

7 Major League Strategies For Growing Your Affiliate Program

How to Avoid the “Field of Dreams” Syndrome
With Your Affiliate Program

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[Push Button Tools for Growing Your Affiliate Network Sales](#)

[Push button affiliate training and tools – Instant Affiliate Tools](#)

Free Tools and Training Are Waiting for You

The strategies in this white paper only work if you put them in action.

To help you take the next step, I'm giving you several "scripts" (software files) I created myself and use in my own affiliate marketing program.

These software files, PDFs, and online video training resources are yours at no cost.

Just click the button or go to [Instant Affiliate Tools](http://www.instantaffiliatetools.com/) (<http://www.instantaffiliatetools.com/>) and give me your email address so I can send the files to you.



Does This Sound Familiar...?



You have “the best” product.



You’ve invested in the “the best” affiliate platform*



You’ve got “the best” payout rates.



You launch your affiliate program...

And then....

Nothing.

(Sounds of crickets chirping in the background)

All those thousands of dollars in affiliate sales you **knew** were a **sure thing**... never materialized.

It happens all the time.

The good news is that you **can** breathe new life into your affiliate sales.

Let me show you how.

* Could be iDevAffiliate, Post Affiliate Pro, JRox, ClickBank, CJ.com, Linkshare, ShareASale, or any affiliate program platform... it doesn't matter.

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“Build it, and they will come.”

Only the magic of Hollywood can materialize the impossible out of thin air.

But in the real world...

Dead professional baseball players don't come to life and walk out of corn fields.

(That's why they called it Field of **Dreams.**)

And in your business...

Seasoned, aggressive affiliate marketers don't flock to your affiliate program just because you're open for business.

Do you want to get serious about your affiliate marketing program?

Of course you do.

Then the first step is to put aside the notion that “if you build it, they will come.”

Because the truth is... running a successful affiliate marketing program is a lot like running and managing a successful baseball team.

In the next few pages I'll show you how baseball and affiliate marketing is very similar, and then I'll get into specific strategies you can use to make the most of your affiliate sales.



Affiliate Marketing and Baseball

Think of affiliates as baseball players and imagine yourself the owner of a professional major league franchise. There are a lot of similarities and some of the strategies for “winning the game” are the same.

Affiliates come in all skill levels

Some affiliates are seasoned pros while others are just warming up for their first game, or worse still, sitting in the bleachers waiting for something to happen.

If you’re going to have a strong team, you need to recruit top talent. Unlike baseball, top talent in the affiliate world is not so easy to spot. They’re not on ESPN or CNN. Most of them just do their thing, and keep a low profile.

So, many times your best option is to develop the talent.

As with baseball, everyone starts as a beginner. Everyone had to learn the basic skills. They were coached, taught, and trained.

The next Babe Ruth of affiliate marketing might be in your lineup right now.

Don’t make the mistake of overlooking talent because you’re too focused on finding and recruiting the top stars. If you develop a star, they’re yours.

All affiliates need training

When a baseball player gets signed to a multi-million dollar contract in the pros, do they stop practicing?

Heck no.

They get ***more coaching and training than they’ve ever received***. Every aspect of their performance is put under the microscope so they can become even better.

Pros understand that a small 1% improvement in their skills is a huge leap forward in their performance. In the same way, top affiliates are always looking for an edge, no matter how small, because at the top, a 1% improvement is a huge jump in their commission.

As for beginners... no rookie ever made it to the pros without training and coaching. No matter how naturally gifted they are, at some point in their career they were given instruction and training to fine tune their skills.

Affiliates need tools

You can't play baseball without a ball, a bat, and a glove. And the more competitive the game, the better the tools have to be.

If you're playing a pickup game of stick ball, a broom stick or waffle bat will work.

If you're playing in Yankee stadium, you better have the best tools money can buy or your team doesn't stand a chance.

If your affiliate sales are sluggish, take a look at the tools you're providing. How many do you offer? Is there enough variety? How good are they? How easy are they to use?

More Parallels to Baseball

I don't want to stretch this analogy too far, so here are some other quick comparisons:

- You have to retain top talent.
- You have to keep your team motivated.
- You have to keep them focused.
- You have to manage their self confidence (most games are won or lost before the players take the field)

So... Are You Playing to Win? Or Is This *Your* Field of Dreams?

Most affiliate programs are operated as if this were a Field of Dreams:



No training program



No specialized attention for pros



No beginners coaching for rookies



No tools for affiliates



No communication from the owner



No retention programs



Nothing to keep affiliates motivated and focused

Here's some good news...

Even if **your** affiliate program is guilty of these oversights - **you can turn things around starting today.**

Read the strategies in this white paper.

Put them to use.

Your team will be re-energized.

Your stats will improve.

You'll attract top talent.

And you'll even find some All Stars in your roster.

Let's get to some specifics:

[Push button affiliate training and tools – Instant Affiliate Tools](#)

Strategy #1: Communicate with Your Team

The most important thing you can do to improve your affiliate network sales is to communicate with your sales force.



It's common sense, but so few affiliate marketers do it at all, let alone do it well or often enough.

Here's what you need:

- A system or platform for sending emails (more on that in a bit)
- A system in place to get your affiliates on your list.
- A schedule or system for communicating with your affiliates at least monthly.

Notice my emphasis on "system". For this to work, you'll want most of your communication to be automated, set it and forget it.

The first step is to choose the right tool for the job. Your choice of email platform will determine how much you'll be able to automate.

I've tried quite a few platforms, but my choice is [Aweber](#). The price is very reasonable, at \$17 to \$20 a month for unlimited lists.

Big League Tip: Work in Batches

I'm skipping ahead a bit, and I'll cover this in more detail later in this report, but I've found that the best way to run a blog, or email list, is to write lots of content at the same time, and then preload them.

You'll use your time more efficiently and your writing will be better because you'll get into a groove. And you remove the temptation to procrastinate later on and let things slide.

Next you need to create your signup form and put it in front of your affiliates.

Communicate early.
Communicate often.

Strategy #2: Coaching and Training

I can't imagine picking up a new sport without having some training. I certainly wouldn't expect to get very good at my new hobby without professional instruction. And frankly I don't have enough time to mess around with sports where I have no hope of rising above "barely competent".

The same holds true with marketing on the internet: why spend the time and money if you're not going to be very good at it?

That's how your affiliates feel.

They want to play ball but they need a coach. They're lost and they don't have the self confidence to invest their own money in training (more on the self confidence issue later on).



Most people in your position would overlook them, ignore them, and move on, waiting for the All Star to show up and start cranking out amazing sales stats and shattering records.

This is your opportunity to be their hero. If you meet the challenge, they'll love you for it, and reward you with traffic and sales.

Here are some ways to deliver training to your affiliates quickly and effectively:

- ✓ Online videos.
- ✓ Monthly or weekly tele-coaching or video coaching (webinars).
- ✓ PDF reports with tips and strategies.
- ✓ Regular email updates.

If that sounds like a lot of work, don't sweat it.

I'll give you two ways you can shortcut the process. First let's move on to strategy #3.

Strategy #3: Give Your Affiliates Tools They Can Use Right Away

I've already given you the analogy that in baseball you can't hope to win if you don't have basic tools like a glove, bat, and ball. That's just for starters, and at the highest level of competition you need to have the very best tools available.

So let's talk about specific tools that you could give your affiliates so they could start promoting more effectively right away:



- ✓ Lists of keywords they can bid for on Google, Yahoo, and MSN with paid search engine marketing.
- ✓ The same keyword list could be used for organic search engine marketing... getting high rankings in the natural search results of Google, Yahoo, and MSN.
- ✓ Videos they can link to.
- ✓ Articles they can link to.
- ✓ Viral PDF's.
- ✓ Banners they can ad to their site.
- ✓ Text links they can add to their signature files in forums and emails.
- ✓ Unique ads (peel ads, hover pops, exit pops, catfish ads, etc).
- ✓ Articles they can use on their own site.

No matter what tools you offer... let me give you a **HUGE** tip:

[Push button affiliate training and tools – Instant Affiliate Tools](#)

Big League Tip: Make It Simple

The easier you can make it for them to use your tools, with no thinking or extra work required, the more successful you will be.

Here's a perfect example.

Example: Viral PDF's have a flaw.

The typical way to make a "viral PDF" is to take a PDF file with good content and links back to your website (where hopefully the reader will order your product). You purchase special software to make it so that any of your affiliates can substitute your regular links back to your site with their links... their affiliate links.

Then they can distribute the PDF files on their site, in emails, in forums, wherever they want... and they promote your products by spreading the word for you.

Sounds fantastic... right? Well the reality doesn't ever turn out that well and that's because there's a huge problem...

Friction. The affiliate has to take too many steps to make it work.

Imagine you're the affiliate:

1. You have to read the instructions on what to do and what a viral pdf is
2. You have to download the software
3. You have to find the downloaded file on your computer
4. You have to unzip the software
5. You have to trust that the executable file (.exe) you just downloaded isn't going to kill your computer and infect it with a virus
6. You then install it on your computer.
7. You run it.
8. You read some more instructions.
9. You enter your affiliate information.
10. You choose a name and save location on your hard drive.
11. The software saves the file on your hard drive.
12. Now you have to decide how to get it noticed on the web.
13. You have to find the file on your hard drive.
14. You have to put your marketing plan in action to get the PDF noticed.

That's a lot of steps. While none of them are "rocket science", most affiliates just won't bother. It's too much work.

Compare this with the way it's done with [Instant Affiliate Tools](#)... (example on next pg)

1. You read the instructions that tell you: "Here's a link to your own personal PDF file with your affiliate links already built into it. Share this link wherever you want. We'll do the rest."
2. You have to decide where you'll put the link (forums, emails, website, etc.)
3. You take action

There's nothing to download (but they can download the PDF immediately if they want to.) There's no extra software to buy, download or install. The affiliates don't have to read instructions or go through steps to add their information.

It just happens. **It's already done for them.**

And, if they want help with ideas on how and where to paste their PDF link, [Instant Affiliate Tools](#) has online videos for that.

Do I even have to ask which has a better chance of working?

See for yourself... the difference is amazing:



[**Watch the Video**](#)

Strategy #4: Passion – Ignite It And Keep the Fire Burning

When your affiliates sign up for your program they're excited. They have hopes. They're thinking, "Maybe this will work." And they're praying it will.

Then the reality sets in.

*"Hmmm... there's a bit of work involved."
"Looks like there's a learning curve too."
"This may take some time."*

Their enthusiasm wanes. They lose focus, and you never see the first visitor from them.

Don't give up. Some of them could be your next All Star affiliate if you can help them accomplish one thing:

Make Their First Sale – Then They're Hooked

When they get that first email announcement saying "Congratulations... you made a sale", they'll be hooked.

I'll give you some ideas on how to make that happen, but first, here's a story from my own career:

I joined an affiliate program for a software vendor, did nothing for a year and a half, and then out of nowhere I started making sales, quickly becoming the top affiliate for the company.

Here's the funny part.

At the time I joined the affiliate program I already had all the skills and resources to be successful. I'm a programmer so building websites is easy for me. I'd been selling my own products for years, so marketing wasn't new to me. I already had traffic to my websites.

For years I toyed with the idea of messing around with affiliate marketing. I bought a few ebooks on how to do it effectively. I bought some more. And some more. And then one day I decided to get off my duff and actually do something.

Within a week I had my first sale. And I loved it.

I remember thinking:

"Wow... I just made money selling someone else's product. And I don't have to do any backend customer support. This is awesome."

I spent the next week tinkering with my marketing, improving it, and expanding it. And now I'm their top affiliate.

The moral of the story is that nothing motivates like that first sale.

Here are some ideas on how to increase the odds that your affiliates make their first sale.



Give them training with online video, audio, and PDF files



Give them easy to use, push button tools they can use to promote you



Make sure you can communicate with your affiliates



Get your rookie affiliates to focus on simple actions... Things they can do in the next 5 minutes that cost little or nothing and could generate several sales over the course of a year.



When you run a sales contest, run two. One for rookies that have yet to make a sale, and one for everyone else.



Run a contest once a month where you give away a valuable prize, like an Ipod, and it's not based on sales, but on actions. Each action is one entry into a drawing for the prize.

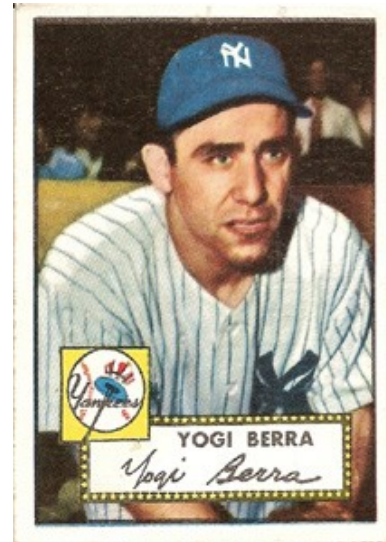
Strategy #5: Self Confidence – “Half this game is 90 percent mental”

The always quotable baseball legend Yogi Berra said, “Baseball is 90% mental -- the other half is physical.”

My daughter’s favorite movie “The Tigger Movie” has a scene where Tigger is teaching Roo (a small kangaroo) how to do his special bounce that only Tiggers can do:

“Half this bounce is 90 percent mental.”

Here’s my quote for you:



Half of what separates All Star affiliates from Do-Nothing affiliates is 90% mental.

Here’s what’s really going on in their heads:

They believe in your product.
They believe in your affiliate program.
They believe other affiliates are making money.

But they don’t believe that they can do it. They won’t admit that they have low self confidence... even to themselves, but it’s true.

If you have any doubts about it, just picture this:

If you could ask any of your inactive affiliates why they haven’t sent you *even one* visitor... what do you think they’d say?

- “I don’t have money for advertising.”
- “I don’t know how.”
- “I don’t have a website.”
- “I don’t know how to sell.”
- “I don’t have time.”

Whatever the reason... it all comes down to this:

If they truly believed that they could not fail, and that any action they took with your affiliate program would bring them money... all of their excuses would melt away.

With that said, convincing them that they can do it is never easy.

So how do you do it?

Here are some ideas:



When you have a rookie affiliate make a sale, get their permission to record a phone conversation with them where you ask them what they did and how they did it. Most of all, capture their excitement. Then post the audio to your website and email all of your affiliates with a link to the audio.



Run what I call an "action contest" once a month. Most contests are based on sales but this is based on actions. Each action is one entry into a drawing for a really valuable prize. If the prize is good enough (like an Ipod, or PlayStation), then making a sale becomes less important and just taking action becomes the end goal.



Encourage fast action with a "commission lock" contest. Give new affiliates your introductory commission rate but bump them to your VIP rate if they make one sale in their first 30 days.



Have a "fast start" tele-coaching call every month (or every week) for rookie affiliates. Get their blood pumping and give them some real ideas they can put to use.



Give them online training videos to show them simple steps they can take today that could generate commissions for them even if they don't have much money or time to actively promote your products.

Strategy #6: Automate Everything – Or As Much As Possible

There are two big reasons to automate everything possible:

1. To free up your time
2. So that your plan gets executed

The benefits of freeing up your time are obvious (whether for leisure or other marketing pushes). So I want to focus on the real issue: Executing your plan with consistency.

Without an automated system, you'll lose focus and soon you'll find your affiliate sales slumping again. So remove the temptation to let things slide and put your affiliate coaching on autopilot.



Use an automated emailer service like [Aweber](#). Preload a dozen messages (the more the better), and then put your signup form in front of your affiliates. Now when your affiliates join your email list they'll get messages from you automatically. Use these emails to point them to other automated training tools.



Online video is a fantastic automated training tool. This is my favorite way of teaching my affiliates how to promote.



Pre-recorded audio. This can be a simple podcast style solo recording, or a replay of a recording of a tele-coaching event.



PDF files. Great for checklists, process maps, and mind maps.



Provide monthly tele-coaching programs. *Wait... a second, that's not automated. **It is if you outsource it.*** The problem is, you can't outsource that to someone you found on Elance.com who speaks with an Indian accent and doesn't really understand affiliate marketing. With [Instant Affiliate Tools](#) you can send your affiliates to tele-coaching classes where I'll teach them what they need to know to get up and running quickly.

Strategy #7: Don't Reinvent the Wheel

Let's say I've done a great job explaining:

- Your affiliates need communication from you
- Your affiliates need training
- Your affiliates need tools
- Your affiliates need a jump start
- Your affiliates need to believe they can do it
- You should automate as much as possible

Great. Now what? How do you put this into action without getting bogged down spending the next 6 months putting all the little pieces together until everything's perfect?

First, you need to know that it's never perfect. You can't wait for perfection because it never arrives.

Next, you need to know that money is attracted to speed. If you put off launching your site or your affiliate program, you'll lose steam and someone else will beat you to the punch.

Look for Shortcuts

One thing I've learned over the years is that the bank doesn't adjust your deposits based on degree of difficulty. Easy money, made quickly, counts just the same as hard earned money that took lots of time.

The Lazy "Location Scout"

A restaurant chain hired a "location scout" to travel from city to city, with one purpose: spend *three* days scouting out ideal locations in the city for the company to open new restaurants.

They taught him everything he needed to know:

- How to research traffic patterns
- How to research available real estate at the county court house
- How to conduct marketing surveys
- How to analyze population growth

After a year of being their **top** performer, the company discovered that **he was only spending half a day doing work** and the rest of his time relaxing...

He was only doing a few hours of work even though they were paying for him to spend three days in each city doing “diligent research”.

His boss was upset, but at the same time mystified. *How did their top performing location scout get the job done in a fraction of the time it took others?*

After some questioning, the location scout divulged his secret (and very effective) strategy:

“No one has a better research team than McDonalds. They hire the best and have the best training. It takes me a few hours to find all the McDonalds locations, and that cuts my research time by 90%. **I follow the leader and piggyback off their A-Team research.”**

You can take shortcuts too. Here are a few examples:



Look at the banners created by top affiliate marketers (both in your industry and out). Copy the **dimensions**, **elements** and **concepts** to come up with original winners (never copy outright).



Look at the countries **excluded** by major affiliate platforms (CJ, LinkShare, etc) and payment processing companies (PayPal) for an idea of counties you want to exclude.



Find the Terms of Service for several major affiliate platforms to see the key components you will want to cover in your agreement. Do not copy word for word. Have an attorney draft the agreement.

An Even Faster Shortcut

I’ve already done the research. I’ve compiled a list of popular banner sizes, and key components... countries with lower fraud rates... and the terms of service agreements for many top marketing platforms.

It’s yours for free. Just trade me your contact information and I’ll give it to you, along with more special reports, training videos, and free code I’ve written that will give you tools to offer to your affiliates.

It’s called **“Shortcuts Every Busy Affiliate Manager Should Know”** and you can [get it here](#).

“Shortcuts Every Busy Affiliate Manager Should Know”



[Click here](#)

Closing Thought: Big League Thinking

Your affiliates are your team; your sales team.

But if you want to play in the big leagues then you have to realize You're not the team coach (even though your team needs coaching).
You're not even the team manager.

You're the owner. You're up in the skybox watching your team from on high, and you have people that do the coaching, the training, and the motivating.

To Join the Big Leagues, You Can't Think Like a Minor Leaguer

Bill Gates didn't write the code for XP or Vista.
Steve Jobs didn't build the iPhone by hand.

Do as they do and run your business like a business.

Outsource. Leverage. Systematize. Automate.

Get it done. Start interacting with your affiliates and your market.

Because if you wait until it's perfect, it's too late.

I want to help you grow your affiliate marketing channel and help you develop a relationship with your affiliates that will keep your sales multiplying for years to come.

This is your invitation to step up to the Big Leagues.

Click the button. You'll be glad you did.



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Resources

Affiliate Training and Tools to Increase Your Sales

[Instant Affiliate Tools](#) – Push button tools and training to help your affiliates sell your products more effectively and with less effort.

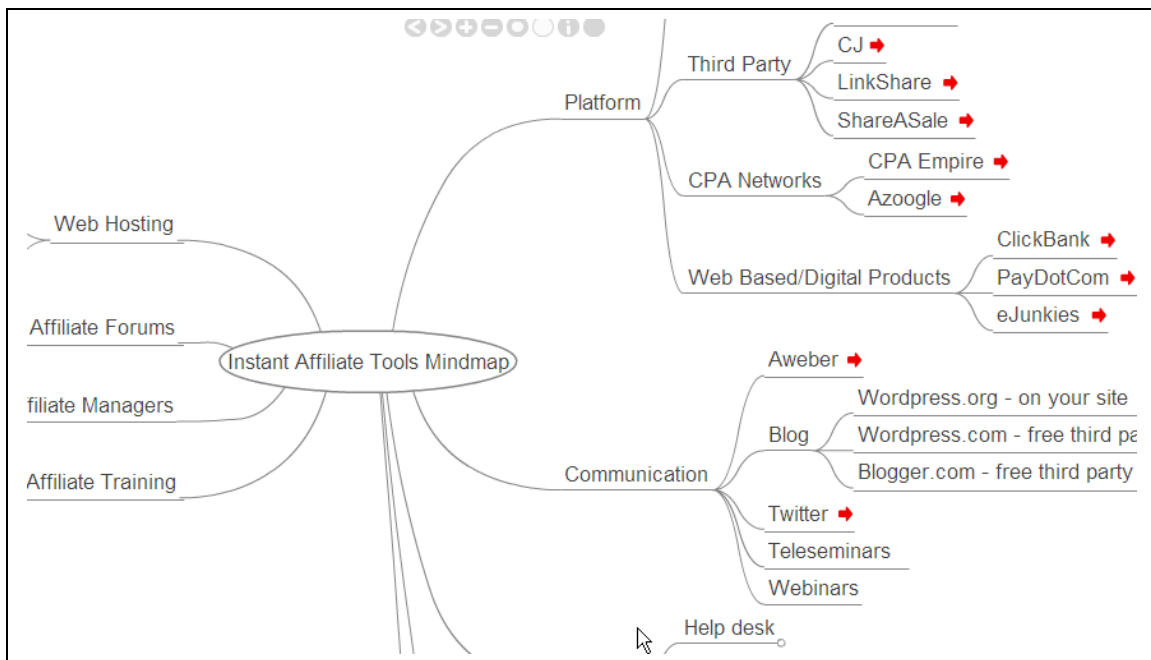
List Building

[Aweber](#) – Great for building lists and automating the training.

Online Mind Map: Quick Links to Resources

You'll find all the top resources and tools at your fingertips in this interactive online mindmap.

Here's a screenshot, but you really have to see it to appreciate it.



[Click here](#) to see the mindmap

About the Author:

Jack Born has been honing his skills on the internet full time since 2002.



- Product creation (digital and physical)
- Online videos
- PHP coding
- AJAX web applications
- Promoting products as an affiliate
- Promoting his own products through his affiliates

He created [Instant Affiliate Tools](#) to help other marketers get the most out of their affiliate marketing sales force through ready-to-use training, tools, and communication.

In addition to [Instant Affiliate Tools](#), Jack provides:

- Affiliate management services
- Custom affiliate tools and training
- Custom website critiques
- Monthly coaching for marketers with affiliate networks

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Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jack Born

Jack Born