

Become A Blogging Super-Affiliate!

Transcript to the Interview with Joseph Ratliff & Lynn Terry

The MP3 recording of this interview can be downloaded free from:

[How to Monetize Your Blog With Affiliate Programs](http://josephratliff.name/2007/10/05/monetizing-your-blog-traffic-part-2-of-2the-interview-with-lynn-terry-of-clicknewzcom/)

This is a quick & fun 30-minute interview, so you can easily listen in while you're working. We talked about how to *successfully* promote affiliate programs on blogs, and also how to monetize blogs in general. I shared my #1 tip for getting higher click-through's and conversion rates, and much more...

<http://josephratliff.name/2007/10/05/monetizing-your-blog-traffic-part-2-of-2the-interview-with-lynn-terry-of-clicknewzcom/>

This document serves as a transcript to that interview, including the full half-hour conversation. Click the link above to listen in while you read the transcript, or simply read the interview – starting below.

Joseph Ratliff: OK for all those that have the privilege of downloading this recording, I have a real treat for you today. Or rather a *real* story in the Internet Marketing world. I'm interviewing Lynn Terry who is the creator of the Self Starters Weekly Tips Forum at <http://www.selfstartersweeklytips.com/forum/> and you should become a member of that forum today if you aren't already. It's a very popular forum...

Lynn's been marketing on the Internet for just over 10 years, and her story is rather unique in that she started where most of us start when we transfer to a self employed business. She's a single mother of two; she has been marketing online for 10 years. She's a *real* home-based entrepreneur.

She started with an under \$10/hour job, no credit, renting a home and her car kept breaking down all the time. Then she started marketing online and she's *really* successful - and one of my mentors.

So I'm going to start with a few questions I have for Lynn, but first I want to make sure she's on the line with us. Lynn are you there?

Lynn Terry: I'm here Joseph, thanks for having me!

Joseph Ratliff: Fantastic, first question I have for Lynn this morning - and this whole interview is going to center around affiliate marketing using blogs specifically. So the first question I have for Lynn when we get started here is:

What is the one thing you would tell a mentoring student looking to market affiliate products on their blog?

Lynn Terry: The first thing that I would recommend is that they concentrate on writing quality content and building a loyal readership.

A lot of people start *backwards* and start monetizing their blog and promoting their blog before they really have a loyal readership or before they really have good quality content that will *attract* readers.

So I think that in the first 90 days it's an *investment* that you're making in your internet business - To spend that first 3 months putting content into your blog, pouring your personality into your blog, fleshing out the different areas of your blog...

And this pretty much goes with any type of web site or online business. You have to get established and get known and build a loyal readership.

And like I said a lot of people start out thinking "I can make money online" and they want to go at it backwards, so - And then they get disappointed or frustrated and that's probably one of the main reasons that people give up quicker than they should.

So my first piece of advice to bloggers would be that you're willing to invest 90 days to *make it great*...

Joseph Ratliff: Wow, that's great stuff. We'll move on to the second question there. Dispel the typical myths about marketing affiliate products, maybe in general and then specifically apply that to blogs.

The examples are "quick cash" and all that kind of stuff. What myths have you heard in your 10 years of marketing online? And then dispel those myths for us with maybe some tips or insider type of stuff.

Lynn Terry: I think one of the biggest myths that's out there - and sometimes spoken, sometimes just assumed - is that you put it out there and people will buy it. That basically all you have to do is copy and paste the promotional material or slap some banners up, or just put in the sales copy and it's going to magically sell. That's not the case...

What's really great about blogs is that they allow you to *pre-sell* products or services, etc. Of course it's no secret pre-selling – that's a very hot topic - and it's no secret that pre-selling is *the way* to do *really well* in affiliate marketing.

Basically what that means is that you write reviews about products or you *lead into* the sale. You don't just stick up a banner that says "hey, buy this!"

The power of blogs versus web sites is that they really are a conversational type of web site, and very interactive. It allows you to build a relationship with your readers and it allows you to talk in a more conversational style, so you don't really have to use the "hard sell methods".

Which is good, because over the decade that I've been in business online things have changed *a lot*. The market is getting more intuitive, they're getting smarter and their expectations are much higher. They prefer to know who you are, and why they should buy from you... and so pre-selling and the power, like the style of blogs like I said, makes that all very possible.

I think that's one of the things – like I said, that people think you can put promotional material up there, post after post and ping it and bookmark it, and spam this site and that site and you're just going to start making sales - but that is not the case.

The case is that, like I said, you want to invest some time into building a loyal readership and then you'll have loyal buyers, and customers, and subscribers and people who trust what you say because you write *solid* reviews and your opinion is safe, etc.

And a lot of the time, or one of the tips that I can offer, is that if you don't like something *say so*. There are times that I will write something on my blog that are not all positive and that really helps to try to balance things out and make people realize that my opinion really is objective.

Joseph Ratliff: I actually like that last point when you said if you have a negative review about something *write it*. Some people may think that because they're writing only the positive reviews, the stuff that they actually like to promote, that they're still appearing real to the readers.

I think the thing that people overlook is that writing positive review after positive review after positive review... You need to balance that like you just said with an occasional negative review. I guess not a negative one, but your true feelings do need to come out.

Lynn Terry: I agree, and of course the thing about it is I don't really use that as a "marketing strategy". I don't think to myself *'Oh I've been so positive this week I think I'm going to trash somebody today just to even things out a little bit'* (laugh).

The point is that in order to pre-sell and in order to be seen as "objective" you should just be honest. So talk about what you like, talk about what you don't like, talk about things you're skeptical of or unsure about. Discuss the good *and* bad.

There are times when a product can have value. Let's say for example I'm discussing or even promoting a product as an affiliate. And a product can have value, but there might be a negative side to it.

You should *definitely* point that out.

A lot of affiliates will say, "well I just won't mention that and then maybe they won't notice that, because I just want to make the sale and have the highest conversion rate possible"...

My strategy is to say *ok here it is* – to break it down in detail and say "this is a negative".

Because c'mon... your customers are smart people and you need to treat them like they're smart people. They're going to notice it and they're going to question it and that's going to affect your conversion rate.

So I say *Address it!* Say this is what I think about it, this is why I think it's insignificant or this is why I think the product is *still* valuable. Or this is the reason I think you shouldn't get it.

So I think that's a very important point to make. If you're not objective and if you only brush over the negatives and stick to the positives, that's going to be very obvious to your readers and they're going to be skeptical about your opinion.

Joseph Ratliff: Absolutely, that's great stuff. I have one more question here, then I'm going to turn the floor over to you to bring up any additional information you wish to share, Lynn.

My last question today is: Give us 3 of your individual strategies, your personal strategies, or more if you want to add more than that. But give us 3 of your individual strategies that you've used on your personal marketing blog that have produced results in marketing the various affiliate products that I've seen on that blog...

Lynn Terry: Oh, this is going to be fun (smile) Okay... And I'm learning as I go, but I've learned some *incredible* stuff over the last few years...

Tip #1: Blog often. The more frequently you blog the more readers you'll have, the more traffic you'll get and the more successful your blog will be overall.

There are a couple of reasons for this, because I've tested it and I've tracked it and it's really interesting...

The more posts you have on your blog, the more pages you have on your blog, because blog posts turn into individual content pages. And each page gets indexed individually in the search engines. So that is exponentially more entry points into your blog or web site where people can find you.

So let's say one day I blog about resale rights, and one day I blog about affiliate marketing and another day I blog about copywriting resources. Those are 3 different topics and points and pages where people may find me and become interested in the things I have to say.

Also, the more frequently you blog the more frequently the search engine spiders will have to visit your site to keep up, so it causes you to be spidered or crawled more frequently. You end up getting your new posts indexed *within the same day* usually once you get your blog established. So that's another reason to do that.

Also every time you make a blog post you put "tags" on it. You tag it with the keywords or phrases that are related to that particular post. So the more posts you have, the more tags you have out there - which is another good way for people to find you.

Also, people are the same as search engine spiders, in the fact that if they get used to you posting once a day, they'll start checking in daily or several times a week. If they notice or realize you only post once or twice a week then they'll only check in once or twice a week.

So the frequency of the posts has a lot to do with the frequency that people will *visit and read* your blog. You want to keep the flow going and keep people involved.

And that was just tip #1 (laugh): *post frequently*.

Tip#2: Use keyword phrases in your post titles, or subject, for each individual post. This is important just like optimizing web pages. Each individual blog post should be optimized for a specific keyword phrase.

I like to use a 3-4 word phrase, instead of just using 1 keyword. You want to work that into a *catchy title* or subject line at the same time. It takes a little creativity and it might take a few extra minutes, but it is *well* worth it.

The keywords that you use are going to help people find you in the search engines - and you can also use various keywords in the tagging. But it's the *catchy subject line* that is going to get their attention and make them click through from their feed reader, or from the search engine results, etc.

A combination of a keyword-rich catchy title for each blog post is *important* even if it takes a little bit of extra time and a couple of extra minutes over at WordTracker's keyword tool: <http://freekeywords.wordtracker.com>

You may write a blog post that may be a topic that your target market, or your regular readers, may not be necessarily interested in. Just to give a quick example, last month I did a blog post about affiliate marketing in the movie niche.

Which I believe was about watching movies online or downloading movies online - and the different affiliate programs they could use to capitalize on the number of searches for that. So it was all about affiliate marketing, and my target market would very much be interested in that topic...

However, as expected - and as optimized for, I got a lot of traffic over the next couple of weeks from people that were looking for the keywords "watch movies online" since that was written within the post, even though I was targeting the actual content to affiliates.

So I did include a banner for Netflix (and made quite a few sales) - and that's just indirect affiliate sales that I expected so like I said I went ahead and put the affiliate banner in there for Netflix also.

Bottom line: It's definitely good to use a keyword rich catchy subject line.

Tip #3 The third tip, which is all-important, is to *always* use a call to action. If someone reads something *great* on your blog and they get to the end... what do you want them to do next?? You need to have an objective with each blog post and to make that objective clear to your readers.

If you want them to comment on it, if it's a discussion-starter, say so. Say I'd love to hear your thoughts on it, please leave your comments below, or what ever.

Don't just leave them guessing what they should do next or where they should go next... otherwise they will click the back button or click the home button. Your job is to write a post and end it with a call to action that prevents them from hitting the home button or back button on their browser.

That might be... if you're doing a promotion and you want to pre-sell, then lead into it and put a call to action at the end so they know exactly where to go next and *why*.

If you're just trying to build a relationship with your readers then ask them to comment on whatever.

If Google Adsense is how you monetize your blog, then you want to place your Google Adsense strategically at the end of the article. Obviously you want it up top because that's where you'll probably get the highest click-through rate, but what if they read all the way down to the bottom and you sign off. Then what are they supposed to do? You need a call to action for the people that actually read your content as well...

That would be my top 3 blogging tips.

I will say that I'm probably making it sound like its not easy peasy and tons of fun. It is work, but there's a lot of profit potential involved.

It's not something that you just hop on and you click a few buttons and whiz bang and it puts out all this stuff and you have automated content coming in from various sources and you just get rich. That's all a myth.

You really have to make a name for yourself, and put your personality online; Talk about a topic you enjoy or you're good at or something you can get into because you're going to want to post *at least* once a day. So if you can't wake up and get excited about your topic at least once a day then blogging is not for you.

I really personally think that if you want to be a "Pro Blogger", or even a B-Class blogger, or just *a blogger that makes money* - then it's important to choose a topic you can stick with.

The people who stick it out week after week, year after year can be found online still talking about the same things, still talking in the same voice, still having the same character, the same trustworthiness. Those are the people that really rise to the top in the blogosphere....

Joseph Ratliff: Wow I'm pulling a couple of notes off that myself. We definitely appreciate that feedback and the top 3 tips there. Those are probably something that, like the call to action, that's a marketing basic - something I use in my individual copywriting business when I write for clients - but yet I'm probably not doing it as effectively *on my blog* so let's expand on that a little.

Let's go into the call to action topic for just a little bit here and really hammer it down for the listeners so they really understand what call to action is and how it can produce results if you don't mind of course.

Lynn Terry: Oh I think it's a great topic actually and it's very important because one of the things people don't *think* about when it comes to blogging is they don't think about that call to action.

You can really get into blogging, it can become very addictive and you just write, and write and write and sign off and then you go and check it out and you think that was cool - really cool. And people read it, you have traffic, sometimes people leave comments... Its very easy to just get into the writing and interaction.

But then down the road you realize it's not monetized properly and there's no strong call to action... and you're missing out on tons of profit potential. So yes - it's a pretty important topic to dig into.

Here's a little exercise I would highly recommend. This is something that I started doing myself several years ago and it made a *huge* difference, so I try to share this exercise when I can.

What I would recommend is that you go into your stats - and this is assuming you're hosting your own blog and that you have Awstats or something like that which will tell where your traffic is coming from and how. I have Cpanel and I go into it and check Awstats and it tells me what keywords people are using to find my site this month.

I can look at last month and it will give me an entire list of keywords and keyword phrases people used to find my site, which search engine they used etc.

I take those keyword phrases and go back to the search engines - Google, Yahoo, MSN - and type in those keyword phrases and try to find my listings in the search engines. I look at my listings in the search results and try to put myself in the searcher's shoes.

Say you've got 300 visits on 1 keyword phrase. Say for example it was the phrase "watch movies online". Obviously I don't have a movie blog. I have an Internet Marketing blog.

So people might be highly disappointed, if 300 people searched that, we know in their mind what they're looking for: they're looking for movies they can watch online. And because my title and blog post was optimized for that keyword phrase, they clicked through. Of course, if they find absolutely nothing but a bunch of marketing talk they're just going to click the back button.

So the point is you take your keyword phrase that you find in your stats. Go and search in the major search engines and find *your* listing.

Does your listing look good in the search results? Is there anything you can do to improve it? That's the first thing you should notice.

Now, get in the mind of the searcher: why are they searching for this. Is my post really relevant? Then click through and try to be in the shoes of the searcher who has searched for "watch movies online", or whatever they searched for, and analyze your own blog post and ask yourself: *did this result in the search engines match the query they typed in?*

Did this give them what they were looking for? Did they find it? And then make sure there's an appropriate call to action there. If there's not a call to action that matches the popular way to get into the page on your site then you need to add one...

A lot of times at the end of the month you can go in and manually *remonetize* your archived pages. Because your archived blog posts are going to continually make you great money if they're optimized properly and have a proper call to action.

So that's very important – You can even go back *month's worth* if you want to. Make sure either you're AdSense or contextual ads are placed properly. Make sure there's a good strong call to action on whatever program it is that you're pre-selling or promoting.

Like I said, in that example I kind of knew that was going to happen and I kind of did that on purpose. So I wrote one blog post for 2 markets. Number one, to write something for my every day and every month readers would enjoy and get something out of -- and at the same time to draw in traffic and make sales with Netflix as an affiliate... and it *worked*.

Again, what I would recommend when it comes to a call to action, is that you *back out* of the admin panel and go back to Google or Yahoo - like your target market, or your ideal visitor. Follow the steps, trace the steps, and try to see whether or not your call to action is doing the job.

Most of the times when I do that - because you never know how great your web page might rank for an obscure term you wouldn't have thought of - but a lot of times I'll go back and do that and then think "*oh man I'm losing lots of money here!*", so it's a good exercise to do every month actually.

Joseph Ratliff: Who would have thought the call to action could be so important beyond the actual call to action itself which leads your reader to the next step. The keyword attraction part of the call to action becomes important as well.

Lynn, that's really good stuff. While you guys are checking out your awstats pay attention to those keyword phrases you're being found under as well. You may use them to your advantage as you know how people are finding you.

Is there anything you would like to add, or any other tips that come to the front of your mind when selling affiliate products on your blog? Or Internet marketing in general. We can even carry that to that level if you like Lynn.

Lynn Terry: Yes I will say this, we talked about pre-sell and we talked about the copy & paste hard sale "buy, buy, buy", and that they're two completely different methods. And I'm finding that a conversational pre-sell objective opinion and discussional-type stance, *really converts better* these days than a hard sell does.

You know 5, 6, and 7 or more years back, I have been doing this almost 11 years, but just 4 or 5 years ago a hard sale would work great. You could put a classified ad out. You could do a forum signature that says "hey, buy this right now! this is so cool" etc and put in an affiliate link, even a direct uncloaked affiliate link, and make sales.

These days it takes more work. It takes establishing a relationship and building on that relationship and sharing an objective opinion and things. So I think that's a really good solid tip when you get into blogging - and blogging is such a great platform for this - but the goal is to be objective, to blog frequently, to blog across the board about all the topics that need to be discussed in your niche, to go positive, to go negative, to touch on all the points that may need to be touched on in order for your reader to *make that buying decision*.

You can't leave it up to the sales copy or sales page. A lot of the times if you do it right (pre-sell) your reader is not even going to read the sales copy. They're going to click the link, scroll down and click the order button.

That's the goal. Take it on your self to pre-sell the customer to the point that they're just going to look for an order button.

Joseph Ratliff: Well that's good stuff. Everybody who happens to get hold of this call, that's about all the time I think Lynn might have here, but if she wants to add something else I'm sure she will.

My Name is Joseph Ratcliff. I'm the author of Profitable Business Edge 2 blog and if you want to read that it has a bunch of Internet Marketing tips. Lynn I'll let you go ahead and promote anything you have at the end.

Lynn Terry: Great, thank you Joseph. I blog at <http://www.clicknewz.com> if you guys want to check it out. Feel free to surf around, or call me on my mistakes, or leave comments if you like..

I also have a discussion forum and would love to have you join us and it's at <http://www.selfstartersweeklytips.com> and there's a link to the discussion forum at the top of the page.

The last tip I'll share about monetizing your blog...

Affiliate marketing is just *one* option and I recommend when I talk to people that they consider all the various options, or various ways to monetize their blog. Over the last few years, I've tested a lot of them myself and haven't found anything that just doesn't work exceptionally well if done right.

Affiliate programs are a great way to monetize your blog, of course. Another way is to use contextual advertising like Google AdSense. And of course you can sell your own products - if you create your own products, or if you have resell rights to products, or even use public domain content. Whatever types of products you create or have rights to, that's always great - you can blend that in.

You can always get paid for sponsored posts, that's kind of controversial but there's a lot of money in it. You can always sell text links or sell advertising once you get established. So there are lots of different opportunities and things.

The most important thing being that you keep it closely related.

You don't just want to go off in a hundred different directions and try to sell people satellite TVs, outdoor patio furniture and Internet Marketing eBooks all at the same time.

You really want to keep a direction with it so you can build a targeted loyal readership that has a specific interest so that whatever you put out there it's pretty much of interest to them.

That would be my advice... but then within that realm, within that niche, use everything that's available to you. Definitely explore all the options for monetizing your blog in addition to affiliate marketing.

Joseph Ratliff: Well that about raps it up here. I hope everyone listening in will enjoy the information on this call. My name once again is Joseph Ratcliff and I've enjoyed the afternoon.

About Lynn Terry

My name is Lynn Terry and I am a full-time Internet Marketer. I have been self-employed and working online for over 10 years now, and still love every minute of it!

I blog daily at <http://www.ClickNewz.com> and also manage an active online community and weekly newsletter at <http://www.SelfStartersWeeklyTips.com>.

Stop by, join us on the discussion forum, get involved at the discussions on my blog... or just say hello!



Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn Terry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.