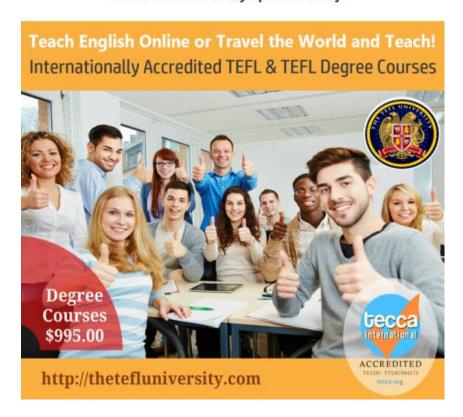# ATTRACTING
AFFILIATES

Starting Your First Affiliate Program

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Introduction

An affiliate program can be a great way to boost your online sales without having to spend large amounts up front. Almost any kind of business can benefit from having an affiliate program, but there are many things to learn and consider before taking the plunge and starting up your own. In this guide we'll go over everything you need to know, so you can make an informed decision.

Here are some of the things you'll learn:

- What an affiliate program is, and why you should have one

- The various methods affiliates can use to promote your offers

- The potential problems affiliate programs can cause, that you need to be aware of

- What the difference is between a hosted and self-hosted affiliate program (and where affiliate networks fit in)

- The most popular services and solutions in both hosted and self-hosted categories

- Some of the decisions you'll have to make before starting your affiliate program, and how those decisions affect how attractive your program is to affiliates

- How to make your program "affiliate friendly"

- The importance of making your program easy to get started with

- Some of the best methods available to recruit affiliates to your program

- ...and much more?

Before we move forward, however, let's start with the basics.

What is an affiliate program?

An affiliate program (sometimes called a *referral program*) is simply an arrangement where you pay marketers (*affiliates*) commission on actions taken (usually a purchase or a free registration) by visitors they have referred to you.

Usually, an affiliate is given a special link (a *tracking link*) they can use to promote your offer. When a user clicks on that link he/she is redirected to your website while the affiliate program software silently records in the background that this particular user is referred by this particular affiliate. Should the user end up buying something from you, a commission will be paid out to the affiliate according to your payment terms. How much you pay affiliates, and on what terms, is completely up to you.

Overview of Affiliate Programs

Why have an affiliate program?

The biggest advantage of having an affiliate program is that you can increase your reach (sell more stuff!) without having to pay for sales people or advertising up front. Setting up and running the affiliate program has a cost, yes, but you're only paying affiliates for actual sales delivered.

A successful affiliate program enables you to cover virtually all channels of online marketing. If your in-house PPC advertising efforts are mostly geared towards Adwords, for example, you'll be happy to find that your affiliates will advertise for you on Bing, Yahoo and everywhere else they can turn a profit. You can cut down on your own advertising efforts and let affiliates do most of the heavy lifting.

Another benefit of having affiliates advertise for you is that even if they're not making any sales, your brand is still getting exposure, and it doesn't cost you anything at all.

How will affiliates promote your offers?

You'd be surprised to see how creative some affiliates are in devising promotion strategies. As competition is often fierce, successful affiliates must learn to think outside the box to separate themselves from others and find methods that allow them to turn a profit.

It is, however, entirely up to you what types of promotion you want to allow. Some affiliate programs allow affiliates to use practically every method they can think of as long as it's legal and ethical, while others are significantly more restrictive in what they allow. As a general rule, the more methods you disallow the harder it will be to attract and keep affiliates.

A few of the most common affiliate promotion methods include:

- SEO (writing about your offerings and ranking those pages for relevant keywords)

- SEM (bidding on relevant keywords in search engines using either a direct affiliate link, or a custom landing page)

- E-mail (promoting your affiliate program to an e-mail list with subscribers who are potentially interested in your offerings)

- Coupons (affiliates offer visitors a discount coupon, which encourages them to click on a tracking link and purchase your product)

- Social media (reaching potential customers through either social media sharing or paid advertising on social media platforms)

- Banners and text ads (buying advertising space on websites promoting your offerings)

Some of the commonly disallowed types of promotions include:

- Bidding on trademarked terms in search engines

- Sending unsolicited messages either through e-mail or social media

- Buying domain names similar to yours and redirecting them to an affiliate link

- Forced clicks and cookie stuffing (learn more about that below)

The 80/20 rule applies

As the owner of an affiliate program, you'll most likely find that 80%+ of your sales comes from 20% of your affiliates. That isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it helps to be aware of this from the beginning. Your mission is to make your affiliate program as attractive as possible to these "super affiliates" who can really explode your online sales.

Problem is, in many cases you can't be certain how well an affiliate will perform until you've given them a chance. And sometimes, affiliates will stay inactive for years until finally deciding to prioritize your offers and send some sales your way. If you decide to focus all your efforts on the top 20% and ignore the rest, you'll risk cutting off many potential future "super affiliates" in the process.

Are there any downsides to having an affiliate program?

There are, in fact, a few potential downsides that you need to be aware of before setting off to start your own affiliate program. Some are more severe than others, but the fact is that all affiliate programs require some monitoring to ensure all affiliates stay compliant and aren't causing any damage to your brand.

Misrepresenting your company

This is probably the most common issue when dealing with affiliates. Since the affiliate marketing world is very competitive, some affiliates won't hesitate to cut a few corners in order to make that sale. It could be anything from offering visitors fake coupons in order to get them to click through and set the tracking cookie, to making promises about your product/service that simply aren't true.

These situations are quite common, and they can be difficult to detect if you have many affiliates. Sometimes you won't know about it until you hear from an angry customer who's been promised things you're unable to deliver. It's important to act quickly when this happens, and suspend the affiliate in question to prevent him/her from causing more damage to your brand.

Competing for rankings

No matter what your affiliate program policy is, you can't really stop affiliates from talking about you or your products on their websites, and thereby ranking for those keywords in search engines. If your program gets popular enough, you may even find the entire first page occupied by affiliates on some keywords! There is no real "solution" to this, other than embracing the fact that whichever site the visitor clicks on, you'll likely get the sale, even if you have to pay an affiliate for it.

Forced clicks / "Cookie stuffing"

Some unscrupulous affiliates employ methods that "forces" a tracking cookie onto the visitor's browser, without them having actively clicked on an affiliate link. This is commonly referred to as cookie stuffing, and it can be a big problem for merchants. There are many ways to do this, but it's often done by embedding a hidden iframe that loads the affiliate link without the user even

noticing. Later, when they arrive on your website through other means, the cookie-stuffing affiliate will get credit for the sale, even though he/she technically didn't refer the user.

The more popular your website is, the higher the chances of this happening, as the affiliate is counting on the user to eventually end up on your site to buy something. Historically, affiliate programs for eBay and Amazon have been among the biggest targets for cookie-stuffing affiliates.

Takeaways

- An affiliate program allows you to reach new customers while only paying for actual sales

- With a solid base of affiliates you ensure your products are advertised in all available channels, including those you wouldn't have been able to reach yourself with in-house advertising

- Since you're only paying for actual sales, your brand will inevitably get lots of exposure that you don't have to pay for (like a blogger mentioning your brand without it leading to sales, in which case you'd still benefit from the mention itself)

- You can set your own rules and decide what you want to allow and disallow in your affiliate program, but keep in mind that more rules often equal less affiliates

- As with many things in business, you'll most likely find that 80% of your affiliate sales are produced by 20% of your affiliates

- You have to enforce rules actively to prevent affiliates from damaging your brand, or even getting your company in legal trouble

Hosted vs Self-Hosted

There are two (actually three, as you'll see soon) basic options available when you're starting an affiliate program. You can go with a hosted solution that handles most things for you, or you can opt for self-hosted and gain more control over the whole process. They both have their pros and cons. Let's first examine the differences, and then we'll look at some of the best known offerings in both categories.

Hosted

If you're just starting your first affiliate program, you may want to consider going with a hosted alternative. Here all the technology and backend features are already up and running in a working platform, and you basically only have to sign up and follow the instructions.

There are actually two types of hosted affiliate program solutions: affiliate networks and SaaS (*Software as a Service*, basically software hosted on the web). The latter gives you the software technology but requires you to manage everything yourself, like processing payments and recruiting affiliates. An affiliate network, on the other hand, lets you tap into their existing pool of affiliates, and they also handle most of the management for you. The downside is that using a network costs more, some charge high fixed fees while others take a cut of each sale delivered by affiliates.

Examples of hosted affiliate programs

CJ Affiliate

CJ Affiliate (formerly known as Commission Junction) is one of the oldest affiliate networks in existence, with roots tracing all the way back to 2002. It is home to the affiliate programs of many well known online retailers - in fact it's the affiliate network that has the largest share of Internet Retailer Top 500 brands. While their main focus is arguably on online retailers with CPS structure (Cost Per Sale), they're also a solid choice for CPL (Cost Per Lead) and other commission structures.

The main downside to CJ is the high fees for advertisers: the setup fee is in the price range of several thousand dollars, and they also take a large % of what you pay affiliates. If you don't have high enough margins, you may simply not be able to afford choosing CJ.

Clickbank

Clickbank is almost the exact opposite of CJ; they have a 100% focus on downloadable information products like e-books and software. You'll find no retailers of physical goods here. Fact is, Clickbank isn't just an affiliate network. They facilitate the whole selling process, including handling payments and delivering your product to the customer. Technically they buy your product from you every time you make a sale, and then resell it to the customer, meaning they also handle things like VAT/sales tax collection and fraud prevention.

Getting started as a merchant is cheap ($50) and relatively easy. As soon as your product is approved by their team, it will be available in their "marketplace", where affiliates can find and start promoting it. Aside from the small setup fee, you'll pay 7.5% + $1 for every sale. If you're selling an informational product, definitely check out Clickbank!

JVZoo

Another affiliate network geared towards digital downloads is JVZoo. The main difference between Clickbank and JVZoo is that the latter isn't acting as a reseller, although they do provide all the technology required for the sales process.

They've become quite popular thanks to their support for instant commissions, allowing both affiliates and merchants to get paid instantly through PayPal as soon as a sale has taken place. They also offer a range of other unique features, like built-in support for JV partners and dime sale buy buttons - both examples of features that have made them a very popular choice for vendors in the Internet marketing space.

Getting started and listing your digital product in their marketplace is free, but they take a 5% cut of each sale made through their system.

HasOffers

HasOffers is not an affiliate network but a SaaS. They provide all the technology required to track affiliate sales, but do not provide you with actual affiliates. If you'd rather handle affiliate recruiting yourself, HasOffers could be a good choice for you. Feature wise they've got everything you expect, but you'll have to be prepared to pay both a fixed monthly fee as well as extra usage-based fees if you go over their allotted limits.

Ambassador

Ambassador is also a SaaS, and is similar to HasOffers in many ways. If you're considering going with a SaaS alternative you may want to check them out. One of the main differences between them is that HasOffers has a higher monthly fee and charges extra based clicks/conversions, while Ambassador is slightly cheaper per month and charges you a % of your sales instead. This means none of them is "cheaper" than the other, and you have to look carefully at your own numbers before making a decision.

Self-hosted

A self-hosted solution is one you install on your own server/hosting. It's your own software, and no one else has access to it. This gives you full control of the whole environment, but also places a lot of responsibility in your hands, as any downtime will lead to angry affiliates complaining that their tracking links aren't working. Aside from this responsibility, a self-hosted solution is similar to SaaS in that it's simply a software platform and you'll have to manage all the other aspects of the affiliate program yourself, including recruiting affiliates.

Examples of self-hosted affiliate programs

iDevAffiliate

iDevAffiliate has been around for more than 15 years, and is probably the most well known self-hosted affiliate program software of them all. It's got everything you need to run your own affiliate program, but be advised that there is a learning curve if you don't have a lot of experience with these things. Don't expect to be able to just jump in and have your affiliate program ready to go in an afternoon. The same is true for SaaS alternatives, of course, but there

is always an additional layer of learning required with software you host yourself.

A license starts at $149, and there are no additional costs unless you want to upgrade versions later on. In fact, that's one of the main advantages of using software like iDevAffiliate over a hosted solution (or self-hosted software with a monthly fee, which admittedly isn't too common but does exist).

Post Affiliate Pro

One of the direct competitors to iDevAffiliate in the self-hosted category is Post Affiliate Pro (or *PAP*). It is well known for the huge amount of features built into the software, so if you're looking for features beyond what's present in most other affiliate program solutions you may very well find it here. Examples include the ability to split commissions if more than one affiliate is responsible for a sale (user has clicked more than one affiliate link), and the ability to offer lifetime commissions so an affiliate earns a commission from *all* purchases made by the referred user, for the duration of customer lifetime (more about this commission model in the next chapter).

Licenses start at $199 for the most basic "Xpress" version, which still offers plenty of functionality for you to get started with your affiliate program. There are also hosted SaaS options available if you'd prefer, but most people considering Post Affiliate Pro are probably more interested in downloading and hosting it themselves.

Which one suits you?

As stated before: if this is your first foray into running an affiliate program, you may want to consider a hosted solution. Most likely you'll want to go with a network that has an existing affiliate base ready to promote your stuff. You won't have to deal with most of the difficult administration, like tax forms and payments, and you can focus on running your business and attracting more affiliates. Just remember to shop around before deciding on a network, as they all have their pros and cons and vary greatly in cost.

On the other hand, if you already have some experience, or you want a specific setup that can't be accommodated by affiliate networks, you could go for a self-hosted or SaaS solution. This is also the best choice if you're running on tighter

margins, as the total cost will be less when there's no network middleman to take a cut of each sale. SaaS is typically a bit more expensive than self-hosted solutions, so if saving money is a priority and you have the technical know-how, consider going self-hosted. Just make sure you're not skimping on the servers/ hosting, as any downtime can be fatal to your affiliate program.

Another advantage of hosting yourself is that it makes it easier to develop custom solutions if you need it. Of course, if that seems like a possibility, perhaps you'd be better off custom developing your software right from the start. That way you'll get it tailored exactly to your own needs, but keep in mind that affiliate software is very complicated and it's not going to be cheap to develop your own.

Takeaways

- There are three distinct options available when you're starting an affiliate program: an affiliate network, hosted software (SaaS) and self-hosted software

- An affiliate network is generally the easiest to get started with, as they'll handle all things for you including recruiting affiliates, but it's also the most expensive and least flexible option

- Hosted software (SaaS) leaves recruiting affiliates and enforcing rules in your own hands, but the rules are yours to set as you wish and it's generally more affordable than going through a network

- Self-hosted software is best if you have advanced requirements or want complete control over your affiliate program - it's usually the least expensive option, but keep in mind that time and effort spent setting it all up is also a type of cost

- If you're going to use an affiliate network, make sure you pick one that caters to your business model

Your Approach

So you've decided to launch your own affiliate program? Congratulations! Now you just need to figure out the details. There are quite a lot of choices to make, and it may seem a bit daunting at first, but remember that you can always change things later on if your initial approach turns out less than ideal.

These are a few of the decisions you'll have to make:

Wide open vs invite only

You'll have to decide whether you want to allow anyone to promote your affiliate program, or if you want to handpick affiliates yourself. Both approaches have their own advantages and disadvantages. Also note that if neither of these seem optimal to you, you could also opt for a hybrid model where you let anyone register for your affiliate program and handpick only those affiliates that meet your requirements, denying everyone else access.

Wide open - advantages

- Allows you to reach as many affiliates as possible

- May attract "super affiliates" you could otherwise never find and invite if you had an invite-only program

- Having lots of active affiliates virtually guarantees that your business is being promoted through all possible online channels

Wide open - disadvantages

- Requires a lot of time and effort to manage and keep tabs on affiliates

- Gives you little control over what each individual affiliate do to promote your program

- Harder to negotiate individual deals with affiliates

Invite only - advantages

- Lets you focus your attention on affiliates you know can perform and deliver sales

- Minimizes the risk of fraudulent affiliates and bad practices like cookie stuffing

- Less time spent on administrative duties

Invite only - disadvantages

- May lead to fewer sales delivered overall unless you find and invite many skilled affiliates

- Requires that you take an active role in recruiting new affiliates, which may be time consuming

Lifetime vs "last cookie" model

While most affiliate programs only credit the affiliate for the first subsequent purchase made by their referred customer, others use a different model where the customer "belongs" to the same affiliate indefinitely once they've made their first purchase. Whenever they return to buy something, even if months have passed, the affiliate will earn a commission from the sale. This is, of course, a very profitable arrangement for the affiliate.

Lifetime - advantages

- Very attractive to many affiliates and can be a major advantage when trying to recruit "super affiliates"

Lifetime - disadvantages

- Will eat up much of your profits if you don't have high enough margins

- Some affiliates may prefer that you give them a larger lump sum after the first sale, based on average customer value, instead of "spreading it out" over the customer's lifetime

- Requires that the affiliate trusts you to honor payments, as they have no real insight into sales made after the first

"Last cookie" - advantages

- Is the most common model, affiliates know what to expect

- After a referred customer's first purchase you get to keep 100% of the profits from subsequent purchases made by them

"Last cookie" - disadvantages

- No incentive for affiliates to encourage customer loyalty since they're only being paid for the first purchase anyway

Instant commission vs delayed

Another choice you'll have to make is whether you want to pay affiliates immediately for sales delivered, or if you'd rather go with a model that requires some time to pass before sales commissions are final. Usually affiliate programs for physical goods require a waiting period to allow for refunds and fraudulent orders, while programs for digital products can take steps to handle these situations even with instant commissions.

Instant commission - advantages

- Very appealing to affiliates as they don't have to wait for their payment

- No need to devise routines for handling affiliate payments as it's all done automatically

Instant commission - disadvantages

- Higher risk of fraud as you have no time to examine an order before paying out the commission

- Requires affiliates to "play nice" and honor refund requests, losing their commission

- Only possible through services like PayPal, does not work if you want to pay affiliates through wire transfers, checks, etc

Delayed - advantages

- You'll have plenty of time to verify that orders are valid and non-fraudulent before paying affiliates

- Handling refunds is straight-forward as you can just subtract those sales from the affiliate's balance before paying out

Delayed - disadvantages

- May deter some affiliates from using your program (or causing them to instead promote one of your competitors who offers instant commissions)

Takeaways

- All the choices you make with your affiliate program have corresponding pros and cons, and you need to consider the consequences of each of them before deciding

- Keeping your affiliate program invite only minimizes your risk and ensures your affiliates know what they're doing, but it may prove difficult to personally invite enough affiliates to make your program successful

- You can choose to let affiliates earn commissions on all future sales to customers they refer, but keep in mind that you'll never make much profit off of these customers (unless you have very high margins so you can pay affiliates good commissions and still make money)

- Instant commission affiliate programs are very popular with affiliates, but be prepared for potential headaches when it comes to handling refunds and disputes

Recruiting Affiliates

Making your affiliate program attractive to affiliates

Before you start actively recruiting affiliates, you need to make sure your affiliate program really is attractive to them. Keep in mind that there are thousands of affiliate programs out there, and you need to give affiliates solid reasons why they should pick *yours* over all the others.

Make it easy to join and start promoting

The easier your affiliate program is to join and start sending traffic to, the more affiliates you'll get - simple as that. A lot of affiliates are impatient and don't like to wait around for days before they can try out a new affiliate program. If you approve affiliates manually you better make sure you're quick about it. Usually it's best to wait until they've actually earned some money with your program before asking for things like tax forms and bank account details. Just make sure it's clear in your terms that you can't pay out anything until those things are in order.

Provide banners, e-mail swipes, etc

Having high converting/click friendly creatives ready to use is a great way to reduce the friction for affiliates. Some affiliate programs go as far as offering to create custom creatives, even full landing pages, for their affiliates to use. If you're just starting out you probably don't have the resources to do that, but it's a good mindset to have nevertheless. The easier you make it for affiliates, the more attractive your affiliate program will be.

Educate affiliates

If you run an open affiliate program you're bound to attract at least some inexperienced affiliates who are just starting out. At their current skill level they may not be of much use to you, and the initial reaction may be to simply ignore them until they've learned the ropes. However, you may find that educating them is the better solution. Some of the most popular affiliate programs (and

networks) are those that actively teach people how to become better affiliates, making everyone more money in the process.

Be generous with commissions

At the very least you'll have to pay commissions on par with what your competitors are offering, preferably more. This is where it helps if you know the average lifetime value of your customers. One common strategy is aiming to break even on the first sale to a new customer referred by an affiliate, and then making your actual profit on subsequent sales to that customer. Usually affiliates prefer to make as much money as possible up front, but in some cases it could also make sense to share profits with them for the whole customer lifetime (as discussed in the Lifetime vs last cookie section of the previous chapter). If you're unsure, you could always ask around and see what people think would be best.

Don't be too strict with rules/terms

It goes without saying that you have to have some rules in place to prevent affiliates from using unethical, or even illegal, methods to promote your affiliate program. However, keep in mind that the stricter your rules are, the less "affiliate friendly" your program will be. Life as an affiliate is uncertain in many ways, and being afraid of breaking one rule or another and getting banned from a moneymaking affiliate program adds unnecessary stress that a lot of affiliates just don't want to deal with. So, make the rules fair, simple to understand and leave as little room for misunderstandings as possible.

Participate on forums

Most affiliates frequent at least one marketing forum, free or paid. By spending some time getting to know the community and networking, you can pick up some real "super affiliates" this way, providing your affiliate program is interesting to them.

It's worth noting that on most free forums it will only be a small percentage of members who are actually successful affiliates. Generally you'll have better chances on the paid forums, but it doesn't hurt to try both types.

To actually find the affiliates, you usually can't just go start a thread advertising your affiliate program (unless there is a specific section of the forum that allows you to do that, but those sections generally aren't visited much by affiliates anyway). Instead, just try to be helpful and become a familiar face on the forum, along with putting some information about your affiliate program in your signature. That should be enough to get at least some people curious about it.

Attend live events

Everyone who's been involved in the affiliate marketing world in some capacity knows how powerful live events can be to meet people and network. A lot of big-time affiliates frequent industry events, and people are generally more open to doing business in person compared to online.

Of course, just like on forums you don't want to go around just trying to advertise your affiliate program. As always, the goal should be networking and focusing on striking mutually beneficial deals. You can bet that most high profile affiliates get a LOT of offers from merchants, so make sure you've got something real good to offer them.

Using Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn

Most high (and low) profile affiliates are on at least one of these social networks, and if you're smart about it you may be able to pitch your program to them without spam accusations. By now you've probably already understood that you should focus more on networking and less on shoving your offer down people's throats, but it's worth saying it again: your goal should be to make friends in the industry, not to blindly push your affiliate program on anyone who'll listen.

You could start by, for example, following all the affiliates you can find on Twitter and participating in the industry discussions. Sooner or later you'll be getting some affiliate followers yourself, who may be interested in checking out your affiliate program.

On Facebook and LinkedIn you may want to focus on hitting up a few groups where affiliates are known to hang, and start adding value yourself. Ideally you

shouldn't even mention your affiliate program until later on when you've established yourself.

"Steal" your competitors' affiliates

This is a somewhat sneaky way to find new affiliates, but it could prove to be very effective in the right circumstances. All you need to do is dig up affiliates who are currently promoting your competitors, and make them an offer they cannot resist.

So how are you going to find these affiliates? Well, you can start by using Google. Check if there are any affiliates currently ranking for keywords related to your product, or bidding on keywords in Adwords. You can also try browsing around on related sites and looking carefully at all the ads you see for your competitors - some of them may in fact be affiliates.

Once you've found a few, it's just a matter of contacting them with your offer. Make sure you're offering something better (read: more profitable) than your competitors, and that you're making it really easy for the affiliate to try your program. Most affiliates are not very loyal, meaning they'll have no qualms about switching to your affiliate program if it converts better, pays more or both.

Advertise

Yes, in some cases you could actually benefit from advertising for affiliates. A good place to start looking would be those marketing forums mentioned earlier. You probably don't want to just put up a banner that says "Come try our affiliate program", as most affiliates are blind to that sort of advertising already. Try to be unique and helpful instead. For example, one strategy could be advertising an educational guides (as mentioned earlier teaching can be very powerful) in exchange for their e-mail address, and then promoting your affiliate program through an autoresponder, showing them exactly how they can use it to make money.

Takeaways

- Before you start thinking about recruiting affiliates actively, you need to make sure your affiliate program is actually attractive enough to be worth their while

- The easier you make registering and promoting your offers, the easier you'll find it to recruit affiliates

- Marketing forums are great to find and network with affiliates, and you can also purchase ads there promoting your affiliate program

- Other ways to find and network with both "regular" and "super" affiliates include visiting live events and using social media like Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn

- If you're feeling sneaky, you can locate and "steal" affiliates from your competitors with a few simple tricks

Conclusion

By now we've gone over all the basics you need to know to start your own affiliate program. Hopefully you're now able to make informed decisions along the way, suitable to your particular situation. Since every business is different there is rarely a "best way" to do things - you just have to figure out the details along the way.

If this is the first time you're starting an affiliate program, it may be a good idea to start small. If you keep it 'invite only' in the beginning, inviting only affiliates you know and trust, you can make sure things are running smoothly before opening it up to world (of course you can also choose to keep it 'invite only' if you wish). As noted earlier, affiliates usually go where there's the least amount of hassle and the most money to be made, and if you're not offering a good experience from the get go some of them may not return later on.

Don't be discouraged if your newly started affiliate program isn't making you much money within the first few months. It can take a long time to build up to a level where it's actually bringing in a sizable portion of your revenue - it can even take years. Remember though that just one or two "super affiliates" can make all the difference, so locating them and convincing them to switch to your affiliate program should be one of your top priorities. Just imagine what an affiliate with a 100,000 strong e-mail list can do for you!

It's also worth noting that if you don't feel like handling all the administration around your program, you could always hire a dedicated affiliate manager to help you out. It may not be something you want to do in the beginning, but managing a large affiliate program with hundreds of active affiliates can be quite time consuming. Letting someone with a good amount of previous experience handle it for you would allow you to focus on running all the other aspects of your business.

Finally, remember that you can always look at what your most successful competitors are doing and start out by emulating their strategies. You don't

have to reinvent the wheel - just do everything slightly better than everyone else and you're golden! Good luck!