure them that you will not give away, rent or sell their email address.

It's highly-effective for growing your list as there are no other options on the page, sign up or don't. There are no other links to distract them from making a decision.

This type of site is recommended for building your list as it is a great way to sustain long-term profits. If you don't have a way to collect email addresses, most of your visitors will come to your site, leave and never to come back.

All you need is a one page website and an autoresponder service for your mailing list.

Portal: Huge Traffic & Establishing Expertise

This is a large website that contains all kinds of articles and other content on your chosen topic or a topic that your target market is interesting in reading. It may also include message boards, video, audio and other interactive elements. There are no hard and fast rules on what has to be included, but a portal is basically a big website catering to a specific market.

Portal sites are terrific traffic builders and great for establishing your reputation in your market. Search engines will most likely send lots of traffic your way and your traffic will also build through word-of-mouth.

Portal sites tend not to be as focused as a mini-site or smaller site and may not convert sales or opt-ins as readily as a smaller, more focused sites. This is most likely due to the large volume of information and links that distract the reader.

You may not want to put your whole affiliate marketing strategy into a portal site though. But instead, also include some of the other types of websites we're discussing here. Then, once you've built up traffic to your portal site, you can direct that traffic to your higher-converting mini-sites - creating a steady stream of traffic to your network of websites.

Mini Review Site: Keep Them Focused on the Product

Instead of a website with a bunch of reviews, you may want to create a single-page website that reviews and promotes a single product that you are selling.

The benefit is you can direct highly targeted traffic to this page where you present them with a detailed review on one product only. Your visitors won't be distracted by other links and information so they can make a decision to buy or not.

The only distraction away from the product review you might want to include is an opportunity to sign up for your mailing list, so if your visitors don't buy today, you can follow up with them via email.

Mini Content Site: Focused Search Engine Food

This is quite different from a portal website. Where a portal site delivers huge amounts of information to a target market, a mini content site focuses on one topic. For example, a portal site might cover all topics related to getting fit but a mini-content site might only focus on abdominal workouts. This might include a review of abdominal targeting exercise products or videos and some strategies to getting rock hard abs. The purpose of the site would be to create a highly-targeted mailing list of people who want to firm and build their abdominal muscles and to sell just a handful of products directly related to doing that.

A mini-content site can easily attract traffic through search engines and other methods. It is also highly-focused in its content so it won't be so distracting for your visitors. A mini-content site won't attract as much search engine traffic as a portal site due to it having less content, but it tends to have a higher sales conversion rate.

With a mini-content site, you'll want to keep your pages simple with just content (how to advice, articles, etc.), relevant offers and a mailing list subscription box.

Blogs: Relationship-Builders

There are many different ways to approach blogs, but the way we've found most helpful is by using them as relationship-builders. Blogs give you a way to establish a rapport with your visitors and you as an expert. It also helps you build your mailing list.

People visit blogs for information and to hear from someone they can relate to on a more personal level. They typically don't come for a sales pitch. That's not to say you cannot recommend things, but be cautious of how you approach it.

A couple of tips for using blogs:

- Make sure you have a mailing list sign-up box. Most of your visitors won't sign up for your RSS feed, but they will sign up for your mailing list. People are more familiar and comfortable with email.
- Don't post ads on your blog. When you're writing your blog posts, it's ok to add affiliate links when they are highly relevant. For example, if you are casually speaking about your experience with a product, link to it. If you're writing about a conversation you had with a friend, who happens to sell a product to your target market, link to it. If there is a free teleseminar or course you're going to attend and it comes with an affiliate link, use it.

Product Info Site: Just Like a Store

This type of website simply looks like a store with a variety of products, but instead of linking to its own shopping cart, it has affiliate links to another website. Some people manually create these sites (it's a lot of work) and others do them through automated data feeds. Many multi-product store owners, Amazon.com included, offer data feeds of their catalog. Data feeds can include product names, prices, descriptions, photos etc and with special programming, you can convert these data feeds into ready-made websites. A couple programs people use are Associate Engine, <http://www.c3scripts.com/amazon/> (for the Amazon catalog) and SecretMoneyGenerator.com (for a variety of catalogs).

The difference between this type of site and a website with a bunch of product reviews is that a product info site is geared to the one-off sale and doesn't offer any extra value to the visitor. Where a full product review site adds great value and can build trust as well as long-term repeat and referral traffic.

If you choose to do a data feed website, it would probably be worthwhile to add the extra value by adding reviews and other useful information to the product pages.

So there you have it, a basic overview of the various types of affiliate websites.

Remember, there is no right or wrong way to get started or to develop your network of websites – but your goal is to reach as much of your market as possible over time AND to develop a trusting relationship with them that helps shape their buying decisions.

Whatever you do, don't try too much at once and realize that it takes time to see results. You'll also want to work on your traffic-building strategies because without traffic, you won't have any results at all.