

How to Promote Your Affiliate Programs - Lesson 1-The Signature File

Wow! I have a business!! Those were the words that initially ran through my head upon joining my first affiliate program. I saw stars in my eyes and I was sure that now that I had a product to sell, I was going to be able to make a living by promoting that affiliate program on the Internet.

Trumpets didn't sound, money didn't magically appear in my PayPal account and I have since become the wiser. Just because you sign up for an affiliate program, doesn't mean that you are going to see instant cash flow. It takes hard work, some business savvy and lots of self-motivation to get to a point where your affiliate program is paying you on a consistent basis.

But the question is, "Now that I have an affiliate program, HOW do I promote it? If you are unsure of what an affiliate program is, please read the article titled, "What Are Affiliate Programs" before moving onto the nuts and bolts of how to promote your affiliate program.

Using a Signature File

Do you see my signature file below?

Blessings,

Julie A.

If you have ever wanted to have a thriving eBay business, you have to see this!

<http://tinyurl.com/bxzo4>

That short message includes my affiliate link to an opportunity for people to purchase an ebook that has been very beneficial in helping me understand that eBay is much more than auctions. All I had to do was join the free affiliate program on that website and I earn a commission for every person who purchases this book through my link.

Most egroups, groups, and message boards are fine with this type of advertising. Usually they will not allow you to actively try to sell the product in their forum unless it is directly related to the purpose of the board or egroup and not in conflict with the owners. Each group is different so you will need to know the rules of the list before you post messages to actively sell your products.

By the term actively, I am not referring to your signature file. Actively means writing messages to promote your product. Personal referrals are the best form of advertising and actively writing messages, especially personal message is a great way to sell your product.

Your signature file is a passive advertisement hence most boards allow them.

One of the main things that stays uppermost in my mind is that I want to build trust in people so that when I do recommend a product or service, they can be sure I am not steering them in the wrong direction. I especially don't want people to think that I am just out to make a buck off them. So I am careful in choosing products but more importantly, I watch to be sure I will not be offending anyone by using my signature file. Active or passive, it can offend the wrong audience.

For instance, I wouldn't think of posting my signature file on a message board if it would take business away from the owner of the board. That is bad netiquette and I don't want to sour my reputation by engaging in that type of business practice.

Now, if you are using a signature file for a related product that the members of the board would be glad to know about, by all means post there. If you are unsure of how the owner or moderator will respond, simply email them privately and ask for their approval. No harm, no foul.

How to Create a Signature File

Most email programs and message boards provide a way to create a signature file. Depending on your program, it is usually found somewhere like settings, preferences or in the option menu. Choose the option which allows you to create a signature.

Once you have completed your signature file, your message will automatically appear in every message you write so you want to be sure to choose your words carefully. Some programs allow you to set up different signature files for different forums.

Components of a Signature File

First - The Closing - Because your signature file is designed to save you a step in writing your message, you should choose something that most often represents you. The following list might help you choose what to use here. There is no right and wrong and there are an unlimited number of choices. I only listed a few. Sincerely, Love, Love ya, TTFN, Until Next Time, In His Service.

Second - Your name. Some people put their whole name but more often you see a first name only or a first name with a last initial. Another option is to use a screen name.

Third - A Hook or sentence which will entice someone to want to click on the link below. Some hooks are short and sweet and some are much longer. You can experiment to see which hook works best for you by interchanging them periodically and checking your clicks in the stats section of your affiliate program.

Last - The link. There are a few considerations when using your link. If it is long, sometimes the message breaks it up over two or more lines which will mean your link will not be clickable. Someone could copy and paste it into a browser but that is a lot more work than simply clicking and you may lose that potential customer.

Sometimes the link identifies you as an affiliate. Even though it does not cost them money or save them money, some people will backspace out of all of the affiliate information and only leave the main URL intact when they put that information into their browser. Even though you referred them to the site, you will not get credit for your referral. To keep people from having the ability to do this, there is a website at:

<http://www.tinyurl.com>

All you have to do is paste your affiliate link into the box on the Tiny URL website and it will create a link that is not able to be tampered with. I went to Tiny URL to make the link for my signature file above so you could see what it looks like.

Before you create your signature file, I have an assignment for you. Go look around on message boards and email lists to see the varieties of ways people use their signature file. Be creative. This article only represents the basics because I want you to be able to get started immediately.

Other Ways To Market Your Affiliate Link

For the people who are not actively involved in email groups or message boards, there are other ways to promote your product.

Website - There are free websites where you could promote your affiliate program. You could set it up in such a way as to be able to promote several affiliate products on the same website. Look for tools on the [Full-Year Notebook Affiliate Tools](#) Website

Business Cards - Always have your business cards available to hand to the people you engage in

conversation about the product you are recommending. If you don't have your business cards handy, this potential customer will never remember what you told them about your affiliate link. They will remember the conversation and do a Google search to find the product or a similar one and you will not get credit for the sale. Business cards - Never leave home without them!

Blogs - The term blog stands for Web Log which is a fancy way to say online journal. These are becoming increasingly popular and provide an excellent way to promote your affiliate product. Here is an example of a blog. [Organized Homeschool Mom](#) When you see my blog, you will notice that in addition to being able to share a bit of myself and my family life with the world, I am also able to share some of my favorite product links with them. People do read blogs and do click on the links they find there. This is an excellent way to promote affiliate products although I would not recommend writing your blog so it feels like a giant advertisement. It is better if you casually mention your product within your writing if you are talking about something with which it relates. Blogs can be very powerful tools and I would also go as far as saying if you are an affiliate, you cannot afford to be without a blog.

Conclusion

There are many, many ways for affiliates to market their affiliate link. I love the saying from Mary Poppins - Well begun is half done! Half of the battle of getting your affiliate link out there is to actually get started. Make a decision - which way is the best way for you to get started? Blog? Message Boards? Signature File? I recommend that you choose one right now! Then apply yourself either today or set a definite time this week to applying yourself to accomplishing that task. If you choose to use a signature file, just go to your email program and set it up. It does not take very long and you will be on your way to maximizing your affiliate sales. If you post on message boards, make a set time each week to post to different boards. I love message boards because I get clicks for months - even years for each message I post.

Not an affiliate yet? Sign up as an affiliate and get started today!

[The Full-Year Notebook System Affiliate Program!](#)