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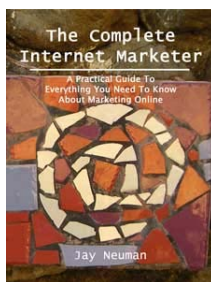
# The Complete Internet Marketer

## How To Make Money From Your Website Or Blog

*In Seven Easy Steps!*

Jay Neuman

This eBook is an excerpt from:



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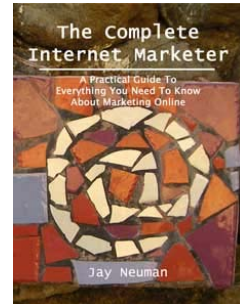
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- ✓ Online Advertising
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- ✓ Designing an effective website
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## Getting Started Making Money From Your Website Or Blog

Earning money from your content website or blog is easier than you might think. Being successful at it is a matter of creating partnerships. Companies are offering products and services for sale over the Internet. For them, one of the most effective ways of reaching potential customers is to get their message out on highly targeted websites and blogs. For most of those businesses, their products and services are offering a genuine benefit to customers who purchase them. There are many people and businesses out there who need what they have to offer.

*This is where your content website or blog comes in.*

In most cases, a content website or blog is providing information, resources and advice on a very specific topic. Internet Marketers call this *content*. That content is being delivered to a highly targeted niche audience. The same niche audience is very likely to need or want products and services related to the topics being discussed on the website or blog. As a website owner or blogger, one of your jobs is to create partnerships between the visitors to your website and the companies who offer products and services they need or want. When you can do this successfully, you will be offering a benefit to both. You will earn sales commissions in the process.

This is how you make money.

The secret to successfully making money from your website or blog is found in these seven easy steps.

*A blog is actually a bare bones content website. To make it easier to read, the term "website" will be used in the remainder of this guide to refer to both.*





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- Step 1:** Reach your niche
- Step 2:** Optimize for search engines
- Step 3:** Choose ads to serve
- Step 4:** Optimize site content for pre-selling
- Step 5:** Create a newsletter or RSS feed
- Step 6:** Create a viral marketing campaign
- Step 7:** Monitor and improve

## Step 1: Reach Your Niche

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The first step to making money from your website is to define who your target audience is. Then you must design your content to reach that target. This can be summed up in one word: Focus! Content websites are effective when they are highly targeted and focused.

This requires some further explanation.

### 1. Define Your Target Audience and Focus on Them

First, if you intend to make money from your website, you must realize that the website is not for you. It is for your target audience. This may be old news to some. But for many, it is something they just never thought about. You are passionate about something and decide to create a website about it. It is only natural that you will write it from your perspective and include things of interest to you. That does not mean other people will be interested in it. You must do some research into who will be interested in your website. Find out what topics they are interested in. Find out what will keep their interest and what will turn them off. Then

*Earning  
money from  
your website  
or blog starts  
by attracting  
people to the  
content on  
your site*





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develop content and write articles targeted to their needs and wants.

*As a general rule, the more targeted the content of your website is, the more useful people will find it.*

## 2. Make a Good First Impression

Second, you must win them over on the first impression. When people first find your website, it will likely be because they were searching for a topic that your website seemed to address. If you are successful in getting them to click through to your website, you will only have a few seconds before they decide if it is what they want. You must grab their attention and prove your value to them with the very first content they see. You can only do this by knowing who your target audience is and what they will want.

## 3. Have User-Friendly Navigation

Third, make it easy for people to find things on the website. Once again, this is part of the change in perspective that takes place when you go from building a site for yourself to building one for a target audience. You know where to find information on the website. But your audience probably does not. You must take some time to design a user-friendly navigation that makes it easy for people to find the information that interests them.

## 4. Bring Them Back

Fourth, you must give them a reason to keep coming back to your website. For a blog, the most important thing you can do is to post new entries on the schedule you set. If your blog is interesting to people, they will keep coming back if they can trust that a new post will be there. For content sites, having fresh content of course is important.

***Successful websites meet the needs and wants of a niche audience***





Just as important is to have a set of informational resources your site users find useful. They will come back when they have a need they think your resources will help them meet.

## Step 2: Optimize for Search Engines

Once you have deigned your website to meet the needs and wants of a targeted niche audience, then you must get them to your website. The most important way to do this is through search engines. To make money from your website, you must have a strong search engine strategy. Reaching your target audience through search engines is done in two ways: *Search Engine Optimization (SEO)* and *Search Engine Marketing (SEM)*. See Chapter 6 for a detailed discussion on search engines.

### 1. Search Engine Optimization

Every content website that hopes to make money by serving ads must optimize the website for search engines. Search engine optimization (known as SEO) is organizing the content on your web pages so search engines find them and list them at the top of their search results. The most important thing to do is to find out what terms your target audience are likely to be searching for, then make sure those words show up on your website. SEO is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

### 2. Search Engine Marketing

Search engine marketing (known as SEM) is paying to have sponsored links appear on search engines. Many profitable content websites advertise on search engines to get traffic to their website. SEM can only be a profitable means of gaining site traffic

***Get search engine traffic at a lower cost than you earn from ads on your website***





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when you make more money by the paid click-thrus to the ads on your site than you pay for the search engine click-thrus. The most important thing is to calculate the breakeven you point you need to reach to be profitable paying for search engine traffic. Then only pay for sponsored links where you exceed your breakeven number. SEM is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Calculating your return on investment is explained in Chapter 1.

## Step 3: Choose Ads to Serve

The way you are going to make money from your website is to place ads on your site that your target audience will respond to. The next step is to decide what ads you want to place. To be successful, this requires some research. The key to success is to find ads for products and services that are complementary to the content on your website. Think of your website as offering advice or information about a topic you are an expert in. When people come to your website, they look up to you as a trusted source of help. While they are on your website, they will be receptive to suggestions you make about products and services that are related to the topic of your site.

For example, you may have a website about maintaining an active life as a senior citizen. People coming to your website may be interested in things like senior discounts on travel packages. In fact, if you can give a personal recommendation about a specific travel company, they are likely to become loyal customers of that company, based on your recommendation. On the other hand, there is no particular reason they would be interested in buying a new computer. You may get a high per-click payout or affiliate commission from the computer store. But, you will not get a high response to the ad. In fact, displaying the ad will

***Choose  
ads related  
to the  
content on  
your website  
or blog***





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cause your site to lose credibility in the eyes of some of your customers. They will think you are just trying to sell things and are not really serious about providing genuine advice.

You also need to decide what type of ads to serve. In general, you will want to choose between serving *paid search listings* from one of the major search engines or *participating in an affiliate program*. These are the most effective and easiest ways for a small website owner to monetize their website. You can also simply sell ad real estate on your website through an ad server network. This requires much more effort to be successful. For a small website it is not recommended.

## 1. Serve Paid Search Listings

The major search engines have made it very easy for small websites to display paid search listing on their websites. The idea is a simple one. Search engines make their money by displaying sponsored links along with their search results listings. Companies have their links displayed when certain terms are searched then pay for clicks to those links. The reason they pay for these links is because their products and services are related to those terms. They expect the people searching for them to be interested in the ad.

When someone is visiting a highly targeted, niche website, they also are demonstrating an interest in the topic of that website. If sponsored links are displayed that are related to the topic of the website, then the visitors on the website are also likely to be interested in the ad.

Search engines let you chose keywords that are related to the content of your website. Then, they will display, on your website, the same sponsored

***Two easy ways to make money from your website:***

***1. Search Listings***

***2. Affiliate Programs***





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links that would be displayed when people search on those terms. For the sponsoring company, the result is the same. People who are interested in their products and services see the ad, and click on it. You will be paid a percentage of the revenue the search engine gets for each click-thru.

*Displaying paid search listings is extremely easy to do. It is undoubtedly the easiest way for a small website or blog to earn money.*

## 2. Participate in Affiliate Programs

A second way to earn money from your website or blog is to participate in affiliate programs. Affiliate programs offer the opportunity to make much higher revenues than paid search listings. They also take a lot more work.

Affiliate programs are discussed in detail in Chapter 9. There are many variations to affiliate programs. The basic idea is that websites will pay a commission on sales generated from traffic on your website. You will research companies offering affiliate programs who have products and services that are complementary to the content on your website.

“MySeniorDiscountTravelSite.com,” in the above example, may have an affiliate program offering commissions on sales. “MyActiveSeniorsSite.com” can participate simply by displaying banner ads or text links on their website. When a customer clicks on the link, it is recorded that they came from “MyActiveSeniorsSite.com.” When the customer eventually makes a purchase, a commission will be paid to the referring website.

Affiliate programs typically offer commissions on sales. So potential revenues can be much higher

***Affiliate programs are more work but can earn more money***





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than cost-per-click earned from paid search listings. That also means that the participating website must do more than just get clicks. You must also prepare visitors on your site to make a purchase after they click-thru. This is sometimes called *pre-selling*.

## Step 4: Optimize Site Content for Pre-Selling

To be effective with the ads on your website, it is not enough to just display the ads. You must integrate them into your site content so people respond to them. Web users have a tendency to tune out advertisements on the websites they are visiting. You must get past this barrier. The way to do it is to build the product/service promotion into the content of the website, so it is part of the user experience. In essence, you are creating for your site visitors a user experience that introduces them to the products and services being promoted on your website and that invites them to make a purchase. This can be called *pre-selling*. There are three key things you must do to optimize your website content for pre-selling.

### 1. Relevance

First, ads must be relevant to the content on the page where they are displayed. The closer you can align the ad to the content, the higher your click-thru and conversion rates will be.

Consider a web page that contains a review of the Canon Rebel digital camera. What kind of ad would be most successful there? You could include an ad for a consumer electronics store like Circuit City. That would be pretty good. It would be even better if you included an ad that said something like, "Buy Digital Cameras at Circuit City" and the

***Your website  
or blog is  
recommending  
the products  
and services of  
your affiliate  
partners***





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ad sent customers directly to a category page dedicated to digital cameras. Better still would be an ad that says, “Buy the Canon Rebel XT at Circuit City” and the ad lands customers directly on the product page for the specific product. Of course, this assumes the review is a positive one.

## 2. Context

Second, ads should be built into the context of the web page where they appear. The more closely the ad is integrated into the informational content of the page, the more likely readers are to see it as something being recommended by the website as a complementary resource to the article itself. This will result in higher click-thrus and conversions.

In the example of the Canon Rebel product review, let us assume that the review begins on the bottom half of the page. You could place a banner ad at the top of the web page. It would be more effective if you place the ad on the right column of the page directly next to the product review. People will see the ad while they are reading the review. Including ads in the right hand column is a common approach. Ad real estate is separated from page content by placing it in a separate column.

You could improve your click-thru rate by inserting a content element, that does not look like a typical banner, inside the content of the review. The text of the article would then wrap around the ad. The ad, in a sense, becomes a part of the product review. By taking this approach, you are giving a stronger endorsement of the product and store than if you clearly separate the ad from the review. If you have done your research and believe this store truly offers a good deal for your readers, then this is a perfectly ethical thing to do. An even stronger





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approach is to include a text link for the store directly in the actual body of the review. Once again, you can increase your click-thru and conversion rates, but are taking on a higher level of responsibility for the products and stores you are recommending.

### 3. Promoting the Product/Service

Click-thru and conversion rates can be increased even further by actually promoting the products and services within the content of the page itself. In this case, you are clearly giving your endorsement and recommendation for the products or services being advertised. This is pre-selling. You are consciously writing the content of your page content with the intent of leading readers to buy the products or services you are advertising on the page.

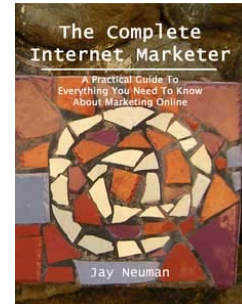
In the example of the Canon Rebel, a positive review of the camera is already pre-selling the product. If you go farther and say that you researched prices and found the best price at Circuit City, then you are also pre-selling the store. It is not hard to see how this prepares your site visitors to become customers of the partner store.

By taking this approach, you will send prospective customers to the merchant website with the intent to purchase. Your website is a trusted source of information and advice. Readers will follow your advice by purchasing the products you endorse. You are acting as an online sales person for the store you are promoting. This will produce the highest sales commissions for you.

This also represents the highest level of responsibility on your part. If you are actively promoting a

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product or company, you must also make sure your website readers have a good experience when they take your advice. If they do not, you will experience a backlash. They will not only stop coming to your website, they will spread bad news about your site to others.

## Step 5: Create a Newsletter or RSS Feed

If your website content is particularly valuable to your target audience, there is no reason it has to stay stuck on your website. Send it out!

Many content websites are offering information, education or guidance that people would like to receive on a regular basis. If you are able to provide valuable information on a regular basis, then give your customers the opportunity to receive it on their own computers. Do not make them have to come to your website to get it.

For content websites, a common way to do this is to create a newsletter. You can send out a monthly, or weekly email with articles, tips or other useful information for your target audience. If it is truly useful, they will be glad for it. Along with the content, you can include ads, just like you do on the website. If you are careful to only advertise relevant and worthy companies, then your customers will be happy to click on the ads and buy their products.

Another common technique for getting your word out is an RSS feed. This is especially popular with blogs. An RSS feed is basically a small snippet of information that gets sent to your customers' computers. You can think of it as a ticker tape headline. If they like what they see, they can click-thru from the RSS feed to your website. RSS feeds are discussed in more detail in Chapter 11.



*Get more  
click-thrus by  
signing up site  
visitors to a  
newsletter or  
RSS feed*





## Step 6: Create a Viral Marketing Campaign

Is your content good enough that people will want to pass it around to their friends and colleagues? If so, you can turn it into a viral marketing campaign.

Viral marketing is simply creating something worthwhile and then giving people the ability to forward it on to others. If it is good, people will keep forwarding it. It spreads exponentially, like a virus. It is not a bad virus. It just spreads like one. Thus the name.

Let us say that you have a website offering advice to Internet Marketers. You have written an article called, "Make Money from your Website or Blog in Seven Easy Steps!" You have posted the article on your website and monetized it with related ads. Well, this article turns out to be pretty popular. You can put the article into an email with a Forward-to-a-friend link. This is a basic viral marketing campaign. People who get your email love the article and keep sending it around to their friends and colleagues. Each time someone gets your article, she also gets the ads that you included along with it. Bingo! You not only make money from people coming to your website. You also can make money by sending your content out as a viral marketing campaign.

If your article is particularly good, you may want to turn it into an eBook. Then you can put it on free download websites. People will download the eBook and be able to forward it along to others. You reach an even larger audience. Of course, this only works if your eBook is good and people want to forward it to their friends. This works the same way as your website. If your eBook is worth reading, then people will value you as a trusted source of information. If you include recommendations for products and services, they will be likely to click on them.

***Create a video clip, a game or an eBook (like this one). Let people download it and forward it to their friends***





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If your motivation is to genuinely provide something useful, then you will also check out the companies who you are advertising. If you believe they are worthy, then the entire experience you offer your readers is a positive one. This generates goodwill with your audience. As you continue to offer benefits to both your audience and your advertisers, you will also be creating opportunities for yourself to continue reaching out to them in the future.

Viral marketing is discussed in detail in Chapter 10.

## Step 7: Monitor and Improve

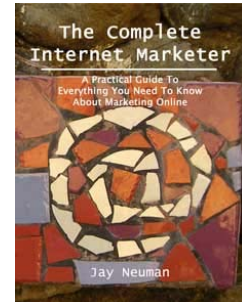
The final step is to monitor results and improve.

The key to continuously increasing website revenues is to identify the levers that impact the success of your efforts. Then you can measure performance related to those levers and make adjustments to them. It is a balancing act. You will learn to do it better and better as you work with it.

We have already discussed what those levers are. Your site content must be highly targeted and useful to your target audience; otherwise people will stop visiting your site, or never come in the first place. Your ads must be closely matched to the needs and wants of those interested in the content of your website. Otherwise, they will not respond to them. The companies you serve ads for must pay a commission that provides you with a rate of return that meets your revenue goals. If they do not, you may need to switch what you are promoting. You can also increase the response to ads on a page by pre-selling them through relevance, context and promotion. Finally, if you are buying traffic to your website, through search engine marketing, you must more than cover the cost of traffic bought through commissions earned.

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There are five key metrics related to earning revenue through serving ads on your website.

## Key Onsite Advertising Metrics and Typical Areas for Improvement

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Low website traffic       | → Effective search engine optimization<br>Effective search engine marketing  |
| 2. Short visit lengths       | → Content not of interest to audience<br>Freshness of content<br>Effective site navigation & site search   |
| 3. Click-thru rates          | → Choice of ads<br>Relevance & Context of ads<br>Freshness of ads  |
| 4. Low affiliate conversions | → Effective pre-selling<br>Choice of affiliates<br>Effective partnership with affiliates<br>(eg. Effective landing pages & product assortment on affiliate site) |
| 5. Low or negative profits   | → Effective search engine marketing  |

## Conclusion

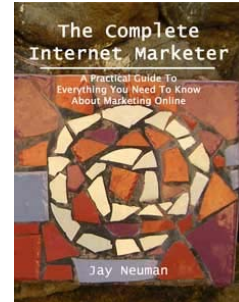
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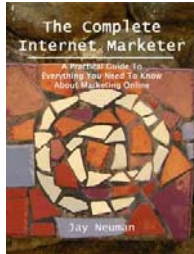


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