

Basic Settings for Affiliate Link

Once your order is placed, order/lead generation process integrated and tested and welcome email received, you can adjust the settings and add marketing material into the admin panel for your account. There is a good deal of information in this welcome email, but don't get overwhelmed. The first item of importance is

Admin Panel url: The link will look like this

<http://affiliatetracking.com/ACCOUNTNAME/admin> unless you've chosen one of our additional services such as Direct Linking, webpage replication or decided to purchase the software for installation on your server. In those cases, the affiliate link will contain your domain name. Please bookmark this link as all administrative functions related to managing your program are done in this panel. You are invited to visit the Support Center, Help section or [contact us](#) via email for free assistance in setting up and maintaining the software.

The items you will customize are outlined as follows:

Customizing your Affiliate Agreement: The Affiliate Agreement should be customized to define the terms of your relationship with affiliates, and should include any terms and conditions that you expect affiliates to agree with before becoming a member of your program. The affiliate agreement appears for affiliates on the 'signup' form for your program. You can edit the agreement to meet your needs specifically in the 'templates' section of the admin panel.

Default Commissions Settings: In the planning stages you should have determined the type and amount of commissions you want to reward affiliates. To set this commission structure for affiliates, login to your admin panel, and choose 'Options', then 'Commissions Settings'. Commissions that you set here are applied to your entire program.

Adjust the Options for your program: In your admin panel, choose 'options' from the main menu. The options menu will appear in 'simple mode' by default. These are the standard options that need to be adjusted for every program. To see additional options that are available, click the 'switch to advanced mode' link at the top right of the page. You won't need to adjust every option. Remember to click 'update options' at the bottom of the page to confirm any changes you've made.

Change the look of your affiliate program: If the default 'look' for Affiliate Link is okay with you, then this step is unnecessary. If you want Affiliate Link to look more like your website, get the URL of your company logo or banner and the URL of the .css for your website. View the options menu in advanced mode. In the General Settings section, you'll find where to enter these URLs so that Affiliate Link will display your banner or company logo and use the font and color schemes from your .css to match your website.

Create entrances: By default, all affiliate's links will redirect visitors silently to your home page. (If you only want affiliates links and banners to redirect their visitors to your home page, then this is an unnecessary step for you.) If you'd like affiliates links and banners to redirect visitors to areas on your website, other than the homepage: make a list of the URLs for these pages and categorize them (i.e. products pages, order page, resource pages). Login to your admin panel and choose 'entrances' from the main menu. Create category names for your entrances, and then add the corresponding page URLs to each category. Affiliates can obtain links for any of the entrance pages you've added in the Affiliate Login area. If you want to include more than one website in your affiliate program: Create Entrance category names for each of your websites, and then add URLs from your sites to their corresponding category.

Add Banners: If you skipped creating entrances, then all of the banners that you add will redirect affiliates visitors to your home page, or the URL you entered in the 'location' box in the 'options' menu. If you created entrances as described above, you can match entrances with banners, to strictly define where an affiliate's visitor will land when they click on a banner. Login to your admin panel; choose 'banners' from the main menu. Name logical categories for your banners (i.e. health products, art, graphic banners art, static health product banners), then add banner URLs to their corresponding category.

Note: If you have more than one website, use the same category names for banners that you used for entrances. This way, affiliates will know which website that the banners are for!! Affiliates will access the banners and entrances for your program in the affiliate login area.

Site Management: If you are managing only 1 domain with the software, the 'site management' item will not apply to your program. If you will be managing more than one domain with the software, then this item is necessary for creating a site 'tag' which will (via integration) be recorded in the system along with the order details. This function is helpful for determining how well each site performs.

Creatives: Use this section to include flash banners, full emails or graphic ads for your affiliates. You can have the software auto code each creative with the affiliates' link.
**Full urls are required for this item to function properly.

Add Affiliate Link to Your Affiliate Page.

With your options set, you'll need to add Affiliate Link to your affiliate page. The affiliate page sells affiliates on the benefits of joining your program, has stats login access and generally an FAQ. The welcome email also contains the links you'll need to add and those are

(1) Affiliate Signup Form: <http://affiliatetracking.com/ACCOUNTNAME/signup>
Should be linked to the text on your affiliate page instructing affiliates to join your affiliate program.

(2) Affiliate Stats Area: <http://affiliatetracking.com/ACCOUNTNAME/affiliate>
Should be linked to the text instructing affiliates to log in to check their stats and pick up marketing material.

Important Reminders:

(1) If you will be accepting affiliates on a pending basis, be sure to log in and approve them on a regular basis. We suggest not leaving them pending longer than 48 hours. You'll find pending affiliates in your admin panel by choosing "Pending" from the drop down menu of the search box under "Affiliates" and choosing "Search". Be sure to customize your decline message to outline why they may have been declined and/or how to reach you for an explanation. All emails and page views available via the software can be edited in the "Templates" section of the admin panel.

(2) If you'll be accepting orders on a pending basis, please be sure to log in and approve these on a regular basis as well. We suggest not going over 30 days in waiting to approve or decline orders.

(3) Pay affiliates per your terms and on time. One late payment can affect the integrity of your program and your company. If you must send affiliate payment late due to vacation, emergency, etc, use the "Email Affiliates" feature of the software to notify them of any delays.

(4) Keep your lines of communication open with your affiliates. Emailing them regularly will keep them motivated and active. The "Email Affiliates" feature can be used for this purpose as well.

(5) Provide your affiliates with sales and marketing material. Your affiliates are your extended sales force. Help them close their referred sales by providing them with up to date, accurate marketing materials.

(6) Have a policy for refunds, chargebacks, credits and returns in place for affiliate referred sales. While you want to make it easy for a disgruntled customer to return the item or contact you for credit, there are instances when chargebacks occur. When any affiliate referred sale results in a return, credit, refund or chargeback, you must decide if you want to delete the order or adjust the order amount, depending on the situation, in order to remove/adjust the affiliate's commission.

(7) Have a policy for affiliate removal. It is an unfortunate fact, but there are dishonest people who join affiliate programs in an attempt to defraud it in an effort to make a quick dollar. Outline, in your affiliate agreement, what you will not allow and what will result in the affiliate account being removed. For instance, if the affiliate refers a high number of orders that result in chargeback, you may want to remove the affiliate from your program.

(8) Make sure your product or service delivers what is promised and that your site contains valid contact information for those who have questions and/or issues.

(9) Try to keep response times to calls and emails relatively short. Prompt responses will ensure that affiliate referred customers and affiliates get what they need quickly in order to remain satisfied and motivated and chargebacks down. If your replies will be delayed, try to have an email or voice message in place that will tell them when to expect a reply.

Sample Affiliate Program FAQs

(These should be included on your affiliate page & edited to suit your specific program.)

When do I get paid and is there a minimum?

There is a \$_____ minimum and all checks are sent on the 28th of every month for the previous month's commissions.

In which currency will I be paid?

Enter Answer here.

I live outside the US, can I still join?

Enter answer here.

How do I know I will get paid? How do you know who has come from my site?

Each affiliate in the program is assigned a unique url that identifies you once that url has been clicked.

I haven't purchased from you yet. Do I need to order before I refer people?

No purchase is necessary to become an affiliate. However it always helps to know exactly what you are selling.

I have been an associate for a month and have not received any commission yet. What is going on?

Enter answer here.

How will my visitors order?

You will place convincing, yet accurate, sales information on your site that direct your visitor to our site via your affiliate url.

If your presales text is persuasive, they will order and you will get credit.

How do you calculate commission?

Each order referred by you is eligible for _____ of any sale made

How will I know how many orders I referred to you?

We will provide you with the URL, where you can check your stats and commissions at any time you wish. These are offered to you in realtime, so if someone has placed an order you will be able to see how much you earned the exact same day.

I sent someone to your site to order, but they do not appear in my stats. Why?

There are only a couple of possibilities for this. Either your link does not contain your unique referral URL or they didn't use it to access our site. Make sure all your links are working properly. Make sure you do some test runs yourself and check in the stats page to make sure they have been logged.

Marketing Your New Affiliate Program

Affiliate marketing is the act of promoting your product or service through independent sales people, referred to as partners or affiliates. To market via affiliates successfully you should consider 3 key factors.

First: Provide Your Affiliates with the Materials to Promote You Effectively

In order to provide your affiliates with those tools, you should create an "affiliate center" your affiliates can log into to get answers about linking codes, payment info, policies, tutorials, successful sales tools, real success stories, updates and your contact information for questions or issues not addressed on the website.

Be sure to remain in constant contact with your affiliates. Whether your communication is a periodic mailing requesting their feedback on how they are doing with your program, a monthly newsletter providing them the latest news and updates on your product or service, or a personalized message to each affiliate thanking them for their continued support and participation in your program, your benefit will go beyond a few extra dollars or visitors. You will have an edge over other affiliate programs in giving a "virtual face" to yours, which will create and build trust in you and your product/service.

Second: Police Your Program - Review New Affiliate Applications and Current Promotional Methods

As with anything, there is a downside to affiliate marketing. Those downsides can chew up a good portion of your marketing time and budget if you do not manage your affiliate program carefully. Affiliates, being the ever zealous promoters they are, can push the ethics envelop when promoting your product or service. They can increase your pay per click search engine ad spend, bid on trademarks, spam, produce or bundle with ad/spyware applications that employ stealth installs, ruin customer machines and unnecessarily increase customer acquisition costs.

You can avoid associations with those types of programs by never charging a fee for affiliate program memberships, never requiring minimum sales levels for affiliates' commissions eligibility, always disclosing traffic figures and other important data, no promotion through spamming, do not change program policies without notice, make sure your policies on promotional tactics are clear and concise and always monitor your affiliate database. Review all incoming affiliate submissions and continue to review their traffic, sales and promotional activities once they've been permitted to join your program. You want to make sure your affiliates add value to your product and your brand, not dilute it. Make sure they are not abusing the relationship.

The Final Key to Successful Affiliate Marketing: Remember That Easy Money in Affiliate Marketing is a Myth

It is a common misconception that affiliate programs are easy money and practically run themselves. An affiliate program does require work in order to profit. The more time you spend working and nurturing your program, the better it will be. And, your time is best spent increasing your targeted traffic and educating your affiliates. Advertise your program in affiliate directories and make sure your affiliates are preselling, not selling, your product. Everyone's time is a commodity and they do not want to spend 15 minutes reading your affiliates' pitch, click the link to order and get pitched again. They lose interest. So, make sure you stress: PRE-SELL

Thank you for your interest in our services. We wish you success with your affiliate program. Please feel free to review the 'Help' documentation, 'Support Center' or get in touch with us whenever you have a question, comment, concern or need.