

# amazon cash machines



**Make Money as an Affiliate with Amazon's Associates Program**





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## Chris Guthrie

### Amazon's "Million Dollar Man"

I actually have never met anybody who has sold as much on Amazon than Chris's Guthrie. This guy is a real "super-affiliate," and sold over \$1,000,000 worth of Amazon products in 2009. He has some great ideas and strategies to maximize your affiliate commissions through the Amazon Associates program, and we will explore many of them in this module.

#### Keyword Research:

**Amazon:** It's very important to select the right products and keywords for your Amazon affiliate niche sites, and a great place to begin is Amazon itself. Start your keyword search here:

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/bestsellers>

From this page you can navigate to the following tabs:

- Bestsellers
- Hot New Releases
- Movers and Shakers
- Most Gifted
- Most Wished For



And from each of these tabs you can search for various product categories like electronics, home improvement, cameras, etc.

This also allows you to search for products that people are actually searching for, pulling out their credit card, and buying online...Remember, not all product categories lend themselves to online purchases, so using web-based retailers like Amazon as your starting point for your research makes a lot of sense.

**Ebay:** Another great places to check for under-the-radar niche product ideas is at Ebay, where you will want to look at both the bestsellers and most popular searches.

First, check out Ebay Pulse to search for bestselling products by category at this link:

<http://pulse.ebay.com/>

Next, check out this link:

<http://buy.shop.ebay.com/>

This is actually one of my favorite places to find long-tail keywords that people are searching for to purchase all kinds of stuff online. It's the most popular Ebay searches as organized by letter. I usually just start at the letter "a" and work my way towards "z", looking for keyword phrases that are 3 or 4 words long in categories like electronics, house wares, etc. Model numbers are great too, and there is often little competition for these in very competitive categories like electronic merchandise.

I guarantee that you will be surprised what people are actually searching for to purchase online.



When you do find an item that looks promising on Ebay, make sure that this is something that Amazon carries as well. You don't want to start promoting something without knowing that there is an affiliate program behind it to monetize these sales!

**Google Trends:** Here is another great place to find super-hot searches in real time:

<http://www.google.com/trends>

This Google tool will show you the hottest "trending" searches and topics on the Google search engine. Bear in mind that most of these searches will be along the lines of "Kim Kardashian bikini pictures" instead of actual physical products that people are looking to purchase online, but occasionally you will find a smoking-hot product release that people are shopping around for and trying to locate.

Be careful not to use copyrighted terms or the name of a manufacturer in your keyword phrase. For example, "Apple iPad" is not a good choice of a keyword that you would want to target. However, you may find some decent searches for a generic phrase like "Ebook reader" that you can use instead to cash in on these hot "name brand" products.

**Google Adwords:** Once you have located a promising keyword related to a product for sale on Amazon, your next step is the free Google Adwords tool. Here's the link:

<https://adwords.google.com/>

This tool will allow you to determine if there are enough monthly searches for this product online to justify spending the time to create an affiliate site in order to promote it.



As a rule of thumb, you want to have at least 300 exact searches per month for a specific keyword for a mini site, and preferably much more than that.

If you are looking to create a larger authority site, you should choose a long-tail keyword with at least 5000 exact searches per month per month. Make sure that this is a product or subject that you are genuinely interested in, because it will require a lot of TLC to make it an authority site.

For example, Chris has a website like this called <http://www.photographytips.net/> which he is using to provide reviews of new camera products, photography tips, articles, trainings, etc...Oh, and by the way, he is also linking out to Amazon to sell some very high-ticket items!

Of course, this represents a lot of work, and therefore it requires a keyword with a lot of monthly searches in order to make it worth his while to create a website of this size. In this case, the Google Adwords tool tells us that there are plenty of searches for the exact keyword phrase “photography tips” (over 22,000 in fact!), so it is well worth the time and energy that it will take in order to maintain this site and push it to the top of the search engines.

## Rules of Thumb re: Domain Names:

The next thing you need to do is purchase a domain name. I used to use GoDaddy.com, but I find that these domains have gotten very expensive lately. For this reason I recommend a discounted service like <http://www.domaincheapsters.com/>, which is actually a just a GoDaddy reseller.

If you are building a mini-site featuring a single product, you will want your domain name to match the product name or keyword exactly (for example, “digital slr camera prices”).





And the same goes for a domain name that you are using to build an authority site around (i.e. “photography tips”).

Some more rules of thumb for purchasing domain names:

Do not purchase a domain name with any extensions other than .com, .net, or .org. Google hates crappy extensions like .us, .info, and .biz and will not rank you for it in this lifetime (Yahoo and Bing will though, but it will still be a lot of work)

Do not use dashes or modifiers if your keyword is not available with a .com, .net, or .org extension...Just keep looking for another keyword that you can use instead that fits this criteria.

## One Final Word on Keyword Research

Of course there are paid keyword research tools that will accomplish all of the above in a fraction of the time. While there are many excellent tools to choose from, I prefer Micro Niche Finder (<http://www.micronichefinder.com/>).

It's is my clear favorite for 3 reasons:

1. A fast, powerful, and intuitive interface
2. Lifetime updates
3. Exceptional customer support

Again, I want to emphasize that all of your keyword research can be done with the free tools and sites that I mention above, but MNF will make your life much easier if you really want to get serious cranking out these affiliate websites in a hurry.



## Setting up Your Affiliate Site

In this pdf I will not be able to drill down into the nitty-gritty details of how to install wordpress on your site, and the various and setting, plugins, and configurations that I use to set up my Amazon affiliate mini-sites. This would simply be an entirely new course in itself, and too much to go into here. However, I do talk about these settings in the “Case Study” video training that I have included in this Amazon Affiliate module.

I have also included a “cloned” website with all of these various plugins & settings already done for you. You can use this cloned theme on all of your Amazon affiliate websites to maximize your on-page SEO and save you a lot of time doing it...In fact, these are the same settings that I used in the “Case Study” website to push it to the first page of Google in less than 4 weeks.

You’ll need the WP-Twin script in order to activate this clone (sorry, I don’t have the rights to this). If you’ve already have this cool tool, you’re good to go. If not, I recommend purchasing this software if you are thinking about building more than a few of these Amazon affiliate sites...It will pay for itself on your first blog! Here is a link:

<http://wptwin.net/>

Be sure to watch the cloning video included in the Case Study series for step by step instructions on how to crank out these clones.

## Your Amazon Site Has Only One Purpose

You only need to accomplish a single goal with of your Amazon affiliate site: to get your visitors to click through to the Amazon mothership, where they will be “cookied” via your affiliate code for 24 hours. Any purchase that they make at



Amazon within this time (as long as they are not cookie'd by clicking on someone else's affiliate code) will be credited to you and count towards your commissions for this pay period.

To accomplish this you must generate curiosity, promote specific & relevant products, and create real or perceived value to your visitor by showing people that they are getting "a deal" by clicking through your website to Amazon to make their purchase.

And remember, you don't have much time to suck these potential customers into your website either. For this reason, you want to completely optimize the landing page of your Amazon affiliate website. This means making it appear attractive, and also loading it with as many affiliate links as possible without appearing like you are trying to "sell them something". I know this is a fine line to walk, but it is easy to do once you get the hang of it.

Let's use my case study seasonal website as an example: You'll find it at <http://outdoorhalloweendecorations.org/>

Remember, you only have a couple seconds to make a favorable impression to the casual web-surfer who is looking for information related to his search. To accomplish this, it's important to make your landing page as attractive and "non-sales" in appearance as possible. In general, people are usually turned off by websites trying to "hit them over the head" to sell them something on their blog, and click away instantly.

As you can see, <http://outdoorhalloweendecorations.org/> features a pretty "bare bones" landing page...A decent-looking theme, cool image, and a relatively uncluttered format. However, if you take a closer look, I actually have 5 affiliate links "above the fold" of this page: 4 text links and an image link. I also have some Google AdSense in the sidebar. It's important to optimize your blogs in this



way to maximize revenues and suck people into the rest of your content, as well as to give yourself the best chance of them clicking on one of these “money links”.

There are a variety of different ways to insert your affiliate links into the content of your Amazon affiliate website: text links, image links, “Buy Now” buttons, widgets, banners, etc. Let’s have a closer look at each one of these types of links.

## Link to Products within the Content of an Article

I recommend creating an original article or product review of at least 500 words to include on the home page of your affiliate site. Within this text, be sure to include clickable links from various words and phrases that link out to Amazon using your affiliate code (again, watch the case study videos to see exactly how I set these up).

I also recommend including at least 3 text links “above the fold” of your landing page, in order to give potential visitors the best opportunity to click through to Amazon immediately before they surf away forever into cyberspace.

To generate curiosity in your visitor, you might include a sentence like this in your article: “The model X3000 is available at Amazon at a discounted price for the 2010 holiday season.” You would then be able to create a text link w/your affiliate code from the words “discounted price”, “model X3000”, or both. People are naturally curious and will click through to see about the great deal you mentioned in your content.

Remember, people don’t want just go shopping; they want to get the best deal possible. If your content is very specific, and pre-sells the products, people are very likely to click through to the Amazon marketplace and give you the sale.



## Make Product Images Clickable

People love clicking on images, and for this reason you're going to want to include many images of your product (and related products) on your site as you can without it looking "cluttered". This is important to do because people, again, are curious and want to see the product on Amazon's site. They want know how much it is, read reviews, and so on.

It is very easy to go to the Amazon Associates area and grab some code to make the image clickable. The great thing about the Associates program is that you can use the images on their site on your own website, as long as you are promoting through that affiliate program!

## Use "Buy Now" Image Buttons

A very powerful strategy is to use the "buy now" image buttons on your website. These are very familiar looking to people, and they want to click through them because they know they're going to Amazon. This is an excellent way to get even more conversions, and it's not something many other affiliates do – this gives you the advantage!

## Push Amazon During Heavy Shopping Periods

There are some excellent reasons to push Amazon during holidays and other heavy shopping periods. People want deals, they're more likely to buy, and they're less likely to be annoyed by sales messages.

Some examples of holidays or special shopping days where people are very willing to pull out their plastic and make a purchase online are:



- Black Friday
- Cyber Monday
- Mother's Day
- Back to school
- Easter
- Christmas
- Valentine's Day
- Halloween
- St. Patrick's Day (yes, this silly holiday is getting into the game as well!)

Get the idea? You can even create special keyword focused pages on these different terms to get even more traffic. Remember—the more specific you are, the better.

Do this even though these particular keywords may not show up in the keyword tools. It's often the case that holiday specific keywords do not show up in Wordtracker or Google's Adwords keyword tool.

## Use Multiple Tracking IDs

Amazon really wants to help you succeed (because it gives them more money too!), so they give you the opportunity to create multiple tracking IDs.

These can be created through your account. They can relate to different sites altogether or even different positions on the same site. For instance, you can put a different tracking ID on your image than you put for your text link. This can help you test and track what your most successful advertisements are, without having to lift a finger!

You get 100 different tags in your Amazon account, so there's more than enough available for you to test and track to discover your best-converting links.



## Build an E-Mail List

It's a great idea to build an e-mail list in different niches. You can give something away for free in exchange for an e-mail address. This works even better in shopping niches than it does in the Internet marketing niche, where many people are jaded!

Once you have captured their e-mail address, you can send follow-up e-mails. Even if that person wasn't ready to buy the first day, they may be ready to when they receive one of your follow-up e-mails.

You can even make money on things you're not promoting! That's because Amazon doesn't only let you make money on items you link to, but on anything people put in their cart at that time.

## Offer High-Ticket and Low-Ticket Items

Because of Amazon's incentive-based compensation plan, it is important to be able to create some amount of volume every month in order to get your commission bumped up to at least 6%. To do this, you will need to sell at least 7 items (any items) every 30 days.

One way to accomplish this is to create some volume by featuring low-ticket items like MP3 music downloads, as each track counts as an individual purchase, and they are a very low-cost item (about a buck apiece). An MP3 Amazon widget installed on your blog is a great way to generate some music download sales and provide added value to your site at the same time.

At the same time, you will want to target some higher-ticket items as well in order to make it worth your while (those 5 cent commission don't add up to much of a



paycheck!). To do this, you should build the majority of your blogs around items that are priced at \$50 or more. For example, in my case study <http://outdoorhalloweendecorations.org/> blog, I am linking out exclusively to Halloween inflatable decorations that sell for as much as \$250.

So make sure to combine both the high ticket and the low ticket items in order to really optimize the Amazon Associates compensation plan.

## Mistakes to Avoid as an Amazon Affiliate

### Banner Ads

I really do not recommend using the banner ads that Amazon offers their affiliates. The fact is that these types of ads are simply not effective, and people literally “do not see them” anymore and tune them out because they are so omnipresent on the web.

Instead, this valuable real estate on your blog can be better utilized with an AdSense module, an interactive and animated Amazon Carousel widget or search box, image links, a video, additional content for your visitors, etc. Remember, the name of the game is to reward your visitors and provide them added value for visiting your site...Not to punish them with cheesy banners drive them away in droves!

Another idea is to make your own banner ads...However, I only recommend this if you are actively testing your home-made banners in order to optimize conversions, because they can often end up being bigger turkeys than the stock one that you will find at Amazon.





## Astores

Astores also tend to perform poorly. Remember, people do not want to be reminded that they are “shopping” (even if they are!)...Instead, they want to be led to a great deal! Astores are generally not recommended because they do not convert very well for this reason.

## Unrelated Ads and Over-Monetizing

Also, remember not to display ads that are unrelated to what you’re selling. Too many people make the mistake of trying to fit in as many ads as possible, no matter what they are on! If you keep things highly targeted, you will make more money.

Some with authority sites tend to over-monetize as well. Do not link to products in every post you make. However, in posts where you do link to products, do so frequently to really close that sale.

## Operating Agreement

Finally, please read the Amazon operating agreement and TOS to make sure you’re staying within their guidelines. You’d be surprised how often these terms are updated, and you do not want to have your account banned by Amazon because you are unknowingly violating these terms. It is not very long, but can help you ensure that you are doing everything “by the book” and will ensure a long and prosperous partnership with the web’s #1 retailer.