

Transcript of:

044 Affiliate Marketing: How to get started with Arlen Robinson from OSI Affiliate Software



[00:00:01.590] - Intro

You're listening to the Keep Optimising podcast to increase your traffic, improve your conversion rates and grow your profits.

[00:00:10.410] - Chloe Thomas

Hello and welcome. If you're looking to improve the performance and return on investment of your marketing, then you've tuned in to the right podcast. I'm Chloe Thomas, the host of this marketing-focused podcast, and it's really awesome to have you tuning in. In today's episode, we are finishing off our affiliate marketing month and we are going to be talking about how to get started with affiliate marketing. So I have a suspicion that many of you have been listening and going this Affiliates thing's quite interesting.

[00:00:39.570] - Chloe Thomas

O this sounds like something that could make me some money, help me grow my sales, help me find some awesome customers. So we are finishing off with how to get started. I've got an excellent guest and we're going to be talking not only about setting up your Affiliates account, we're also going to talk about whether or not you should use an affiliate network or use your own Affiliates software. We're also going to talk about the role Influencers have in the world of Affiliates marketing and how to explore that further.

[00:01:06.460] - Chloe Thomas

So there's a lot coming up for you, got an excellent guest who's sharing a lot of really good tips, too. We are just about to meet today's guest. Before we do, though, please do check out the sponsors.

[00:01:19.780] - Chloe Thomas

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[00:01:52.100] - Chloe Thomas

Today, I'm chatting with Affiliates marketing expert Arlen Robinson. Arlen is the COO and co-founder of OSI Affiliates Software, and he's been in the Affiliates marketing world for over 20 years. Plus, he's the host of the eCommerce marketing podcast who recently gone past 200 episodes. Congrats on that, Arlen.

[00:02:13.520] - Arlen Robinson

Thank you, Chloe. I really appreciate it. It has been quite a journey and it's hard to believe we've hit two hundred episodes definitely.

[00:02:20.480] - Chloe Thomas

The big hundreds means so much to podcast hosts.

[00:02:24.020] - Arlen Robinson

Yeah

[00:02:24.380] - Chloe Thomas

They're lovely listeners. I do wonder if they, if it means quite as much to them as it does to us. But I take my hat off to you for reaching 200. We are a long way from it here on Keep Optimising. But we'll keep trying.

[00:02:36.350] - Arlen Robinson

Actually, that's it. Just keep plugging away. Thanks again. You guys will definitely get there.

[00:02:40.100] - Chloe Thomas

We'll get there. Whether anyone else cares or not. I will get to two hundred. Right, right.

[00:02:46.670] - Chloe Thomas

So Arlen we're not here to talk podcasting. We're here to talk about Affiliates marketing. So, all those years ago, decades ago, how did you end up in the world of Affiliates marketing?

[00:02:57.470] - Arlen Robinson

Thank you for asking.

[00:02:58.520] - Arlen Robinson

And again, thank you for inviting me on the podcast, I'm super excited to be here. But, that's a great question. You know, it has been quite a journey, as you mentioned. It's been over a twenty-year journey into this tech world. And actually, it started in about the year 2000 to kind of rewind things. You know, we started out our main, our company main name is Omnistar Interactive. We started in about the year 2000 as a full-service Web Development Agency.

[00:03:26.690] - Arlen Robinson

So we were developing custom websites, custom Web-based applications for a variety of different start-ups, industries, different companies. And we did that for about three to five years, just custom Web work. So we learned a lot and we learned that a lot of these industries, a lot of these companies had different needs. You know, the Internet was kind of really just getting going. Talking about, in the year 2000, traction was building. The Web was exploding.

[00:03:54.440] - Arlen Robinson

But what we saw is that the next iteration of kind of the Internet was Web functionality, you know, tools. What kind of things can you do online, whether it's email marketing, whether it's eCommerce, all of that stuff was exploding.

[00:04:08.930] - Arlen Robinson

And so we said, we decided to take a step back and said, OK, why don't we create our own toolset so that we can meet the needs of a variety of different companies, a variety of industries, rather than doing all of these custom web projects, because we were doing a lot of custom work. And, you know, within each Custom Pride project, we had web tools and, you know, some Web solutions, you know, for that.

[00:04:32.390] - Arlen Robinson

And so, you know, we knew that there was a need for it. And so we took a step back and we decided to create our own suite of solutions. And that's really where the Affiliates software was birthed. We actually had the Affiliates software and approximately about five other Web tools from email mailing lists, management. We even had our own eCommerce shopping cart solution, web help desk and a variety of other solutions. So we did that for several years.

[00:04:57.500] - Arlen Robinson

When we managed all of these different Web solutions. We were kind of like a an early SaaS company and early software as a service company providing the subscription model. At that time,

we were actually also selling the product itself as well, where a company can purchase it outright, purchase a license, install it on their own servers. Of course we since discontinued that. And we're fully SaaS, which is really the trend these days, just the subscription model.

[00:05:24.260] - Arlen Robinson

And so what we saw is that, yeah, that Affiliates software was the one that really took off and we decided to discontinue our other solutions and then go full speed ahead with the Affiliates software because it is really exploding. And our numbers really spoke to that. And we just kind of put all of our efforts into the Affiliates software. And we've been continually growing the product, getting feedback from customers, trying to make it the best that it can be.

[00:05:50.180] - Arlen Robinson

And that's brings us to where we are today. You know what, they are really fully mature product that, you know, still is continually growing because, as everyone knows, the Internet is ever changing, so you got to stay on top of things.

[00:06:02.240] - Chloe Thomas

Well, I love about that story is that is that you've done something which we talk a lot about on both my podcast, which is listening to the customer. And you tried all these things and then the customer went we love your Affiliates software, we're going to keep buying your Affiliates software. And you went, alright we'll listen to them and we're just going to focus on making it the best, best we can make it. So I think that's such a cool thing anyone needs to do in any business is to focus in on what the customer actually want. So I love that.

[00:06:31.700] - Arlen Robinson

Exactly!

[00:06:32.690] - Chloe Thomas

Well Arlen, we are here today to discuss how someone who is wanting to make their first steps with affiliate marketing can get into it. And I think, my first question to you is how to decide if Affiliates is right for you because it's not necessarily right for everybody, and you've certainly got to know why you want to get into it. It's not just like Google Ads PPC where you just turn it on. It's a bit more complicated than that.

[00:07:00.470] - Chloe Thomas

So what should a retailer be thinking about to decide if Affiliates is right for them?

[00:07:07.190] - Arlen Robinson

OK, great, great question. And really, before I dig deep and really answer that, I want to kind of explain the difference between an Affiliates program and a referral program, because a lot of times they're used interchangeably. A lot of times people think they are Affiliates, they say referral program. There is a distinct difference. So first off, a referral program is actually where you would get your customers to refer typically people that they know to your brand.

[00:07:36.200] - Arlen Robinson

They refer people that they know to your brand and they get an incentive for that referral. The incentives you just typically discount towards future purchases or cash incentive or some type of gift. And so that's what a referral program is. When the customers are referring people that they know. Now affiliate program is just a little bit different, the Affiliates program is you're getting outside people outside Affiliates or Influencer, Affiliates and Influencer is a really kind of almost the same thing these days.

[00:08:01.340] - Arlen Robinson

But you're getting outside people, people that may have never used your brand before, but you're getting them to promote your brand to their larger network. And usually these Affiliates or these influencers have a network across various social channels, the Facebook, Instagram, the Twitters, the LinkedIn, or you name it. They'll have some type of network of followers and then that's how they're going to promote it. With the Affiliates, you're going to typically provide them.

[00:08:29.390] - Arlen Robinson

What's customary these days is you're going to provide them with a cash incentive, usually a percentage of an order total or some type of fixed amount that you agree upon with them. And so that's the difference.

[00:08:41.780] - Arlen Robinson

Now, as far as to answer your questions as far as, how does a company and eCommerce company determine if this is right for them, whether it's a referral program or an affiliate program to answer that? Really what I've seen over the years is there's not too many companies that it's not right for, because the bottom line is, as long as you have a product that can be promoted across any of the social platforms and without having any type of legality issues, whether it's a product, let's say, that's restricted, you know, maybe it's because, you know, here in the U.S, one of the things right now that.

[00:09:22.940] - Arlen Robinson

eCommerce brands is struggling with is cannabis and that type of thing, the hemp, and I'm not sure if you guys have that same issue.

[00:09:30.860] - Chloe Thomas

Yeah, we had the, we've got the whole CBD thing going on, which is limited in your marketing channels because it comes on just a lot of the farmer regulations, doesn't it?

[00:09:39.650] - Arlen Robinson

Exactly!

[00:09:40.310] - Arlen Robinson

Exactly. And so, you know, if you have a product like that, it can be a little tricky because you're going to have Affiliates promoting on certain channels that where it may not be acceptable. So it's a little tough.

[00:09:51.530] - Arlen Robinson

And if you have other products like that that are a little touchy, such as, you know, such as arms or guns, things like that, where it can be a little tricky on social media, if you're in any of those kind of niche brands where you're selling those type of products, where it's a little touchy based on your government's regulations, then you may want to really do your research first before you do it. Other than that, I'd say it's wide open for any eCommerce brand to start at Affiliates program, and I definitely encourage any brand to do it.

[00:10:26.150] - Arlen Robinson

And so, you know, if you're selling anything else other than some of those products where it's a little touchy, I say go, go for it. Know whether it's food, whether it's, you know, fashion, electronics, you name it, it's something that can definitely benefit your business. And the main reason for that is what I said earlier. It's the Affiliates or these influencers that you're tapping into have really a built in audience of people that you would not normally be able to tap into.

[00:10:54.290] - Arlen Robinson

And that's the biggest benefit for for doing it.

[00:10:57.380] - Chloe Thomas

So given this Affiliates plan is available for pretty much any business to give a go to, how do we get ready for going live? How do we think through, what decisions are we going to make to make it successful?

[00:11:12.830] - Arlen Robinson

Good question.

[00:11:14.060] - Arlen Robinson

The first thing is you want to think about, of course, you know, like you mentioned, laying really the foundation. And that's really what's the most important thing before you get started. You don't want to just kind of jump into it. So you want to think about really what is your brand about, who's your target demographic and also how do you as your own brand owner, how are you typically attracting customers? Because once you do that, that's going to really help you narrow down the types of Affiliates or influencers that you're going to want to target.

[00:11:45.740] - Arlen Robinson

Because, you know, these days there's Affiliates and Influencer and so many different niches and genres that have so many different particular audiences. So you want to really clearly define, you know, your audience and then see how that's going to mesh with the audience of these Affiliates. So definitely get that established first, firstly.

[00:12:07.670] - Chloe Thomas

I'm going to jump in now Arlen, because there's a couple of things you said which are just triggering thoughts in me and also that I want to tie in to another episode we did. So one of the, one of those things you've got to think about from an Affiliates perspective is what I was talking about with Amy from eight, from Webgains even, maybe I've got the company wrong, which is around, you know, you kind of have the voucher code and discount site Affiliates and you've got content Affiliates.

[00:12:31.220] - Chloe Thomas

Then you've got the CSS Affiliates. There's all these different types. You kind of got to decide which ones are going to fit well with your brand. But then the more the the even more interesting thing you're saying about that Arlen was around. You've got influences and you've got Affiliates. And it strikes me that that's one of the big things that is bringing a lot of retailers to the world of Affiliates now is that they've got, they're running these micro or nano Influencer programs where they want to reward the Influencer for success.

[00:13:03.890] - Chloe Thomas

They don't want to just give them a free product or just pay them something. They want to give them a commission. So they may be working with people who don't see themselves as Affiliates, but who are very much up for being paid by commission. So it strikes me that we've kind of got, we've probably got listening a group of retailers who are into the idea of turning their Influencer channel into a cost per acquisition channel rather than a flat fee channel.

[00:13:31.610] - Chloe Thomas

And then we've got people who are going, I want to tap into those big, solid Affiliates, traditional affiliate channels, you know, like the content networks and the voucher code sites and the price

comparison engines and that sort of thing. Is that because you're spending a lot of time, a lot more time than I am talking to retailers who are launching Affiliates, these Affiliates channel. Do you see them kind of breaking down into those two groups or is it more of a merge between them these days?

[00:14:00.170] - Arlen Robinson

What I typically see is things kind of merging, actually, to tell you the truth. And, you know, these different worlds of, you know, the Influencers, the Affiliates and just really kind of all in one. You kind of mentioned a couple of things now when you were speaking that there's a lot of.

[00:14:22.160] - Arlen Robinson

Of people that are either, you know, they're Affiliates, they have a certain following, but their whole goal wasn't necessarily to do what they're doing for, you know, a commission or an invoice. It just so happens they have a following. You know, maybe they're doing it because they're they're really passionate about educating people on a certain topic. But then, you know, because of all of that and because the whole following, they're naturally going to, you know, attract brands, you know, because brands these days are looking for all types of avenues to try, you know to tap into, you know, a certain audience.

[00:14:57.590] - Arlen Robinson

And so, I think those people really just almost become Affiliates by default. You know, they've kind of just step into it. That's not their goal. But then at the same time, there's also people that that's what they do that. I mean, if you look at, if they say who they are, they say, OK, I'm an affiliate marketer. That's their title, so to speak. And so their goal is really to just to seek out brands.

[00:15:20.540] - Arlen Robinson

So they're doing a little bit differently there. That's their job. Their goal is to seek out Affiliates, the goal is to seek out eCommerce brands.

[00:15:29.150] - Arlen Robinson

And, you know, they have ways and they have networks in which they can promote the brand too. So I think it's really just kind of those two types of things. But they're really all doing the same work, so to speak. You know, it's just, I think a matter of how they're, how they initially have engaged with these brands.

[00:15:47.540] - Chloe Thomas

It's interesting isn't it? It's kind of the, we as retailers.

[00:15:50.780] - Chloe Thomas

With our marketers. We need to be very aware that the people who were aiming to get onto our affiliate program may or may not think of themselves as Affiliates, but might be perfect targets. So but we digress into an area that I think we both find fascinating, but which isn't about getting started with Affiliate marketing. So, I'm clearly in a tangential mood here today. So apologies, everyone, for that.

[00:16:15.830] - Chloe Thomas

Okay, next question then, Arlen. We've worked out that it's right for our business. We thought about what sort of Affiliates or Influencers, we want to bring in on board. There's a really key decision that someone needs to make to go into affiliate marketing because they need some kind of software to track all that stuff that's going on and to manage the payments, the Affiliates and all this kind of stuff.

[00:16:36.860] - Chloe Thomas

And we have essentially two big decisions. And one is to go with an off the shelf software solution like yourselves, where we're going to build it ourselves. Or we go to one of the big affiliate networks, the AWINs, the Trade Doublers, the Commission Junction's or CJ's, and we tap into their software into, or their network in return for a fee we get access to more stuff theoretically. There's pros and cons to each. So let's start off with why someone would be best off doing it on their own app, because obviously that's the world you're coming from.

[00:17:15.680] - Chloe Thomas

So what's the key benefits of doing it with your own Affiliates app, rather than using a network?

[00:17:22.100] - Arlen Robinson

A great question, Chloë, and that's the question that I often get, because, you know, people see that there's two distinct parts that they can go to. So but of course, I'm going to be a little biased, as you know, because I am the co-founder of OSI Affiliate Software and I want people to go our route. But, bias aside, one of the main advantages, this distinct advantages to creating your own Affiliates program is the control factor.

[00:17:48.260] - Arlen Robinson

You're going to be in full control over every aspect of it, the commissions, the offering, you know, layout how people and how these Affiliates engage with the program, the dashboard, all of that. Joab, you'll be in control of. You know, of course, there's limitations based on the software that you're using, but essentially you have full control over it. And the biggest thing that I've seen with the networks as opposed to starting your own, is the fee structure, which is really a big thing.

[00:18:17.660] - Arlen Robinson

And mostly of these affiliate networks, the larger ones, charge a pretty hefty fee just to be a part of their network, you know, for looking at like the commission junction's of the world, you know, to get in there, you're looking at at least three to five thousand dollars just to get in there, which is their initial setup fee, or to get into their their network. And that's just to get in there. Outside of that, you're going to be paying them a percentage of every referred sale as well.

[00:18:48.450] - Arlen Robinson

So they're they're not only getting the upfront fee, they're getting a percentage of the overall sale. So that's really a big thing there. If you're a brand, maybe that's just getting started and that's a lot to you. You don't really you want to get into Affiliates marketing, but you can't afford those fees and yeah you know, starting your own definitely that's a lot more cost effective because you're really just paying for the software solution, the monthly fee for the software, and then that's it.

[00:19:14.180] - Arlen Robinson

Other than that, it's just time, whether it's yourself or somebody on your staff that's going to be setting it up and managing it for you. So that's, I'd say, one of kind of the distinct differences, one of the reasons why I kind of tell people, especially startup brands, people just getting started to look more at the setting up their own software. Now, there are other alternatives, though.

[00:19:35.190] - Arlen Robinson

You know, to play devil's advocate, there's other cheaper networks that are out there, such as the what is it? And then the name is escaping me. But yeah, there are other smaller ones that are not Commission Junction that don't have those hefty fees.

[00:19:53.910] - Arlen Robinson

They all still are going to charge a commission based upon that.

[00:19:59.870] - Arlen Robinson

Yeah, the override fee, the percentage. And so that's that's always going to be the case. But there's there's some less expensive ones.

[00:20:05.790] - Chloe Thomas

Yeah. And I'm going to play the devil's advocate for you and kind of make a little bit of a case for the networks. So everything Arlen said is quite right. There are you are in a lot more control. If you've got your own software, it's a lot cheaper if you've got your own software because you're not paying those overrides, which are a percentage of everything you pay Affiliates that the Affiliates network will take. And you're not paying those potentially massive fees.

[00:20:30.870] - Chloe Thomas

And the numbers on them are saying, you know, it's not unusual here in the UK to see a five grand set up fee, which is a huge chunk of cash for just setting up. So the question is, what are you paying for if you're doing that? Well, the networks will argue and I'm not saying either route. You know, as with everything we do on the show, it's all about finding the right option for you.

[00:20:54.520] - Chloe Thomas

So we're going to give you the stuff and then you can make up your own minds. And if you find the salesperson on the right day, you may get a much better deal than what we're talking about here. But what you will, what you also get with the networks is you get various technology, which in some sectors can be really, really useful, some verticals. And you also get a whole host of Affiliates who are already signed up to that network.

[00:21:19.440] - Chloe Thomas

So if you, if you're on, I don't know, let's say Webgains and you speak to someone and they happen to already be on the Webgains and Affiliates is already on the Webgains platform. It's really super easy for them to start marketing you because you're both already on the same network platform.

[00:21:38.160] - Chloe Thomas

So that's kind of kind of the the the benefits, I would say, from the network side of things. But as we're about to explore imminently the rest of the work we're about to start talking about, you have to do whichever route you go down. So that's the, that's the key. The key areas there, I think. Arlen which is the any other reasons to go on the network side?

[00:22:00.840] - Arlen Robinson

Yeah. I mean, you mentioned those are the key things. I guess the main biggest reason, of course, is you're getting instant exposure to that network of the Affiliates that are already in there looking for deals and brands to promote. So, you know, that's the biggest thing. And, you know, that's a question, of course, that people that are getting into Affiliates marketing and launching their own affiliate programs, as that's always the next question, once everything is set up, OK, how do I find Affiliates?

[00:22:27.480] - Arlen Robinson

And, you know, the Affiliates networks definitely provide that. But, you know, you're going to pay the cost for that.

[00:22:33.990] - Chloe Thomas

Indeed. I know. You know, five, ten years ago, the networks had a better argument because then Affiliates might be exclusive to certain networks. But one of the episodes, the last episode in this series, actually, I was talking to Chris Tradgett from Publisher Discovery who has a software platform that's all about finding Affiliates. And he was he was looking it up as we were talking and he was looking at Affiliates who were connected to 99 plus different affiliate networks.

[00:23:02.160] - Chloe Thomas

So Affiliates, if they want to promote you, they will sign up to your system. It's not it's not a barrier. It's just probably a bit of a speed thing. Okay, Arlen, you mentioned finding Affiliates and getting people on board. For me, that kind of starts with working out what your offer is to the Affiliates. So let's tackle that first. How do we decide how much commission we're going to pay people?

[00:23:27.750] - Arlen Robinson

For Affiliates, it's pretty simple. I mentioned Affiliates and referral program. You know, like I said, there's a distinct difference referral program as you're dealing with the customers. With the Affiliates side of things you're dealing with these outside Affiliates or Influencers.

[00:23:41.070] - Arlen Robinson

What's standard and what's typical is a percentage of an order total, I think you mentioned that earlier. Percentage commission of the order total or a fixed amount. And unfortunately, there's no really set rule of thumb as far as amounts are concerned with an affiliate program. There's more of a rule of thumb dealing with the referral program.

[00:23:58.140] - Arlen Robinson

But with an Affiliates program, you're going to really, a lot of it is going to be dictated on really what level that Affiliates or what the Influencer is like. How large is their audience? They're probably going to command, you know, a certain fee based on their audience. And so, you know, that could range anywhere from, you know, what I've seen for Affiliates to have a decent half, decent audience that, you know, the Micro Influences of the world that have, you know, a little bit less than anything greater than a thousand followers on any of the networks.

[00:24:40.010] - Arlen Robinson

You know, if you're looking at that range, I always see as a starting point, 20 percent commission, 20 to 30 percent in that particular range. Now, that's no way near a just kind of a hard and fast rule. You know, you do have to look at, you know, your overall margin, know, what are you taking home at the end of the day, of course, after you've paid for the product, you know, your cost of goods, you know your advertising fees, you know all of those other overhead costs, you got to look at all of that.

[00:25:09.650] - Arlen Robinson

And then on top of this, you add those fees that you're paying the Affiliates you definitely, at the end of the day, want to make sure you make money. But like I said, I see it as a starting point, 20 percent, 20, 30 percent as a starting. But when you start getting to those higher levels of Affiliates or Influencer, so let's look at the micro influencers that have greater than about one hundred thousand followers on any of the you know, the major social networks definitely going to have to get a little bit higher.

[00:25:37.400] - Arlen Robinson

You're going to have to get towards the 40, 50 percent commission just because of the following that they have and the amount of exposure that they're going to give you and the potential audience. And then, you know, if you get past that, let's say your brand is doing really good and you can attract the celebrity levels that, you know, greater than a million followers, then you you're kind of in a whole different ballgame. What I usually see at that level is not really a percentage of an order total.

[00:26:03.740] - Arlen Robinson

What I see is these celebrities, what they'll do is they'll charge a specific amount per post on their social channels. You know, that's what's customary. I've seen some of the largest celebrities like the, you know, the Kardashian clan of the worlds. They've, they're in the, you know, several hundred thousands per post, one hundred thousands of dollars per post. So if you get to that level, that's really what you're looking at. You're looking at a cost per post because they know whatever they say, they have so much engagement.

[00:26:38.000] - Arlen Robinson

You're going to really get a lot of bang for your buck on that.

[00:26:42.710] - Arlen Robinson

The great thing about if you're running your own your own software for your Affiliates network is even if you're working with someone who wants a flat fee, whether it's £100 or it's £100000 flat fee, you can ask them to use the link and just not attribute any commission to it. And you can track the results there so you can put all your Influencer activity through the same platform and making it so much easier to track the results of the different different people you're working with.

[00:27:10.280] - Chloe Thomas

I mean, something I do say is you're not necessarily going to be publishing all these rights on the front end. So often with influencers, these rates get negotiated. And then you put them live, you set them up on their individual accounts, often with especially if you're on the networks and you're after the kind of more traditional Affiliates, you may be looking more at an 8 to 10% commission, but the quality of the customer might not be as good.

[00:27:38.840] - Chloe Thomas

So this might be, you know, working with a voucher code site, you're not going to offer a voucher site, 20 to 30% don't. For those of you having a minor heart attack about what that would do to your margin.

[00:27:47.540] - Arlen Robinson

Right.

[00:27:48.020] - Chloe Thomas

That's not what you're going to be doing. It's kind of , it's like any marketing, really. The greater the quality, the higher the potential price goes, wouldn't you stay on?

[00:27:57.390] - Arlen Robinson

Exactly.

[00:27:58.040] - Arlen Robinson

That's, that is so true. So it's the quality, the higher the quality, the higher or the larger the networks that these Affiliates have. And then, you know, just you're also going to want to look at their engagement. So, you know, it's a tricky thing. I'm what I have seen is, you know, you also do have to be careful when you're engaging these Affiliates and these influencers because you can't get a lot of times what I've seen as brands get fooled by a high follower count.

[00:28:25.770] - Arlen Robinson

You see a potential Influencer or Affiliates. And, you know, you see they've got two hundred thousand followers on Instagram. You know, they've got, you know, all of these followers on Twitter, you know, hundreds of thousands of followers on Twitter. So, you know, off the top, just with a quick glance, you're like, wow, you know, they look great, they're in my niche. But you do have to dig a little bit deeper.

[00:28:45.680] - Arlen Robinson

Where you want to look at is the engagement that they have with their followers, you know, just because they have you know, unfortunately, these days there's a lot of ways to get followers. There's companies that actually sell followers. So you can't be fooled. And so what you got to look at is the engagement. When I say engagement, all you want to look at firstly, OK, how often are they posting when they do post, what's, what is the common activity looking like as their comments initially soon after the post?

[00:29:15.200] - Arlen Robinson

And if so, are they engaging with their followers or are they commenting back, are they giving helpful advice or are they creating a dialogue there? That's how, you know, if you're seeing a lot of that on every post, then, you know, this is kind of the real deal. This is somebody that's really engaging with their audience. And you want to look at even those comments. Is it just a generic comment or is it really seemed like it's their real voice coming through with a real opinion about something?

[00:29:43.990] - Arlen Robinson

So you want to look at that, because on the flip side, there could be Affiliates of or Influencers who have that high follower count, but then when you look at the comments, you'll see per post very little comments. You know, if there's any comments, you know, it's just some generic information. And that's kind of a tell tale sign that you know there's, could be something fishy going on and they're just boosting their follower account by maybe paying more followers.

[00:30:12.470] - Chloe Thomas

Really. Well, thank you for all of that, Arlen. We're now going to pause for a reminder of our sponsors and then we're going to talk about the wider world of affiliate marketing.

[00:30:22.100] - Chloe Thomas

Success in 2021 means building stronger relationships with your customers last year saw a lot of consumers switching to buy online, leading to surges in new customer acquisition. So how are you planning on turning your new first time buyers into profitable repeat customers? Well, that's what Klaviyo is for. Klaviyo helps businesses create memorable marketing moments through email, SMS and personalized website experiences, and that is what creates repeat purchases. That's why Klaviyo, the ultimate eCommerce marketing platform, is used by over 50000 eCommerce brands around the world.

[00:30:57.020] - Chloe Thomas

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[00:31:08.350] - Chloe Thomas

OK, Arlen, so far, we've gone deep into getting started with affiliate marketing. Now you get to wow us with your insider knowledge about the whole of Affiliates marketing. So for the following questions, your answer can be anything to do with Affiliates marketing, which of course does include getting started with Affiliates marketing. So Arlen, you ready for these tips?

[00:31:29.710] - Arlen Robinson

Sure, definitely.

[00:31:31.280] - Chloe Thomas

OK, let's start with Affiliates marketing newbie advice. If we've inspired someone to take their first step with affiliate marketing, what do they need to know to give themselves the best chance of success?

[00:31:43.570] - Arlen Robinson

OK, you know, we talked about a couple of these things already earlier on. We talked about definitely determining what the incentive is, targeting, figuring out who your target affiliate is beforehand before you you kind of cast your fishing line out there. You want to make sure you know who you're looking for. The next thing I think that's important when getting started is thinking about what is going to be the best type of promotional materials and media that you're going to make available for them.

[00:32:14.530] - Arlen Robinson

You want to do this, really start doing this beforehand. Because what I've seen is that when you're launching an Affiliates program and you get these influencers, if you don't give them the right media, when I say media, I'm talking about graphics for social posts, banners for their, for their sites or for their blogs, messaging in the form of text messages that they can post across the social networks, you know, emails and all of that and written emails, all of this stuff you want to make available in the pool of your Affiliates software so that when they do get in there, they do create their account, they're ready to go.

[00:32:52.750] - Arlen Robinson

They don't have to do too much thinking because these Affiliates, these influencers are busy promoting, you know, a lot of different brands and they don't have time to try to think about it, you know, create their own media, even though some of them do. A lot of them do like to personalize things. They do like to come up with their own graphics and media. But you do want to make sure you give them as much as possible, because the less work that they have to do, the better, you know, their whole you want to make sure that their focus is just promoting so that they you know, you want to make sure and ensure that they have everything they need to be able to do that.

[00:33:29.260] - Chloe Thomas

Great advice, I love that. Because it's so easy to forget that even once you've recruited them, you still got to make their lives easy, make it easy for them to work with you.

[00:33:38.170] - Arlen Robinson

Exactly.

[00:33:38.820] - Chloe Thomas

OK, well, once you've started, of course, you've got to Keep Optimising. So what's your favorite way to improve Affiliates marketing performance?

[00:33:47.650] - Arlen Robinson

Great question. Yeah. You know, just like any marketing tactic, you always got to look at the results and keep, you know, keep pivoting. So, you know, number one, you want to look at and you want to measure the analytics of everything that you're doing. So from day one, once you launched the Affiliates program, you want to look at your sales and your traffic stats specifically coming from all of these Affiliates, because I've always seen with a lot of the brands that are using our technology, and this is I think no matter what technology you're using, you're going to quickly see there's going to be some top dogs in the pack.

[00:34:26.830] - Arlen Robinson

There's always going to be a few Affiliates that are going to be your main Affiliates that are going to be the standout. They're going to send you the bulk of that. And so, you know, in order to see that, you have to look at the stats, the traffic that they're sending, the sales that they're sending within a specific set of time. Based on that, then what you want to do in order to kind of improve and optimize is you want to take a look at how are they promoting, what are the social channels that they're promoting on that they're sending the sales that you're getting the majority of the sales from.

[00:34:57.190] - Arlen Robinson

So let's say you have an affiliate and he's one of the top dogs and the majority of the sales he's sending is coming from Facebook. So in order to, let's say, optimize what he's doing on Facebook, take a look at your graphic media, your posts, the social posts that you're giving them, and double down on that increase that, come up with more, come up with other types and then you know just go from there. So you really want to look at where the sales and traffic is coming from and it just further you know improve what you're offering that would be available across those channels and that they can make available across those channels when they're promoting.

[00:35:39.670] - Chloe Thomas

Nice. And if someone listening wants to learn more about Affiliates marketing, is there one cheap or free resource you'd recommend?

[00:35:46.270] - Arlen Robinson

Yes, definitely. Well, because we have been in this industry such a long time, we have a ton of blog posts on getting started with Affiliates marketing, I'll give you some social some links to these blog posts that I think will be relevant to your audience and they'll be able to check those out on our website. So we have a number of different posts. So we've even created some in depth e-books and PDF guides that are really comprehensive when it comes to affiliate marketing, and we can make those available, you know, to all of your listeners as well.

[00:36:18.170] - Chloe Thomas

Marvelous. Will make sure those are in the show notes for all of you so you can go and have a have a good look at all of those and learn even more.

[00:36:26.420] - Chloe Thomas

Finally, Arlen its crystal ball time. What's coming up in the next six to 12 months that we should be getting ready for in Affiliates marketing?

[00:36:33.920] - Arlen Robinson

Well, within the next 6 to 8 or 12 months. One of the things that's really big for Affiliates marketing is you want to make sure your Affiliates can take advantage of seasonal holiday sales. That's a big thing for Affiliates because they know there's always going to be a spike of activity and that's when they do a lot of their promoting. So, you know, right now, when this is while we're recording this, we are, you know, in March about to approach April.

[00:37:04.310] - Arlen Robinson

And so if we're looking at looking at the holiday season, the Christmas holidays and all of that, you know, we're pretty early for that. But it's now definitely a good idea to kind of keep that in mind, what holiday sales that you're going to come up with. And then when you're doing that, we mentioned earlier about the media and the creatives that you are, you normally you're going to provide the Affiliates. Start thinking about the media and the creatives that you're going to need to provide these incentives, excuse me to provide these creatives for your Affiliates so that you know, they have the right things in place.

[00:37:36.200] - Arlen Robinson

You definitely don't want to wait to the last minute, you know, for your holiday promotional materials

[00:37:43.400] - Chloe Thomas

And of course, tell them when it's all happening as well, because that's, it always, I always find it slightly crazy when people are partnering with other people like Affiliates and it's the day before

Black Friday and they drop it or would even go by the way, we're running Black Friday. And it's like, did you not think this awesome person who drives you the loads of traffic might have been working on their Black Friday, which is a huge opportunity for them for maybe the last two months.

[00:38:09.470] - Chloe Thomas

You know, you've got to, you've got to tell them early what you're doing, bring them into your team. Don't you?

[00:38:14.480] - Arlen Robinson

Exactly, exactly! Because they're really essentially are, you know, part of your team. And then, you know, lastly, one of the things that's also it's big now, but it's going to be bigger than ever. These Influencers I mean, this whole Influencer culture we're in, where you have all of these influencers attracting huge amounts of attention and huge amount of followers, that's just getting bigger and bigger as the months, you know, move on. And there's, you know, it's more popular than ever.

[00:38:40.970] - Arlen Robinson

And so one of the things that you want to do when you're thinking about approaching these influencers is look for ones that provide authentic content to their audience because, you know, there's a lot of fake people out here that are just doing it just to to earn some commission and earn cash from these brands. But they're not really authentic. And I think it's it's kind of pretty easy to sniff it out. You can tell which of the influencers really are authentic and how they're promoting.

[00:39:10.320] - Arlen Robinson

You know, they usually open themselves up. They open their whole lives up to their audience. And, you know, you can really tell who is authentic, how are they dialoguing you know with their followers. And so, you know, definitely, you know, these next few months definitely focus on getting to those authentic, you know, Influencers so you can really dive into that audience.

[00:39:31.700] - Chloe Thomas

Nice Arlen brilliant advice there, I love it.

[00:39:34.760] - Chloe Thomas

We are nearly at the end of the show, though, so could you please let the listeners know where they can find you and your business on the web and social media please.

[00:39:41.870] - Arlen Robinson

OK, not a problem. A quick link to get to our site would just be getosi.com. That's GETOSI.com. That's a quick link that'll forward you to our site. There are osiaffiliate.com website where they can just go

to getosi.com and take a look at what we offer there. If anyone wants to get in touch with me and actually get access to all of my social channels, they can just go to my site, which is ArlenRobinson.com.

[00:40:09.980] - Arlen Robinson

You can have that in the notes as well. So ArlenRobinson.com to get a hold of me if they want to pick my brain and more. And you know lastly, for all of your listeners, we got a nice little discount promo. If somebody wants to sign up for any of our plans and get a 10 percent ongoing lifetime discount on any of our plans, they can just go to getosi.com/ko for you know Keep Optimising. K as in Kangaroo, O as in Oscar.

[00:40:37.160] - Arlen Robinson

So that's getosi.com/ko. If they go there, they will be able to get the discount across any of our plans.

[00:40:45.350] - Chloe Thomas

Awesome. Thank you very much for that Arlen. I'm sure there'll be a few people hitting you up for questions and answers and those sorts of things after this because you've been absolutely brilliant today. You shared, you've shared so much. It's been brilliant. So thank you very much for being on the Keep Optimising podcast.

[00:41:00.890] - Arlen Robinson

No problem. And thank you, Chloe, for having me.

[00:41:05.110] - Chloe Thomas

OK, so there you have it, lots of different ways to go about starting your journey into Affiliates marketing and realise it's quite a lot to think about there. But the key thing really is why are you getting into Affiliates marketing? Is it to make more better relationships with your influencers? Is it tap it to tap into those kind of traditional affiliate audiences like the voucher codes and the content Affiliates those kind of things?

[00:41:29.710] - Chloe Thomas

Because how you put things together will vary depending on those two aims. Are you going to do it with your own software and take advantage of those low set up costs and that full control? Or are you going to tap into the power of the networks and pay, you know, the fees that go alongside that? Then it's about working out what can you afford to give away and what's going to your flat, flat rate scheme and what are you going to going to be willing to negotiate with people then launch. Speak to those Affiliates.

[00:41:56.140] - Chloe Thomas

We didn't do a huge amount on how to find Affiliates. That's partly because we did a whole episode on that last time with Chris Tradgett from Publisher Discovery. So have a listen to that if you want to find out more about finding Affiliates. And we didn't get into a lot of the affiliate and different Affiliate types because we talked about that when we were talking about full price sales strategy with Amy from Webgains, which was two episodes ago. So lots of content across these four Affiliates episodes for you to get stuck into to improve your affiliate marketing.

[00:42:29.380] - Chloe Thomas

You get links to everything we discussed today, the full transcript of the episode, important notes and more at KeepOptimising.com. And there you will also find the social media month we did, which had a lot of influencers in it. So if you're going uhhhh, Influencer plus Affiliates marketing sounds sexy, then go to KeepOptimising.com and check out our social media topic, because there you'll find some really cool Influencer recommendations, which fit really nicely with this content about Affiliates, too.

[00:43:01.910] - Chloe Thomas

As you know, we also, at the end of every month run a Q&A webinar where you can ask your questions about the month's topic with our guests. So it's Affiliates marketing webinar coming up very soon. Go and find out all about when that's happening or if it's happened. Watch the replay by heading to KeepOptimising.com and going to the Affiliates marketing page. Please do sign up and join us.

[00:43:25.960] - Chloe Thomas

I'm sure you've got questions about it because it's the very first time we've covered it on the podcast. And it'd be lovely to see you there. Thank you so much for tuning in to this episode of the Keep Optimising podcast. I hope you found it useful. I hope we've inspired some more of you to give Affiliates a go because there's a lot of potential there. If you're ready to build those relationships with your Affiliates, please do tell your fellow marketers about the show, because my aim is to help as many of them as possible.

[00:43:53.290] - Chloe Thomas

So I'd really appreciate it if you could tell them about the show so I can help them too. Make sure you tune in next Wednesday, where we will be starting our series of six shows about Google Ads. Yes, we are going Google Ads crazy in May. So if you know someone whose particular interest in Google Ads, then it would be a good time to let them know about the show so they can catch the very first episode on that we put live next week.

Keep Optimising Podcast: <https://keepoptimising.com>

[00:44:18.460] - Chloe Thomas

Have a great week and make sure you listen to the next episode so I can help you to Keep Optimising your marketing.

[00:44:26.830] - Outro

Access everything Keep Optimising at KeepOptimising.com, that's what an S, not a Z.