

FREE REFERENCE GUIDE

The Beginner's Affiliate Marketing Glossary

Every term you will encounter — explained in plain English.

No jargon. No confusion. Just clear, simple definitions you can refer back to any time you need them.

A free resource from yourdigitalbreakthrough.com

How to use this glossary: This is your reference companion for affiliate marketing. Bookmark it, print it, or keep it open in a tab while you learn. When you encounter an unfamiliar term — look it up here first. Terms are organised alphabetically for easy navigation.

A

Above the Fold	The part of a web page visible without scrolling. Placing opt-in forms and calls to action above the fold increases visibility and conversion rates.
Affiliate	A person or business that promotes another company's products or services in exchange for a commission on sales or leads generated through their promotional efforts.
Affiliate Disclosure	A statement informing readers that a piece of content contains affiliate links. Required by the FTC in the United States and best practice globally. Typically placed at the top of blog posts containing affiliate links.
Affiliate ID	A unique identifier assigned to you by an affiliate program. Embedded in your affiliate links to track which sales or leads came from your promotions.
Affiliate Link	A special URL containing your unique affiliate ID. When someone clicks this link and makes a purchase, the sale is tracked back to you and you earn a commission.

Affiliate Manager	The person at a company responsible for running their affiliate program. Your point of contact for questions, promotional materials, and commission issues.
Affiliate Network	A platform that connects merchants with affiliates and manages tracking, reporting, and payments. Examples include ClickBank, ShareASale, CJ Affiliate, and Impact.
Affiliate Program	A formal arrangement where a company pays commissions to affiliates who send customers their way. Some are run directly by the company, others through affiliate networks.
AOV (Average Order Value)	The average amount spent per transaction by customers referred through your links. Higher AOV means more commission per sale even at the same percentage rate.
Autoresponder	An automated email or sequence of emails sent to subscribers after they take a specific action — such as signing up for a lead magnet or making a purchase.

B

Backlink	A link from another website pointing to your site. Backlinks from reputable sites improve your search engine authority and help your content rank higher.
Banner Ad	A visual advertisement placed on a website. Many affiliate programs provide banner ads you can place on your blog to promote their products.
Black Hat SEO	Manipulative tactics used to artificially boost search rankings that violate search engine guidelines. Risks include penalties and de-indexing. Avoid entirely.
Bounce Rate	The percentage of visitors who leave your site after viewing only one page. A high bounce rate may indicate your content does not match visitor expectations.
Brand Ambassador	Someone who represents and promotes a brand consistently over time, often with a deeper relationship than a standard affiliate arrangement.

C

Call to Action (CTA)	An instruction directing the reader to take a specific next step — "Click here to learn more," "Download your free guide," or "Get started today."
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Chargeback	When a customer disputes a charge with their bank and the payment is reversed. Chargebacks reduce your commission earnings and too many can get you removed from programs.
Click-Through Rate (CTR)	The percentage of people who click a link compared to the total who saw it. A higher CTR indicates more compelling copy or placement.
Commission	The payment you earn for a successful referral. Can be a flat fee per sale or a percentage of the sale value. The core income mechanism of affiliate marketing.
Content Marketing	Creating and distributing valuable content — blog posts, videos, emails — to attract and engage an audience, building trust that eventually leads to sales.
Conversion	When a visitor completes a desired action — making a purchase, signing up for a trial, or submitting their email. The goal of all affiliate promotion.
Conversion Rate	The percentage of visitors who complete a desired action. If 100 people visit a page and 3 buy, the conversion rate is 3%.
Cookie	A small file stored in a visitor's browser after they click your affiliate link. Tracks that the referral came from you for the duration of the cookie window.
Cookie Duration	How long a cookie remains active after a click. If the duration is 30 days and someone buys within 30 days of clicking your link, you earn the commission.
CPA (Cost Per Action)	A commission model where you earn a fixed amount when a referred visitor completes a specific action — a purchase, sign-up, or form submission.
CPC (Cost Per Click)	A model where you earn a small amount each time someone clicks your affiliate link, regardless of whether they purchase. Less common than CPA or revenue share.
CPL (Cost Per Lead)	A model where you earn a commission when someone you refer provides their contact information — even if they do not purchase. Common in finance and insurance niches.

D

Deep Linking	Creating affiliate links that point to specific product pages rather than a merchant's homepage. Increases relevance and conversion rates.
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Digital Product	A product delivered electronically — ebooks, courses, software, templates, and memberships. High commission rates are common as there are no physical production costs.
Display Advertising	Banner or visual ads placed on websites. Some affiliate programs provide display ads as promotional materials for affiliates to use.

F

Email List	A collection of email addresses from people who have opted in to receive communications from you. Your most valuable marketing asset as an affiliate.
Email Marketing	Using email to communicate with subscribers — sharing content, building relationships, and promoting affiliate products to a warm, engaged audience.
EPC (Earnings Per Click)	Your total commission earnings divided by the number of clicks sent. Helps compare the income potential of different affiliate programs.

F

Flat Rate Commission	A fixed dollar amount paid per sale regardless of the sale price. Common in hosting and software affiliate programs.
Funnel	The series of steps a visitor takes from first discovering you to making a purchase. Includes awareness, interest, consideration, and conversion stages.

G

Geo-Targeting	Showing different content or offers based on a visitor's geographic location. Some affiliate programs only accept customers from specific countries.
Google Search Console	A free Google tool that shows how your site performs in search results — which pages are indexed, which keywords drive traffic, and what needs attention.

H

High Ticket Affiliate	Promoting products or services with high price points that pay large individual commissions — often \$100 to \$1000 or more per sale. Fewer sales needed for significant income.
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Hosting	The service that makes your website accessible on the internet. Web hosting affiliate programs are popular due to high commissions and recurring demand.
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I

Impression	Each time an ad or piece of content is displayed to a user, regardless of whether they click or interact with it.
Influencer Marketing	Leveraging an established audience to promote products. Affiliates with large, engaged audiences often overlap with influencer marketing.

K

Keyword	A word or phrase people type into search engines. Targeting the right keywords in your content is how you attract the right audience to your affiliate posts.
Keyword Research	The process of identifying which search terms your target audience uses so you can create content that appears in those search results.

L

Landing Page	A dedicated web page designed for a single purpose — capturing a lead, promoting a product, or driving a specific conversion.
Lead	A potential customer who has shown interest — typically by providing their contact information in exchange for something of value.
Lead Magnet	A free resource offered in exchange for someone's email address. Examples include ebooks, checklists, templates, and mini-courses.
Lifetime Cookie	A cookie that never expires — meaning you earn commission whenever that visitor purchases, regardless of how much time has passed. Rare and extremely valuable.
Long Tail Keyword	A specific, multi-word search phrase with lower search volume but less competition. Easier for new blogs to rank for and typically indicates higher purchase intent.

M

Merchant	The company or individual who created the product or service being promoted. Also called the advertiser or vendor. Sets the commission rate and manages the program.
Meta Description	A short summary of a web page that appears in search results. Should be compelling for human readers and include your focus keyword naturally.
Multi-Tier Commission	Earning commission not only on your own referrals but also on referrals made by affiliates you recruit. Also called two-tier or MLM-style affiliate programs.

N

Niche	A specific, focused segment of a broader market. Successful affiliate marketers typically focus on a well-defined niche rather than trying to appeal to everyone.
Niche Site	A website focused entirely on a specific topic or niche, built primarily to generate affiliate income through targeted content.

O

Opt-In	When a visitor voluntarily provides their email address to join your list. The foundation of permission-based email marketing.
Organic Traffic	Visitors who find your site through unpaid search engine results. The most sustainable and scalable traffic source for affiliate bloggers.

P

Passive Income	Income generated with minimal ongoing effort — like affiliate commissions from content you published months or years ago that continues to rank and convert.
Pay Per Sale (PPS)	The most common affiliate commission model — you earn a commission only when a referred visitor completes a purchase.
Pixel	A small piece of tracking code placed on a webpage to monitor visitor behaviour and attribute conversions to the correct traffic source.
Product Review	Content evaluating a specific product or service. One of the highest-converting content types for affiliate marketers as it captures commercial investigation intent.

R

Recurring Commission	Earning a commission every month a customer you referred continues their subscription. Creates compounding passive income over time.
Return on Investment (ROI)	The ratio of profit earned relative to money invested. In affiliate marketing, measuring ROI on paid traffic or tools is essential.
Referral Link	Another term for an affiliate link — a URL containing your unique ID that tracks purchases back to you.

S

Sales Funnel	The structured path you guide a potential customer through — from awareness to purchase. Includes lead magnets, email sequences, and offer pages.
SEO (Search Engine Optimisation)	The practice of improving your content and website to rank higher in search engine results and attract organic traffic.
Solo Ad	A paid email advertisement where you pay a list owner to send an email promoting your opt-in page to their subscribers.
Split Testing (A/B Testing)	Testing two versions of a page, email, or ad to see which performs better. Used to optimise conversion rates over time.

T

Terms of Service	The rules governing an affiliate program. Read carefully before joining — violations can result in removal and forfeiture of earned commissions.
Traffic	The visitors who come to your website or landing page. The fuel that powers all affiliate marketing — without traffic there are no commissions.
Two-Tier Affiliate	A program where you earn commissions on sales from affiliates you recruit, in addition to your own direct referral commissions.

U

Unique Visitor	An individual person visiting your site, counted once regardless of how many times they visit within a given period.
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Upsell	Offering a higher-value product or additional purchase to someone who has already bought or is in the process of buying.
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V

Value Ladder	A sequence of offers at ascending price points that moves a customer from a free or low-cost entry point to higher-value products over time.
Vendor	Another term for the merchant or product creator whose products you promote as an affiliate.

W

White Hat SEO	Ethical, guideline-compliant SEO practices that build sustainable rankings over time without risking penalties.
WordPress	The most widely used blogging and website platform in the world. Powers over 40% of all websites and is the standard choice for affiliate bloggers.

Still learning the ropes? The **AI Thinking Partner Blueprint** walks you through building a real online business using AI as your personal guide — from choosing your niche to creating content to generating your first affiliate income.

Visit yourdigitalbreakthrough.com to learn more.