

Mark Ling Transcription 2/27/13

Hey everyone and welcome to today's interview. I'm here with a very special guest, Mark Ling. Mark has a really amazing track record. He's generated millions of dollars online. He's started multiple online businesses, and he's made a lot of money in a lot of different niches – both promoting affiliate products and creating and selling his own products on line. One of his areas of expertise is affiliate traffic – recruiting affiliates and how to get affiliates to also take action and make sales for you if you have your own product. So, it's great to have you here, Mark.

It's great to be here. Thanks for having me.

Well, maybe you could just start out talking a little bit about the power of affiliate traffic and just the basics of how to go about getting it.

Sure. Well, just a real quick background, though, I started out as an affiliate marketer back in 1999, so I was earning commissions promoting other people's stuff. A few years later I got into making my own products as well, and now I basically play both sides of the game – I affiliate and I make a lot of sales using affiliates, and I also make a lot of sales from my own products. With your own product, one of the big keys to doing really well is to get affiliates on board selling your products for you. That way, even if the latest traffic strategies that you're using, whether it be SEO, whether it be pay per click, etc. Whatever kinds of traffic you're using, if they start to fail on you in any way, there's always some of your affiliates that either have different methods of traffic, or at least they've got a really good list following that will keep making sales for you for a very long time. It really adds, not just longevity to your business, but it adds a lot of sales.

I just want to give a couple of the benefits first, and then I'll explain why, for instance, if you want to run a promotion where you're offering a product for, say, 30% off for a week; then if you've got affiliates on board, you can make tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands of dollars that week because of everybody mailing to it. But if you haven't got affiliates, then you've only got your own list to mail to. So, yes, you might still make a lot of money, but you'll probably make less than a quarter of what you would make if you had affiliates – probably even less than a tenth of what you'd make if you had a lot of affiliates. So it can be very, very helpful for a lot of reasons.

It helps you also when it comes to making use of your own traffic as well. If you affiliate to someone else's product and yourself, and you form a JV relationship with somebody, and you promote them and they promote you back; then basically you're getting traffic from them and you're making use of your traffic already. They've already bought from you – they might have already bought all the products that you have – you've only got one or two products – so you're going to have to sell them something else anyway at some stage. Otherwise, you're not making full use of the money. But you may as well as well something that you're going to get traffic out of, i.e. that person is going to promote you back at some point. So there's a lot of benefits.

So how do you get it all started? Well, for me, I think that the easiest way for me – and there are a lot of other ways of doing it – but for me the easiest way is to just use a system at a website called ClickBank. I think that you cover that in your Niche Profit Classroom, don't you, Adam?

Yes, we talk about ClickBank a lot.

Yea, so basically, I'm talking about selling digital information products. A lot of what I say in this interview is going to apply if you've got a physical product, but I'm mainly focusing on digital products because that's what I sell, just to let you know.

So with digital products, it's great. I first used ClickBank mainly because it was the easiest way that I could not only put my product online and start charging money for it without even having to have my own merchant account – you know, charging credit cards for my orders – but I also instantly had an affiliate program. All I had to do was log into ClickBank and see the commission that's available to affiliates and bam! Anyone could promote my product for me if they wanted to, and they would automatically pay them that percentage commission.

The real key is a thing called earnings per click. You really want to be able to make your affiliates a lot of money. Ideally, in most niches, if you really want to do well yourself, then those affiliates are going to be making on average maybe a dollar a click. You'll do okay if you're doing anything over 50 cents, but anything under 50 cents, you may or may not really take off. You might have a site that makes you \$100 a day, but you're not going to have a site that makes you a million dollars a year. You know, I like to aim high because I've seen that kind of success. So the higher the earnings per click, the harder they'll push it. If you've got a product that's making \$2 per click for the affiliates, that will probably turn into at least \$10,000 a week because of the fact that if it's earning that much, they can probably buy clicks for \$1, and they will be making \$2, and they will just be doing it all day.

So it's really important to focus on your conversion rates. Your conversion rates will largely dictate your ability to get and keep good affiliates in the long run. So it's not all about if you go through recruiting – that's part of it, but recruiting becomes very easy when you've got a good offer because affiliates start introducing you to other friends of theirs, and so forth. They all talk amongst themselves about different offers that are working for them already. So word of mouth is better.

One way to make sure that your earnings per click is good is to pay out a high percentage commission, particularly on the front end of the product. Affiliates don't know exactly what their earnings per click is going to be, although they will get an idea if they've been told about your offer by a friend of theirs. If they haven't and they're just browsing the marketplace on ClickBank, then the only thing that they can really tell is the percentage commission that you pay out. So you really want to offer at least 70% for digital products. That might sound like a lot, but it's not a lot if they're not making any sales. It's only a lot if they're making lots of sales, and if they're making lots of sales, you don't know how much they're spending on getting those. It might cost them 50% out of that 70% commission in order to make that sale if they're buying traffic. So really, if you get 30% and you don't have to do any work for that, that's really, really good. So one way to get your earnings per click up is certainly to pay that 70% - at least on the front end.

On the back end, it's really important that you have at least one one-time offer. That's where when someone buys the product, there's another product straight away for sale to that person. So if someone buys your weight loss product, maybe there will be a product on weight loss recipes. Or maybe there will be one that shows you like a virtual personal training and it's a piece of software, or something that goes hand-in-hand. It shouldn't be something that has to be purchased to make your product work. Otherwise, it should have actually come with your product, and that's kind of disingenuous and annoying to the customers and will cause high refunds. I just mean something that is perfectly complimentary – like your product is great without it, but it's even better with it. Particularly in anything where you can do something that is perceived as done for you or hand holding, that's really good.

The importance of one-time offers – and I'm talking about conversions here – how does that make you get more affiliates? Trust me, when I'm an affiliate looking to promote an offer, I'm looking for offers that have one-time offers. I want to make sure that I'm promoting something that's going to do well. So by adding a one-time offer, if you word it right and you do a good job, you're probably going to add another maybe 30% onto your order – or even more. Sometimes 60% onto your order. Also, the one-time offer is where you will make the majority of your money because you pay your affiliate usually 50% on the one-time offers. So usually it's 70-75% on the front end, but you're paying 50% on the one-time offer, so you'll find that it's actually a good idea to have two or three one-time offers so that you offer one, and then another and then another. All you do is say, okay thanks for your order. You either say your order is not yet complete or you say your order is complete, but we just want you to customize your order. And then you say you're at step one of three of customizing the order and you just show them the first offer, the second offer, and the third offer, and people will take either one, two, three, or none of those offers. And that's where you should be making more of your money – considering you're getting 50% from that. But at the same time, by having two or three of those offers, you're going from, say, and earnings of 50% for the affiliate, all the way up to a dollar, or something like that. Or maybe you're taking them from \$1.00 to \$1.70. It makes a big difference, and that can be all the difference. Earnings per click can be all the difference between an offer that makes you \$300 a week and an offer that's making you \$3,000 a week.

I've had offers before that have gone a whole year making me \$100 a week, only for the second year for them to make \$3,000 to \$4,000 a week. It's not linear, the difference between an offer that attracts affiliates and an offer that doesn't. It's not like one offer gets you 20 or so affiliates and another one gets you 30-40 affiliates. It's almost like either you get all the affiliates, or you get hardly any. There's not really that middle ground.

So that big leap, you're saying, came from actively increasing your earnings per click.

Yes, that's the main thing. There is certainly more to it, and I can give you more – absolutely there's more to it. But I've just given you ideas to do with the offer. You also have to think about your landing pages as well. Try and think about learning a lot about how to write sales copy that sells. That's really important. Affiliates always look at the sales copy of a weak site and think, “Does that look like it's going to convert to sales – yes or no?” and “Does that look really professional.”

You know graphics actually doesn't make that big a difference to your conversion rate, but it does make a big difference to your conversion rate of converting affiliates into active affiliates. Affiliates tend to just assume that that ugly-looking website is not going to convert. So even though it might, they will often bypass it because of how it looks. So try to make sure that it looks good.

Learn everything you can about video sales letter writing. I highly recommend that. Spend a couple thousand dollars if you can. If you can't just do it on the cheap. There's plenty of courses out there and you can have a look for yourself on video sales letter writing. At the very least, just look at all the video sales letters out there that are already selling that have high gravity on ClickBank and take notes, and you can probably figure it out for yourself even, what the structure is, if you have to – if you can't afford to buy a course.

So for people who don't know what gravity is and why it's important, why are you saying look at the products with high gravity on ClickBank?

I'm saying look at the products that have high gravity because gravity basically means they already have a lot of affiliates. An easy way of looking at it, and it's a bit more complicated than this, is to think that the gravity is basically the number of separate affiliates who have made sales of that product in the last week. So if you've got a gravity of 30, then 30 different affiliates have made at least one sale of that product in the last week. One of them might have made 100 sales. Another one might have made 10 sales. Another one might have made one sale. The gravity doesn't matter how many sales each affiliate made – it just goes up by one point every time a separate affiliate has made a sale of that product.

It's a little more complicated than that. Like if the last time an affiliate made a sale of the product, say, eight weeks ago, then it might actually only add 0.01 of a point to the gravity. If it was in the last week, then it will add a whole point. The maximum an affiliate can add, though, is one point, so the easy way of looking at it is that that's the number of separate affiliates succeeding on that offer. And so if there's 300, then you know that's a lot of separate affiliates that are having success promoting that offer. So that can give you a good indication that that video sales letter or the written sales letter is converting well; and, hence, could be modeled, particularly if you're in a different niche.

You should be very careful about modeling yourself on a sales letter that's in the same niche as you if you don't want to get complaints. You want to be able to work with these people. You want these people to become your affiliates and your friends so you can work together. So you want to be careful about that. But if they're in a different niche, then you're just learning from their structure, and that can be fantastic.

Video sales letters tend to do a lot better than written ones, if you know what you're doing, because of the fact that people have to follow the sales process in order as opposed to getting to the site and scrolling to the bottom, looking at the price, and then scrolling back up, doing this and doing that – you know, they skip stuff. The conversion rates can be worse with written sales copy. But still, at the end of the day, there are a lot of sites that do extremely well without video copy. And I've got a lot of products that I've had for a long time that I haven't written video copy for yet that still does extremely well with written copy, so that's still fine. But still make sure that you do it well and you make it look cool.

I've talked quite a bit about conversion rates. The next thing is to make sure your affiliates area is extremely helpful and contains really good swipe emails that they can just swipe and use straight away. It should contain keywords that they can use if they're doing pay per click, and even banner ads if they want to use those. And you should get your affiliates to opt in to your mailing list because most affiliates don't come back to your affiliates area if you don't keep in contact with them. So you actually need to form an autoresponder series for your affiliates.

You've probably heard about this before through Niche Profit Classroom that autoresponders help you make repeat sales and help you keep in contact with your customers. Well, the same thing with your affiliates. It helps you get more promotions out of your affiliates. It helps you form better relationships with them. What you do is save a lot of content. You put the minimum content up in your affiliates area, a bunch of swipe emails, maybe even some private label rights articles can be used, or whatever. But what you do is maybe a couple of times a week, start out by having 10 emails on there, but then keep building on it.

What you'll do is maybe one day mail out just a bunch of keywords they can use for an ad group if they want to promote you on Bing or Google or whatever. And then maybe the next email that goes and say three days later will be a swipe email. And all it will say is "Hey, send this to your list. I've got this new swipe email that's great for promoting whatever your product is. Just change the affiliate link to your link and go." And I would suggest that you use swipe emails that actually aren't already in your affiliate area, or you can use the same ones, but it's pretty easy to do that. Then perhaps the next email might just be a private label rights article where you say, "Hey, look, I've got this new article here. You can just reword it and use it and put it up on the internet somewhere – either on your own site or on an article site and use it to affiliate to our product." And then you just keep going back through that cycle again as long as you want. I know guys that do this for an entire year, and they've got gravities of 300 or whatever, you know, making tens of thousands of dollars a week.

So then the idea is that you just keep on giving your affiliates as lot of material so that they can promote you. They may not even think about promoting your product for the next six weeks. Then someday – let's say they've got a weight loss list – and then they get this email that says "Hey, use this swipe." And then they look at the swipe, and the swipe says in the subject line something like, "The horrible truth about sugar." And then it will say, "Did you know that sugar does this, this, and this to you?" And there might not be a bunch of content in the article, but it might also two or three times in the article link off to your product or your video sales letter which might be related in some way to that. So they might say, "Oh, that's an interesting email and I'm going to make money sending it, and it's going to be good for people so I might as well check it out." You're making it easy for your affiliates go ahead and promote you. So that's important.

And obviously, there is recruiting affiliates actively. One way to do that is to actually just approach them. The better way of doing that is once you've got a few affiliates on board that you know is to get them to introduce you to other people if possible. Another way is to actually turn up to marketing events where you might meet other affiliates. For instance, there's Affiliate Summit in the U.S. There's other events as well – Traffic and Conversion Summit... There are other events, too, where you will meet

others in your niche, assuming your niche isn't too narrow, and be able to get people on board to be able to promote you, and perhaps you might promote them also.

Another way to get affiliates on board is to actually promote them first. So you might want to do everything you can with paid traffic or whatever in order to build up at least some sort of a mailing list in order to be able to promote other people as well. Hence, once you've mailed for them and made some sales, you can get in contact with them and say who you are and what you've got and so forth, and see how things go from there.

So if somebody has their own product created, it's listed on ClickBank, but they don't have any sales, would you say that approaching affiliates and asking them to promote is a good way to start the sales coming in? Is that a good source of traffic for people?

If you were me, yes, that would work fine because I know that it will convert at least reasonably well. I kind of know conversions now. But if you're really not that sure, you better start testing it with your own traffic first because you could be wasting a lot of people's time, and your own time also. If they try it and it doesn't convert, then it's really hard to get them to mail for you again or become your affiliate again, put you in their autoresponder or be promoting you all over their website. It's really hard for you to get a lifelong affiliate if they try it and it doesn't work. It's a lot of wasted time and energy trying to get an affiliate. So I would say that you should try your best to find ways to promote it yourself first, unless you already know that it's going to work for the affiliates – like you've got some experience already, in which case that's slightly different.

So when you're rolling out a new product and you want fast conversions and test how the product performs, what kinds of traffic do you use to get it going?

If it's already in a niche that I'm already in, which is what I usually do... Usually you'll want to take a niche and then just keep making products in that niche. That way, you launch it to your own niche and pay for the whole cost of producing it all on the launch day, or at the very least, the week that you've launched it. So I'll usually mail it to my own list, and quite often I'll send some cold traffic to it in the form of paid traffic as well, just to make sure that it converts cold traffic as well. Sometimes I'll even buy email drops from different places and then just email it out to their list and see how it performs. Then I'll know if it's doing well – now I can get affiliates to mail for it. So that's one way.

If it's a brand new niche that I'm in, then I'll usually try and start by doing a bought email drop to somebody whose got a list in that niche. I'll just pay them for the promotion, say, \$1,500 or \$200 – it depends on the size of their list. I'll take a risk just so I can test those conversions. And then the other option is doing paid traffic through Google Adwords or through Bing or Yahoo and that sort of thing. Those are great, and they can convert better, but it takes longer for that traffic to come in rather than someone whose got a big mailing list and can just hit the offer.

I think what you mentioned there about paying someone to mail out to their list, that's one of the ways I've had a great experience doing. It's a really fast way to test. So for anyone who didn't catch that, it's contacting someone in your market who has a similar product to yours and just offering them some

money to mail out, and it's as simple as that. Mark, do you suggest providing that person with prewritten swipe?

Yea. And the biggest key, though, to getting affiliates on board – and it's really going to help you anyway in the long run – is to get really obsessive about conversion rates and obsessive about copy. So copy can be a sales letter, copy can be an email swipe, pretty much anywhere your potential customers see any message from you. It could be copy for your advertisement. So learn brief copy writing, and it can make heck of a difference to attracting the affiliates.

And, like I said, keep in contact with your affiliates. A lot of people have a great affiliate program and they go to so much effort to get the conversions right and keep a relationship with their customers, but they don't do the same thing when it comes to affiliates. They just bang up a single one-page thing, give them your affiliate link and a couple of swipes and that's it. There's no followup sequence or nothing. Most people are like that - even a lot of the top people with top offers. I've been guilty of that in the past but have kind of remedied that in recent times, and it has paid huge dividends – like massive dividends. So I highly recommend that as well. You've always got to treat your affiliates just like customers and do the work to build that relationship and keep giving them great stuff and keep doing what they want is to build higher conversions for them.

I think what you said is key about building as long of a followup series as you can. And if you haven't experienced this before, you can take our word for it. But basically, the timing isn't always right. You might send them 20 emails, but then one day your email catches their eye and it's just perfect for them. So the longer, the better. I think that's a key tip.

Absolutely. And you can have other training too. Three quarters of your emails should be targeted at affiliates that already have a mailing list or already have some sort of knowledge like someone who will do paid traffic or whatever, because most of your sales come from those guys. But your gravity can get built up quite quickly in ClickBank anyway from separate affiliates. So you can have one guy doing 100 sales a day. That's not that likely, but let's say you had one guy doing 100 sales a day, or even 100 sales a week – that's more likely. So that gravity is only one point. And then can have another 20 guys that are only doing one sale a week each, but now your gravity is 21. And the way to do that is just to maybe every third or fourth email make sure you are doing that to target the newbies on your list – to get them doing something. Even if they're only making one sale a month, it's boosting your gravity and giving you more attention. A lot of affiliates just look at the gravity before they choose which offer they're going to promote. So make them find it easy to find you.

And ways to train the newbies is – basically the easiest thing you can do for them is just teach them how to get traffic without even needing to have a website. So basically, they take an article from you, they rewrite it, and they post it to Ezine articles, and then they maybe build some sort of link to it or whatever. Or they do the same thing but post it as a Squidoo or something like that. Or even take a bunch of your private label rights articles, put them together, and rewrite them, of course to be unique, and turn it into a Kindle book and put it up for 99 cents; but they're also making affiliate commissions for you.

You can take all sorts of little ninja strategies that may or may not be the kind of strategy that will make the bulk of your sales, but they'll give everyone – especially people who don't know how to get a website online, or who don't want to for whatever reason – it will at least get them involved in doing something.

Is there any place where someone can go to get ideas for those little things to teach people? You just named three that are really simple and effective and cool. Where can we hear more about those?

Basically, the only way I've taught this so far is either in this video – or I've taught it to some degree in also in my Affilorama Premium members area. I made a little course there for the premium members at Affilorama on how to make and sell your own information product. So I basically teach people how to make their own product as well. I cover pretty much everything I've covered in this call in terms of affiliate stuff.

I think the best way, though, is maybe to look by example. You can look at one of my niche affiliate sites. I'll give one of those away. It's in the dating niche. If you go to meetyoursweet.com/affiliates. It might be [/affiliates.php](#) – I can't quite remember. It will be in the menu at the bottom anyway. If you sign up as an affiliate, even if you're not in the dating niche yourself anyway, you might actually get a lot of good ideas for how to go about running your own mailing list. You just sign up to it, and over the course of time you'll see a whole bunch of the emails that come through, and you get a really good idea of how we go about it, and it will give you some ideas.

The other thing you can do is sign up to, not just mine, but any product that's got high gravity – not all of them are going to have great mailing lists, but I know at least half of them will, and you'll get a lot of great ideas. I'm sure there's some in the weight loss niche, there's ones in the dating niche and in other niches where they give you good affiliate resources. You'll be able to tell which ones are doing a good job with the mailings and which aren't. Some people just decide to put everything in their affiliate resources area, and they don't do it in chunks like with the mailings, but I find the mailings is where you get the maximum impact. Because people just can't go through your whole affiliates area. They don't market and keep coming back – they just about live their whole lives based on what's coming into their inbox. Not quite, but a lot of their to-do lists are based on their inbox. So keep giving them to-do items. Treat them almost like they're your employees or something. And they are in some ways – they're making you money, and at the same time you're making them money. So I hope I answered that question in a round about way.

You've given so much powerful information in such a short period, and for anyone who wants to learn more... well, I guess before we get to that, are there any other secret tips or strategies that you would want to share? Any last bits of advice for how to get started – for people who want to get going with affiliate traffic?

I guess the other thing is when it comes to your conversion rates, you always want to be split testing. You don't have to do it from the word go, but I would if I were you. I think Adam teaches that anyway – am I right in saying that?

Yes.

So I would be always running a split test, so you can always learn all the time about what's a better headline, what's a better way of doing things in terms of maybe your add to cart button or how you scripted your video or sales letter. There's a lot of things that need testing. Recently, I just ran a test on having my video 720 wide instead of 640 wide in terms of pixels, and I didn't realize it would have such a big difference. It's been like a 25% increase in sales – and that's over a few hundred sales. So it's pretty definitive data. So now I'm thinking, man, I've got a whole lot of videos I need to test now because they're all at 640. I've just been doing that by default, and now I'm thinking they need to be 720, and maybe they even need to be 800 wide or 900 wide. I didn't really test bigger. So if you're not testing, you need to find this stuff out. So that's really important.

And just speaking from experience, too, I've been doing internet marketing for years and been successful, but we've really just started now getting into testing, and the progress that we've made in the past three months just from all the testing we've been doing is amazing. If we hadn't been doing this testing, it would have taken literally years. So testing, speaking from experience, is key.

Right. Absolutely.

Well, thank you, Mark, for everything. I know that you're involved in a variety of niches, and one of the things you do is you're an internet marketing teacher and coach. You have various internet marketing services. Where can people go to learn more about making money with affiliate traffic?

Well, I've pretty much taught you everything that I know to do with affiliate traffic right here. You probably say it more of a step-by-step manner and say it with video examples and so forth about what I've been teaching you – all inside Affilorama Premium. That's a product of mine if you go to affilorama.com and go to the premium members area, it's in there. It comes with it – it's just part of Affilorama Premium. I have an area called the marketing vault – a 7-part course – I think there are seven one-hour videos where I teach you how to make and sell - including getting your product onto ClickBank and all of that sort of stuff – how to make and sell your own digital information product – how to research and find a profitable niche and all that sort of stuff. I've got other products on how to do affiliate marketing and that sort of thing, but for this particular call if you're looking for a particular product, that's going to teach you more about making and selling your own information product and you can get access to that for a \$1 trial. It's like Niche Profit Classroom – it's a monthly membership – you stay as long as you want. So people on this call would probably find that most relevant.

Yes, and it's very high quality training. For anyone watching, there is a link somewhere near this video that you can just click as well, and that will take you over to Affilorama. Then you said there is a special area in Affilorama – the marketing vault?

That's inside Affilorama Premium. Affilorama Premium is largely based around software that helps you make more money. It does everything from tracking your Google rankings to all sorts of stuff, really, to help you get ahead and go further. But it's also got training as well. I often upload different videos of different things that I'm doing that makes me more money, and I put it up there in a section I call the marketing vault. One part of the marketing vault was a 7-part series on how to make and sell your own

digital information product. Because I was getting so many people asking how to write sales copy and how to do this and how to do that, I thought well, I'm just going to teach it from start to finish and show you exactly how to do it – so I put it on there just to make it easier for people.

Fantastic. And to implement everything you've talked about in this call, you really have to have a product first, so that's a great place for anyone watching to start if you don't have one.

Absolutely. And you can have a browse Affilorama and you'll find that I also teach you how to be an affiliate if that's all you want to do – which is totally fine. But most relevant to this call would be Affilorama Premium.

Well, thanks again for sharing your time, Mark. This content has been awesome, and it's been great having you.

You're welcome. It's been great being here. Thanks very much for your time, and I hope everyone takes action and gets out there and don't just make this be a wasted 45 minutes or however long this video is. Make sure you take action with what you learn.