



SPI 290

Affiliate Marketing: An Insider Look at My Most Successful Long-Term Campaigns

November 1, 2017



Pat Flynn: This is the Smart Passive Income Podcast with Pat Flynn, session number 290. Oh man, I'm so excited for this one.

Announcer: Welcome to the Smart Passive Income Podcast where it's all about working hard now, so you can sit back and reap the benefits later. Now your host—celebration dances are not uncommon for him to perform—Pat Flynn.

Pat Flynn: Hey. What's up, everybody? Pat Flynn here. Thank you so much for joining me today in this session of the Smart Passive Income Podcast. I couldn't be more excited because this whole month, I'm going to be talking about affiliate marketing on the podcast, on the blog, on the YouTube channel. Affiliate marketing, I have a passion for because it's helped me make millions of dollars. It's absolutely changed my life, and I've learned so much about this whole world of affiliate marketing and how to do it right, how to do it in a way that's not slimy. I was going to say sc-limy, like scam-y and slimy in one word. But yeah, really all that stuff. That stuff annoyed me when I was first starting out online and I was getting offers from here, from all these different people at the same time, and it just didn't feel right because nobody cared about what I actually wanted.

That brings me to my foundational and most important lesson when it comes to affiliate marketing: Affiliate marketing is promoting and recommending other peoples' products and earning a commission as a result of doing that. Like I said, I've made millions doing that, and I want you to make a lot of money too. But you're not going to do very well if you are recommending products that you don't care about, if you are recommending products that you have no experience with, and most importantly, you're recommending products that aren't actually helpful to your audience. You need to find products that you know, that are going to transform your audience, that are going to serve your people. If you're trying to be an affiliate and make money by something that actually doesn't do that . . . Well, stop. Just don't. Okay?

Foundationally, you need to find the products that you know are going to serve your audience. That's the most important thing. It's

not only important because you are going to try to make money. But let's say people do buy that thing that you do recommend, that you don't know very well, just because you made a few bucks, and then they don't have a great experience with it. What's going to happen? Well, they're going to be upset at that product. They're going to be upset at that product owner very likely. But they're also going to be upset at you because they trusted you, and now you've lost them. They're going to go elsewhere to get their recommendations, to find their solutions.

You need to be the one to find their solutions, and maybe sometimes it's your own products. But oftentimes, it's other peoples' products that already exist. That's an opportunity for you to become an affiliate, to share and recommend that product, and have everybody be a winner. You're a winner because you're generating a commission, they're a winner because they've gotten a product that they needed from you, and of course that product, who owns that product, they're going to be happy because they have a new customer too. So everybody can be a winner in affiliate marketing, if it's done right.

Now, I've shared a number of tips over the years that are also very basic and foundational in terms of how to win with affiliate marketing. I've compiled them all into a PDF file, which you can download at AffiliateMarketingtheSmartWay.com. Go there now, AffiliateMarketingtheSmartWay.com. It's just a quick guide, 10 tips on how to master affiliate marketing. But in this episode, I wanted to frame it a little bit differently, give you some additional, more advanced-level affiliate marketing tips. When I say advanced, I don't mean that it's advanced like technical or even difficult to do. It's just advanced like nobody's doing this. And so I want you to do these things because I want you to succeed with affiliate marketing.

This case study that I'm going to talk about is based on a product that I've recommended recently that has done extremely well—much better than I actually expected—and it's continuing to grow. When I say grow, grow the number of people that I'm helping, grow my income. It's continuing to serve people in the long-term, so this

is a long-term strategy. There are strategies for affiliate marketing for short-term. For example, your buddy's coming out with a product, or there's some promotion for a software that's happening next week and you want to promote that as a partner for a short period of time. There's some strategies that are there for that, that I'm going to talk about next week. But this week, I want to talk about the resources that actually matter to your audience, that will be there for them for a long time, that will continue to hopefully earn you some money for a long time too.

The tool that I want to talk about is ConvertKit. A lot of you know ConvertKit is an email service provider. I absolutely love the product. I'm not here to promote ConvertKit. I'm here to talk about how I promoted ConvertKit. I did it in a very specific way. I did it by doing. D-O-I-N-G. That's your acronym for the day, so if you're taking notes, D-O-I-N-G. I'll talk about what those letters mean in just a moment.

But with ConvertKit, the amazing thing that surprised me was just how well, based on the strategies that I used . . . I think I was kind of more motivated to do these things because I had a relationship with the founder of the company, Nathan Barry, who is a good friend of mine. I absolutely love everything that he does . . . and the tool is just so amazing that I wanted to push it out there to my audience, because I knew it would be extremely helpful. So I did things in this campaign that I've only done with a few other ones before. When I made the connection, those other ones also performed very well, and it was likely because I did these things, these DOING things.

And so, with ConvertKit . . . You know, it's an email service provider. I had other email service providers before. The first one I started out with, in 2010, was AWeber. AWeber was great. It served me for a little bit, but then I kind of needed more. I needed more advanced features, I needed easier to use. The most I ever made from AWeber as an affiliate—because I was promoting them back in the day too—was \$2,000 a month, which was pretty darn good. I mean, that's an amazing income, \$2,000 a month just from one product. The reason why it comes in monthly and very consistently

is because, well, the customers pay monthly. These tools typically pay you an affiliate commission for every month that that person you refer stays on, so it's a recurring income for you as long as that person stays on.

It was amazing. So \$2,000 a month. I was very happy with that. Things were going. It never really broke \$2,200, \$2,300. It would kind of waver in and out of that, because sometimes people leave and you lose that subscription. But then new people come in, and of course it depends on the list size too, because as they grow their list, they have to pay more, et cetera. Well, with ConvertKit, if you've noticed in my recent income reports, you're seeing numbers between \$12,000 and \$15,000. I've only been promoting it for about a year and a half to two years . . . Well, two years at this point.

So it's found significantly more income. Now, part of it is because it's just an amazing tool, but also because of these things that I was doing. Let's talk about the first D, or the . . . There's only one D in DOING. Let's talk about that first letter. That's D, which stands for demo. Create a demo of that product. One of the issues with affiliate marketing is that it's so easy to technically do, because you just grab a link from that affiliate partner and you share that with your audience. You send emails out, you put it on your resource page, you blog post about it, whatever. Well, it's very easy to just grab that link, and then share it, and then have it be it. That's it. That's all you would do.

But one of the things that you need to do when you're affiliate marketing is take these products that are not your own and treat them as if they were your own. If you were selling your own product, you would absolutely show people what they're going to get before they get it, right? But most people who do affiliate marketing just share the link and just a couple words, and that's it, a couple sentences. So demoing it, purposefully going in with the idea of, "Okay, I'm going to create a video." A video demo is just the best way to do it. "I'm going to create a video showing people exactly why they need this and how to use it, because people are going to buy when they're comfortable with that purchase." They're

comfortable when they know what they're going to get before they get it. I'll put a link to the demo, so you can see it, in the show notes, [SmartPassiveIncome.com/session290](http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session290). But I'm actually going to play you the audio, the first bit, just to show you how I hook people in. This demo has been viewed, on YouTube specifically, 20,501 times.

Now, when you search "ConvertKit demo" or "ConvertKit tutorial" on YouTube, this shows up. It's driving a ton of traffic. Not just to watching the video, and not just back to my website, but through the affiliate link that's also included in that video and also in the description of that video too. I'm going to play that for you really quick, just so you can see how I hook people in and get them to continue to watch the whole thing.

"Hey. What's up, everybody? Pat Flynn here from [SmartPassiveIncome.com](http://www.smartpassiveincome.com). In this video, I'm going to give you a quick demo of ConvertKit, a brand-new email service provider that I've started using that I've fallen in love with. The reason is because, well, it sends emails and allows you to build your email list like many other tools. But ConvertKit especially because, one, it is extremely easy to use and set up. It's beautifully designed. Nathan Barry, the creator, is a UX, or user-experience, designer and he's made it incredibly easy to understand. Number two, the statistics are incredible. It allows you to see exactly what's going on within all your campaigns and all your forms and all your broadcasts. It's really easy to understand. Number three, and my favorite, are the advanced features that come along with ConvertKit for your email marketing, such as segmentation and tagging—which a lot of other tools have, but they're more expensive and they're more complicated to use. ConvertKit makes it extremely easy. So let me take a few moments and show you around. All right, so here we are inside ConvertKit. You'll notice right here at the top a section called "Subscribers" . . .

That's just the beginning of it. Of course, during this time, you're seeing visuals. During the three things that I loved most about ConvertKit, I had little slides pop up, just to kind of keep peoples' interest. Many people continue and followed to watch that end. I do

keep track of the clicks that come from that for that affiliate offer, and it is very high. Like I said, it's been viewed over 20,000 times. It's also interesting because when you type in "ConvertKit demo" in Google, not only does that YouTube video show up on the first page, but the blog post that I actually embed that video in shows up too. So I'm in two places on the first search engine results page for ConvertKit demo. When people are trying to buy something and they're not sure about it, what are they're going to type? They're going to type in something like "demo." They want a demonstration of it, or . . . They want to see what it looks like, right? So why not give it to them?

That's the first thing, D. How can you create a demo? Make it quick, make it easy, make it fun, and just show your personality at the same time. It really shows that you care about not just creating quality stuff, but also the person who's watching on the other end. Make sure you also include calls to actions to go through your affiliate link, and always make sure—especially if you're in the U.S., because it's required—to let people know that you do have an affiliate relationship with that company and you're always disclosing that.

Okay, so let's move on. O in DOING. Offer answers. Offer to answer peoples' questions. This is huge. A lot of people don't want to talk to people about these things, and I don't know why. Because if a person asks you a question about a product, they're likely very interested in it. They're just on the fence, and if you can be there to answer their questions, they're going to know that, "Okay. Well, I have somebody here who could potentially support me if I needed to." I've always offered support. "Hey, guys. If you have any questions, let me know."

When those questions come in, I'm quick to answer them because I want to make people feel comfortable about the idea that they're about to spend money on this thing. Of course, the demo helps. But the demo, in combination with the offer to answer peoples' questions, is huge. You know what? Because that video gets thousands of views, I hardly get any questions at all. But I think what also happens is not only do the people who do get their questions

answered, they do follow through, but just the fact that I'm offering to answer peoples' questions makes people feel more comfortable.

Most people who watch that video, or who come across my blog post, or who see me reference ConvertKit on other places, when I say, "Hey, I'm here to answer questions if you have any," it makes them feel good about the fact that, well, if they did have questions, they would be able to find somebody who would answer that, and that I'm also confident enough to be there to answer those questions too. That puts people at ease, because of course when you're buying stuff, and especially stuff that is technical, stuff that you don't know much about . . . I mean, there's always reservations. But of course, because you know there is somebody there to support you on the other end, you are more likely to follow through. That's O. That's a quick one, but it's a powerful one too.

I. Interview. Interview who? Interview the founder of that product, if possible, or perhaps somebody who represents that company who is involved with that product. Or if you can't even reach out and do that, interview somebody who you know who has used that product, hopefully somebody that you've recommended. Because again, this is almost like a testimonial. You would do that with your own products, right? You would have people talk about how they used their product to help them solve a specific problem. Well, if you're doing affiliate marketing, why not do the same thing?

It's always best to get the interview on with your . . . Excuse me. That sounded weird. It's always best to do the interview with the founder, because then what happens is people are building a relationship. Not just with you, but also with the owner of that product. If they do a good job, if they represent that company very well—which likely they would—it'll work out very well. Nathan Barry came on in episode 244 to talk about not just ConvertKit. We actually didn't talk about the actual product and what it did very much. We talked about his story and how he grew this, how he bootstrapped it. I mean, the episode was titled "Bootstrapping a Business," but it was about ConvertKit. Because people heard about ConvertKit, they were able to build a relationship with him, to

hear how much care and quality he put into the way ConvertKit was built, into the culture that he's creating there, and how I became an advisor, how we met and created that relationship.

It was really interesting. People got really involved with that interview and, as a result, trusted the product a lot more. See how you might be able to get the founder of that product on your podcast. If you have a podcast . . . I mean, this is another great aspect of having a podcast, is to be able to get access to people like this, to have a platform to talk about these things. This, in combination with the affiliate promotion for that particular product, I mean, it's a long-term home run. Because now, episode 244—I mean, we're 46 episodes later now—people are still continually listening to that. I think it gets 5 to 6,000 downloads a month now at this point on autopilot, just because new people are finding my new episodes and they're going back into the archive and they're finding ones that are interesting.

I also reference that particular podcast episode many times when I mention ConvertKit. “Hey, guys. You should check out ConvertKit. It's an email service provider that I use. I'm also an advisor. By the way, if you want to hear an interview with the founder, episode 244, about how he bootstrapped this thing and all the care and effort that he put into it, you can check it out there.” And of course, I'm mentioning the affiliate link at that moment in time, when I'm talking about that, but I'm also mentioning it in an interview too. It just naturally comes out. It's never forced, because it's just a natural sort of conclusion to that episode. “Hey, guys. By the way, if you really liked this episode with Nathan, of course ConvertKit is there for you. I'm an affiliate. If you go to SmartPassiveIncome.com/convertkit, you can check it out there. Don't forget—I do earn a commission as a result of you going through that link, at no extra cost to you. But I just love it so much, and I'm confident it can help you.”

That's kind of how I frame that pitch during . . . You know, every time I mention it like that. Having an interview with the founder's great. You could also do an interview . . . I mean, I probably should do an interview with somebody who has used ConvertKit, who

has taken my recommendation. That would be really interesting to do too. I'm missing it on that one, but you could probably do that one. If you can't get access to the founder for a podcast interview, maybe you could do a written interview or maybe a video interview, Skype call type interview. You could do it that way too. But if you have a podcast, it's much easier. If you can't do that, well, then find somebody who you know has taken your recommendation to use that tool.

I mean, you can do it yourself too and talk about and show how much you love it and talk about the results you've gotten. That's going to help a little bit too. Obviously, that's the sort of proof aspect of the selling equation. However, because it's coming from you and because you're recommending it and because you're also earning a commission, it comes off a little more market-y, just because of the nature of the whole thing. That's why having other people come on and talk about the story behind it and the journey is going to be much more powerful.

All right. Next up, we have N. This is a really important one. There's a lot of debate about this. Some sites can do this because they are review sites and it's impossible. But the N stands for never recommend more than one of the same kind of product. It's a lot for just one letter. But never recommend more than one solution for a specific type of problem. Now, what do I mean by that? What's an example? How does this play a role with ConvertKit specifically?

Well, if I were to recommend ConvertKit, but then also recommend AWeber, and then also recommend MailChimp, and then also recommend ActiveCampaign, and then also recommend all the other ones out there, it dilutes the power and the strength of your primary campaign. You need to have one and you shouldn't be recommending others. Because if you are recommending others, then people are going to be very confused. I've done that before, even with ConvertKit, as an active campaign that I was having. It didn't do very well. People were . . . "Wait, I thought you were recommending this one. But now you're talking about this one? What's the difference? How is it better? Which one?"

You don't want to get people to that mindset where they are just asking themselves and you a bunch of questions about making decisions. You want them to go to you to make that decision for them. So yes, I've made a decision. The email service provider I recommend to people is ConvertKit, and that's the only one I recommend for my audience. Have that be the case for you. Are you recommending more than one product right now, that's essentially the same solution or the same type? If you do, you're diluting your affiliate marketing and as a result, you are decreasing the amount of income you can make. I promise you. I'm probably going to get a few people who are going to argue against me for that, but I think you know where I'm coming from. If you are the trusted advisor and you recommend a specific product that you know is going to help them, why would you recommend other products? Yes, it's great to have options, but it could also work against you too.

Now, if people ask me, for example, "Hey, Pat. I know you recommend ConvertKit, but what other solutions are out there?" Well, of course I'm going to be honest with them and tell them what my other top solutions are. I'm not going to be like, "Sorry, Dave. There are no other options." No. That's not true. That would be lying. "There are no other great options out there." No. Not true. That would be lying as well. There are other great options too. But the one that I use, and the one that I recommend, and the one that I trust that will be there to help my audience, and I'm doing them a favor by picking one for them, is ConvertKit.

Say that about the products that you recommend and that you choose to recommend to. Like I said, this isn't always possible for various sites. For example, if you're reviewing vacuums, you can have a featured one or a top recommendation. But when people are searching for different consumer products, they want to compare, right? It's going to be really important to do that. But even that, what if you were to take the approach of, "You know what? This doesn't even compare. It's the Dyson?" Yeah.

Anyway, so that's what the O is. Wait. No. The N, the N is in DOING.

Now, the G, and this is the big one, and people don't even do this with their own products. But it is to get this product in front of your people. When it's your own product, it's even more sad, because it's like you have this solution. You've built it. You've created this product, this course, this service, and you're timid then at that point to get it in front of an audience. Well, you should feel the same way with affiliate marketing. But you don't, because it's just an affiliate product that's not yours. But what I want you to do is shift your mind from being timid to selling something that you know is helpful to being excited about it, to feeling like it's your obligation and your role to do that. Because if you don't, you're actually not serving your audience as best as possible.

This is a mindset shift I've had over the last years. First, it happened with affiliate marketing and things like that, and I've become a little bit more . . . not pushy, not aggressive, but more motivated to get it in front of people, to get these offerings, such as ConvertKit, in front of people. Then also, with my own products specifically, many of you who have been following me for years know that I finally came out with my own courses and that I'm now comfortable selling them. I feel like I'm actually serving an audience by doing so. Not taking anything away from that audience that cannot afford those courses, but offering additional resources for people who want to go deeper with me.

That's where Smart From Scratch came from, PowerUpPodcasting.com, and then also the affiliate marketing course that's going to come out later this month that's going to really hone in on these strategies and help you go from nothing to something, in terms of affiliate revenue. I'm really, really excited about that. Actually, just kind of an insider tip, affiliate marketing is the number one search term that brings traffic to my website, Smart Passive Income, which is really cool. Affiliate marketing is the number one search term when they get on Smart Passive Income, because I use a tool to keep track of the searches that come in through the search bar on SPI. Algolia is the name of that tool.

Yeah, anyway, I'm just really excited, because I want you to get

excited about the products that you're recommending. You have done the research, you have used these products, you are offering answers, you have done the demonstrations, you have done the interviews. You know that this product is there to help serve your audience. Well, get it in front of them. Talk about it on your podcast. Talk about it on other peoples' podcasts. Share it in blog posts. Do more videos about the ins and outs related to this thing that this product can solve. Walk people through a specific process. I mean, that was another thing that has helped me with affiliate marketing, that I talk about in my free giveaway, *Affiliate Marketing the Smart Way*. That's sharing a process that happens to use this affiliate product in it.

For example, back in 2010, I did the Niche Site Duel. That was where I built the website from scratch—it was the security guard one—and I showed people exactly how I did it. I shared it for free, and I also happened to share the tools and the resources that I used to help pick the right keywords, to help build the website, to help pick the themes, et cetera, and how I got it to number one in Google. It still is number one in Google for security guard training, even now, seven, almost eight years later, which is really interesting. But through that process, which I gave away for free, I share these affiliate products as recommendations and, again, using many of the same strategies. It's doing very well.

Let's recap everything we talked about today, everything that you're going to be doing. Number one: Create a demo of yourself using that product. If it's not a demo online, like that ConvertKit one was . . . That one was done by actually just opening up ConvertKit and using a screen recording service, such as Screenflow—or if you're on a PC, you can use Camtasia Studios—to just record what's on your screen and share that as your demo. If it's not that, then just flip on your camera or turn on your smartphone, flip it on selfie mode, and then walk people through the process of you actually using that product. Has anybody ever seen any of those unboxing videos? That should give you a clue that this thing is what people are looking for. They're looking to see what is going to happen when they buy it before they buy it. Okay?

These unboxing videos . . . There are some channels there that have millions and millions of subscribers. All they do is get products and they start by turning on their camera and then unboxing that product, showing people what it looks like, how it feels, what the first moments are when they turn that thing on. Do that with the products that you are recommending as an affiliate. Pick one, start with one. With this DOING thing, this whole formula, pick one product first to start with. Then, pick the next most popular one after that. O, offer answers to peoples' questions. Always do that. You're not going to get very many, but the ones you do, they're going to be ones that are more likely to actually follow through. But just the fact that you are offering to answer peoples' questions is going to be there and be really helpful to just making people feel more secure about that product they're about to buy. I, interview. Interview the founder of that company or somebody who represents that company. Interview people, who you know, who have used that product too. N, never recommend more than one of that particular type of solution. G, get it in front of people.

Once you start doing, you will start succeeding. I cannot wait to hear how you take this episode, actually put it into action. I also can't wait to serve you later this month with all of the things we're going to be talking about related to affiliate marketing on the blog, on the podcast, even next week. Next week, we have some more strategies coming your way, but that's specifically for more short-term promotions. So maybe there is, for example, a friend of yours that's coming out with a course next week. Well, what are some things you can do to prime and get your audience ready for that recommendation that you're going to give them to your buddy's course, which will only be open for like a week or so? We're going to talk about that next week, so make sure you subscribe. If you haven't subscribed yet, do that now. We got a lot of great stuff coming. Also, the YouTube channel's hot right now. I'm devoting a lot of time into that as well. [YouTube.com/smartpassiveincome](https://www.youtube.com/smartpassiveincome). As always, you can get all these links and everything we mentioned today at SmartPassiveIncome.com/session290.

Finally, I want to remind you one more time about that free offer



for my little booklet. It's not even a book; it's just like a number of pages in a PDF file. If you go to AffiliateMarketingtheSmartWay.com, you can check it out there and download it for free. Again, AffiliateMarketingtheSmartWay.com. It's been downloaded, I think . . . Actually, it wasn't created very long ago . . . over 10,000 times now. I'm excited about that. I want people to win with affiliate marketing. You can do this, and it's not a negative thing, like it's been for years. I'm trying to change the way people approach affiliate marketing, because then, like I said, everybody can be a winner. I want you to be a winner too.

You guys, thank you so much. Affiliate Marketing the Smart Way is where you go. I look forward to serving you in next week's episode. Please subscribe if you haven't already. All right. Talk to you later. Bye.

Announcer: Thanks for listening to the Smart Passive Income podcast, at www.SmartPassiveIncome.com.



SHOW NOTES: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session290>

- RESOURCES:
- [Affiliate Marketing the Smart Way](#)
 - [ConvertKit](#)
 - [ConvertKit Demo by Pat Flynn](#)
 - [Smart Passive Income Podcast Episode 244: Bootstrapping a Startup with Nathan Barry from ConvertKit](#)
 - [Algolia](#)
 - [Screenflow](#)
 - [Camtasia](#)
 - [Smart Passive Income on YouTube](#)

