WHAT'S WORKING IN

AFFILIATE MARKETING

2019

Insights from the Top Affiliates, Ecommerce Experts, SEO Experts, Traffic Networks, Affiliate Networks, and Spy Tools

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Table Of Contents

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4

WHAT'S WORKING IN AFFILIATE MARKETING 2019

Introduction & Dedication

Every year for the several years before year 2018, **STM Forum** Administrator Hugh Hancock, known on the forums as "caurmen", would put together a "What's Working in 2019" post. And it would always receive lots of "Thanks" from members.

He was the ideal person to write such a post, as he not only had extensive experience in affiliate marketing, but also spoke with many people in the industry on a regular basis - online as well as at conferences and local meetups - which had kept him up-to-date on the current pulse of the affiliate marketing industry.

Unfortunately for both STM and the rest of the world, our beloved Hugh passed away suddenly in February last year - as he was about to attend an STM meetup in London.

So, with Hugh gone, we decided to take up the task of writing the "What's Working" content last year (2018) – in his honor.

Moreover, instead of just making a post in the forum, we made it bigger and better:

We interviewed the top experts in the affiliate marketing industry to ask them "what's working in affiliate marketing this year?"

We compiled all the feedback to produce a PDF report with over 130 pages.

We distributed the report free-of-charge to everyone.

The report received close to 10k downloads in 6 months!

Due to the massive popularity, we've decided to publish another report for this year (2019).

And, in this year's report, we've added sections for feedback from Ecommerce Experts and SEO Experts. Many affiliates have expanded their businesses from just running paid traffic to traditional CPA offers to include these areas, so we've expanded our report to suit your needs.

We at STM would like to dedicate this report to Hugh Hancock. If you did not have the good fortune of having met or known him, you can find out more about Hugh in the following tributes:

In Memory of Caurmen - Tribute by Lorenzo (MrGreen), STM Co-Founder

Machinima founder and VR developer Hugh Hancock has passed away

In Memoriam: Hugh Hancock

On Hugh

We know Hugh would be proud and appreciative of everyone that has contributed to the making of this report.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that has submitted insightful answers to our interview questions. So many individuals have taken valuable time out of their extremely-busy schedules to contribute to this project, when they could be spending that time to add more zeroes to their businesses. Words cannot convey our appreciation for your support.

Last but certainly not least, **we would like to sincerely thank YOU** – our dear reader - as your taking the time to read and benefit from this report is what will give it life and value.

Enjoy the rest of this report!

With Much Appreciation,

Amy and Matej,
Senior STM Moderators
(P.S. As thanks for showing interest in this report,
here is a coupon code for 20% off 1st month's subscription
to our forum: STMWW2019.)

Before Reading This Report

We know you must be eager to get started, but we need to quickly cover 2 things that will help you to better understand the report.

#1)Main Sections

This report is organized into 6 main sections:

a)Intel from Spy Tools
b)Insights From Top Affiliates
c)Insights From Ecommerce Experts
d)Insights From SEO Experts
e)Insights From Traffic Networks
f)Insights From Affiliate Networks

In each section, replies are ordered by the starting alphabet of either the individual's last name (or forum username if their full name is not made available), or the name of the affiliate/traffic network they represent.

#2)Long vs. Short Questions

We sent out a different set of questions to each group of experts. **Because the questions are long, we will not be including them with each set of answers.**

Instead, we will be replacing each long question with a much shorter form of the question. For example, this long question:

" 1. Please briefly introduce yourself: Where are you from, how long have you been in affiliate marketing, which offer vertical(s) and traffic type(s) do you mainly focus on?"

Will be replaced by just:
"1. Self-intro"

For your reference, below are the questions that were sent to the contributing parties, and the corresponding shortened versions.

Questions for Top Affiliates:

1. Please briefly introduce yourself: Where are you from, how long have you been in affiliate marketing, which offer vertical(s) and traffic type(s) do you mainly focus on? **(Short: Self-intro)**

2. When you compare your campaigns in 2019 to those you run in 2018, do you see any major differences? Did you have to change focus to different traffic type(s) or vertical(s)? **(Short: Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?)**

3. Black Hat vs. White Hat as promotion strategy – which would you recommend and why? **(Short: Blackhat vs. Whitehat?)**

4. Please predict for 2019: Which offer verticals are thriving or dying? Which traffic types are thriving or dying? **(Short: Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?)**

5. If you were just starting in 2019, but had all the knowledge you do now, which traffic source/type and vertical/offer-type would you focus on? (Please name one of each.) **(Short: Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?)**

Questions for Ecommerce Experts:

1)Please briefly introduce yourself: Where are you from and how long have you been doing ecommerce? **(Short: Self-intro)**

2)What tips do you have on how to choose a niche, and also specific products? **(Short: How to choose niche + products?)**

3)What tips do you have on how to acquire customers? i.e. What are the most effective advertising channels, and how to run ads **(targeting, creatives, etc.)? (Short: How to acquire customers?)**

4)What tips do you have on how to maximize the life-time value of each customer? **(Short: How to maximize LTV?)**

5)What are some of the main factors you feel are responsible for your success in ecom? **(Short: Factors for your success?)**

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6)What is the best practical advice you would give to ecom newbies? **(Short: Advice for newbies?)**

Questions for SEO Experts:

1)Please briefly introduce yourself: Where are you from and how long have you been doing SEO? **(Short: Self-intro)**

2)In your opinion, has ranking sites on Google gotten harder or easier in recent months? What has changed? **(Short: Easier/harder to rank in Google?)**

3)How to choose good niches to build SEO sites for? **(Short: How to choose niches?)**

4)Some of your best tips for on-page SEO? **(Short: On-page SEO tips?)**

5)Please share some of the most effective backlink strategies? **(Short: Best backlink strategies?)**

6)How to avoid being penalized by Google? (Short: How to avoid Google penalties?)

Questions for Traffic Sources:

1. Please tell us how long you have been in the business of selling traffic and what traffic type you focus on? **(Short: Self-intro)**

2. On your network, do you see certain ad formats with expanding/shrinking volumes? Would you say CPM/CPC prices are going up/down or remaining stable in general? **(Short: Expanding/shrinking ad formats? Traffic prices going up/down?)**

3. In 2018, Google announced stricter rules known as the "better ads initiative". Did this affect your network? (For example, some networks have tightened their advertising rules.) How do you think this has affected the affiliate marketing space in general? **(Short: Did Google's better ads initiative affect you?)**

4. In terms of offers and verticals, did you see any significant changes during the past few months? What are the most-promoted offer types on your

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network so far in 2019? **(Short: Changes in verticals? Most-promoted verticals?)**

5. Push notification traffic seems to be next big thing. Do you offer this format and what's your take on it? Will it last for a while or do you expect it to get regulated in some way, due to excessive messaging abuse? **(Short: Views on push traffic?)**

6. For 2019, do you foresee any ground-breaking changes in the traffic business or are you expecting a year of "same old"? Any tips for the readers in terms of what they should focus on in 2019 to grow their affiliate marketing profits? **(Short: Changes for current year? Tips?)**

Questions for Affiliate Networks:

1. Please very briefly introduce your network: What are your main offer verticals and how long have you been in business? **(Short: Self-intro?)**

2. In the 2018 report, most participants confirmed that the death of mobile subscription offers was imminent. Based on your network's stats for carrier-billing offers, has this prediction come true? **(Short: Are carrier-billing offers dead?)**

3. What offer verticals do you see performing the best with mobile traffic? Do these verticals perform differently for 3G vs. Wifi, or similar? **(Short: Best verticals for mobile? Performance on 3G vs. Wifi?)**

4. Are there verticals you feel are on their way out (e.g. carrier billing offers in 2018)? Are there ones you feel are gaining traction? **(Short: Rising and declining verticals?)**

5. Are there any verticals or offer types that have been stable and lucrative, that you predict will remain so into the future? **(Short: Stable and lucrative verticals?)**

6. And Black Hat vs. White Hat as promotion strategy – which would you recommend and why? **(Short: Blackhat vs. whitehat?)**

Questions for Spy Tool Owners:

Because each spy tool is different, no specific questions were sent, except

"we're creating a report on What's Working in 2018 - please contribute any intel that you feel would benefit our readers - offer verticals, geos, angles, etc."

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Bird's Eye View

In the remainder of the report, you will see detailed comments from the best individuals in the industry.

However, we thought it would help to provide an overview first, in graphical form, on what - according to parties we've interviewed - **are the best traffic types and verticals.**

Every positive comment we see in their replies, directed at a specific traffic type or vertical, is recorded as one vote towards that traffic type or vertical. **The graphs below are a summary of categories that received the most votes.**

(Disclaimer: What qualifies as a "positive comment" is subject to our personal interpretation. Thus, the graphs below are only approximations/estimates, and should be treated as such.)

Top Traffic Types

Traffic Type	Votes
Facebook	27
Push	20
Native	13
Adwords/Bing	13
Email	8
Snapchat	8
Pinterest	7
Pop	3
Video	3
Organic/SEO	3
Quora	2
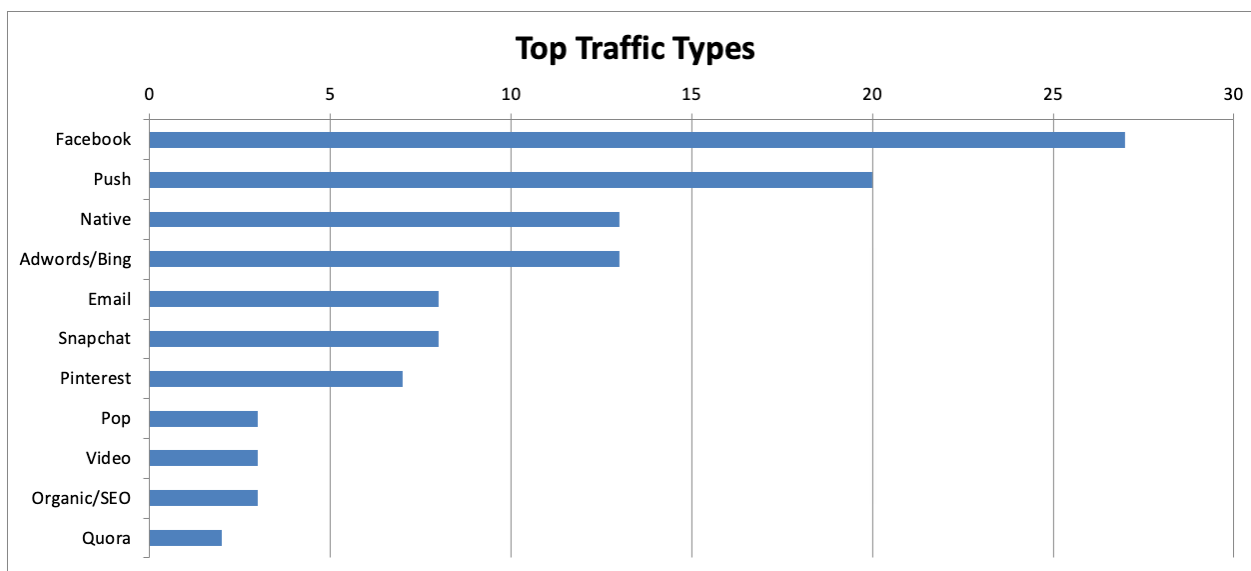
Note 1: Input from traffic networks is excluded to keep this graph as unbiased as possible.

Note 2: Feedback from SEO experts is not considered as votes for SEO traffic.

Top Offer Types
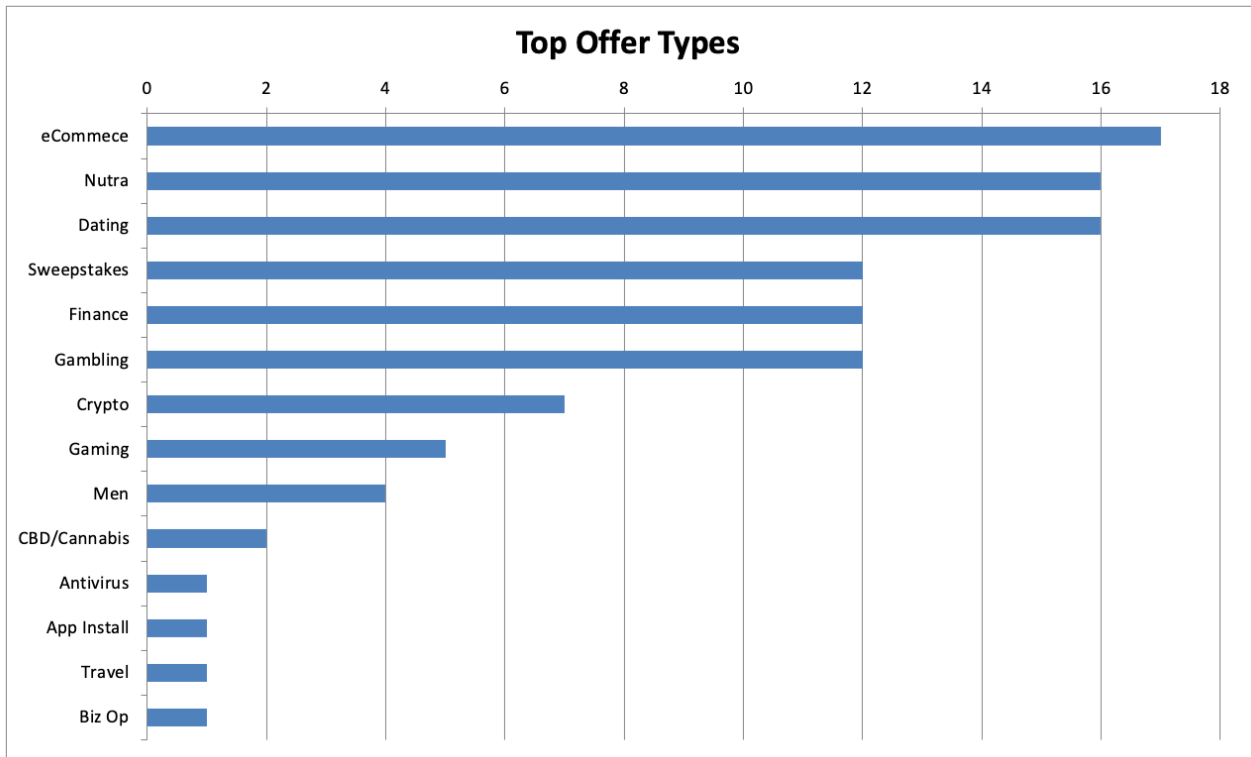
Note 1: Input from affiliate networks is excluded to keep this graph as unbiased as possible.

Note 2: Feedback from Ecom Experts is not considered as votes for the ecommerce vertical.

Note 3: "Dating" includes mainstream and adult dating. "Finance" includes debt and insurance, "Men" includes male enhancement, erectile dysfunction and muscle.   "Gambling" includes casino and sports betting.

Intel From Spy Tools

Adplexity, Alex Om, CMO

Websites:
Adplexity Native, **Adplexity Mobile**, **Adplexity Desktop**, **Adplexity Adult**

Ad formats

Native Ads and Push Notifications ads are set to dominate in the coming year.

Native

Native advertising has been effective for affiliate marketers in the past, and will remain an important asset in 2019. We should expect some improvements on the tech side, and better opportunities for ad targeting. Native ads let you access your target audience on numerous websites and 'find' the users that can't be reached via Facebook or other means of advertising. But at the same time, moderation will become tougher. Only high-quality, unique content for specific audiences will bring in results.

Push

Push notification proved itself to be a straightforward format, suitable for new affiliates with low budgets. Despite the drop in traffic quality and increase in price, push notification will still remain one of the top formats in 2019. It's especially effective for those who have collected their own databases and aim to deliver the most relevant content and offers to their specific audience. It is a really good trending format, but huge competition and possible regulation will come to limit its effectiveness in the near future. But again, now is the best time for push ads. You're better off jumping on the train now, rather than risking missing out.

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Facebook

Facebook is growing.

Mobile Video Ads are performing well here, as more and more people choose to watch videos rather than read something. Facebook promoted the video format in all their placements in 2018, and will enforce it in 2019. So we can expect to see even more high-quality content this year.

Influencer Marketing

The rise of influencer marketing has been tremendous. These people are not celebrities. They are real people endorsing products and services based on their own real experiences. Interest in influencer marketing has grown considerably over the past few years.

Pop and Display

These remain popular, especially on mobile. It's easy and fairly cheap to join. If you hustle, you can be making xx-xxx/day in profits within a few weeks or months. But it's quite saturated nowadays, campaigns don't stay profitable very long, and there's more and more bot traffic.

Offer Verticals

Evergreen verticals like dating, gambling, sweepstakes, nutra and finance are still going to be around. But affiliates will have to be more creative in building their funnels. Just make sure you stand out from the crowd.

Another trend is the growth of the ecommerce space. More and more affiliates are engaging in dropshipping, or running COD offers.

Analyzed.ai, 'desteny' on STM, Owner

Websites: **Analyzed.ai**

Whitehat and eCommerce

There is an increasing number of ecommerce and whitehat offers that we see on Facebook. Most of the ads that have been successful and visibly scaled on Facebook, focused on either a product listicle or contained a very distinguishable product. We see less simple ecommerce products that are available on AliExpress and more of unique products available through exclusive whitehat affiliate networks. Most of such ads are run in Q4 of the year and there are definitely less ecommerce offers being run in January-June.

Blackhat – Diet and Skin

The biggest visible shift was Facebook's algorithms being able to detect blackhat ads easier. We see that successful blackhat ads are now less distinguishable from whitehat diet and skin ads. The words used are no longer as aggressive and affiliates focus more on image quality to achieve higher CTR rather than ad text. Going forward, blackhat ads will be less and less aggressive given Facebook's ability to improve its AI for blackhat detection.

Keto diet products have been popular in the US and Europe and affiliates who are able to jump on general diet and food choice trends have been very successful.

Blackhat - Financial

Perhaps the largest blackhat vertical are financial and crypto-currency offers. We see these being run across the globe from small Eastern European countries to United States.

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There were expectations that crypto offers would perish along with the fall of the cryptocurrency market-cap, however, this did not hold true. It seems that many affiliates are still having successful campaigns with financial offers, however, the landing pages used are now more sophisticated and angles used are unique. Technical setups are also far more advanced and we no longer see any amateur cloaking methods used which used to work in the past.

Idvert.com

Websites: Idvert.com

Black Hat

Geo Distribution: Extending from tier1 countries to South-east Asian countries and to the rest of the world.

Sales Mode: Compared to the traditional free-trial sales mode, now straight-sale is getting more popular.

White Hat

GEO distribution: COD and shopify beginning to extend from South-east Asian countries to tier1 countries. European countries such as IT, DE, etc. are also beginning to adopt the COD shopping mode.

Sales Mode: Shopify and COD sales used to be made via dropshipping, but nowadays the influencers/KOL approach is being adopted more to generate sales.

Insights from Affiliates

Jason Akatiff ('Smaxor' on STM), Entrepreneur
Website: JasonAkatiff.com

1)Self-intro

Jason Akatiff, San Diego, California. I started in Affiliate Marketing in 2003. I run traffic to around 100 verticals and used all the main traffic sources. Over the years I've driven traffic with Facebook, Google, Display, DSP, Native, Pops and the list goes on.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

In the last year or so we've been focused heavily on Facebook ads. So far for the first of 2019 it's been a rocky road on the Ecommerce side for FB ads. However all our financial newsletter stuff is doing quite well on Facebook. Snapchat people keep talking about, but the audience is just small in comparison to Google or Facebook. I think Google will be a lot of the focus this year as Facebook continues to have rapid increases in prices and conversion unpredictability due to all their data issues.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

I'd always recommend as close to white as possible, as channels are getting better and better with AI every year. Is it still possible to beat the system? Of course. But that cat and mouse game is going to continue to get harder. And when you are successful at it, it will need to be massively profitable. Which unfortunately, a lot of times, means stealing from people. Not creating value.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

All the talk of the town has been CBD. As legalization continues to press forward I think we're going to see lots of opportunity in this space. Hopefully the rest of the traffic channels will open up like Snapchat just did. Ecommerce will always be strong.

There's a slow progression from offline to online and we still have a LONG way to go. Did you know only 10% of retail transactions happen online?

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

I would probably focus on Native and Google. Facebook has been really unstable as a channel. We're not seeing account issues so far in 2019 as we have in other years. However the profitability of campaigns has been much less stable. We'll see swings of 100-200% in conversion rates and click costs day over day.

John Alanis ('johna5150' on STM), Email Marketer

Link: John Alanis' Resource Page

1)Self-intro

John Alanis, from Austin, Texas. Been in direct marketing since 1996, internet marketing since 2000 (when GoTo.com invented ppc and Google "stole" it). I used to focus on dating, but now focus on what is more accurately called the "horny guy" business, since there is an enormous amount of horny guy traffic out there and always will be. This is best described as "casual dating" and not "adult." I'm a list builder (email and now push) so I focus on all types of traffic that can be funneled to an opt in page to generate an email list I can market to over and over - banner, push, email, tab, text link, etc.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

As expected, push has dropped off a bit (as happens with all "new media") but is still a very viable way to both buy traffic, and for building a list of push notification subscribers to market to. I would say it's pretty close to what it will be over the long term, although google can always fart and make it go away. It's an add-on to an affiliate marketing business, not something to base a business on.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

I personally always go white hat because it allows me to form long term relationships with offer owners, traffic sources, etc. Those who go black hat spend their time staying one step ahead of "the law" and see huge dips and spikes in their business. Yes, some are very good at it, love the game and can make it work, but I have always personally preferred running clean and it has served me well when I've had a problem or an issue that invariably crops up in affiliate marketing.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

The "horny guy" business has been around since long before the invention of the internet (I hear a guy named Hugh Hefner made a fortune from it), and will continue to be around. Email will be steady as ever (opt in email, spamming is harder than ever I think, but I don't fool around with that, so

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others will have to weigh in), and I believe push will continue to diminish but be a viable add on to partially offset traffic cost (like, say, happened with Adsense circa 2006 or so) and banners will continue to be solid, especially on mobile.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

I'd keep doing what I'm doing now, the "horny guy" business, building lists and selling the original click over and over, instead of just once.

So, a few things that were reinforced in 2019 that have been true ever since Corey Rudl came out with cartips.com and marketingtips.com and told everyone that Mailloop really, really, really was a good piece of software and worked (Corey was a great guy, a true pioneer, and someone I considered a friend, but Mailloop was a turd and did NOT work).

In order to make real money in affiliate marketing, you have to come out from behind the computer and meet the people you do business with in person. You have to go to the events, talk to vendors, keep your ear to the ground, form relationships, understand everyone is out to get your money, and keep your finger on the pulse of this business - the rate of change is faster than ever. Forming relationships in person will bring you a measure of stability in business, and allow you to identify opportunity before others do. Buy a few drinks, pick up a few dinner tabs, talk with a lot of people, identify the real players and the bullshit artists, and form lasting relationships with those few who know what the hell they are doing.

Always test small, then slowly expand, letting the media prove itself, letting the offer owners get comfortable with you and the traffic. Understand that traffic sources will always die, offers will always pause, and others will seek to rip your banners and landers (but never your relationship with your email list - that's work.)

Think in terms of "bridging the gap." I.e. if you have an offer that is converting but at a loss, think of all the things you can do to offset traffic cost - selling banners and exit traffic on your landing page, selling CPC text links, email blasts to your list, etc. Use every part of the pig, all you need is one part of your campaign to be profitable while the rest offset traffic cost and you can do very well.

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Also, especially for you younger people (I am 48), familiarize yourself with the magic of compound interest. A business is something to get money out of, not put money into, and if you can get a lot of money out of your business into secure investments (I happen to like the Motley Fool mutual funds), you can be set for life. There's an old saying that rich people buy assets, poor people buy liabilities, and that's true. A big Cock-Knocker watch to show off to others who are showing off is a liability, as is "bottle service" where you pay $800 for a bottle of nasty-ass Jim Beam White Label to drink on the other side of a velvet rope (google "compound interest calculator" and see how that $800 can grow over time). Don't get me wrong, I am all for having a good time, and I detest cheap people, but if you don't get money out of your business and into investments where it can safely grow, you will soon find yourself without any when your business takes a dip (and all businesses do).

So, as always in the affiliate marketing business circa 2019, everything has changed and everything has stayed the same.

Besmir Bregasi ('bbrock32' on STM), STM Co-Founder

Website: STMForum.com (Use coupon code STMWW2019 for 20% off 1st month)

1)Self-intro

My name is Besmir and I've been in affiliate marketing for over 10 years now. I'm one of the founders of STM / iStack and a few other companies in the adtech space.

Being in the space for such a long time allowed me to run pretty much every hot trend through the years. I've run everything from diet on Adwords (2009-2010), PPV, casual dating on adult, mobile pin submits everywhere to a myriad of offers lately on native ads. These days I try to keep a more diversified portfolio than just affiliate campaigns. So it's like 50% on building tech companies and 50% still running traffic to fund my other ventures.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

Compared to last year, looks like mobile pin submits and pops are still on the decline.

Native ads have matured and it's a great traffic type to run affiliate offers. Most of the networks are affiliate friendly and the volume is huge.

Finally, I see a surge in push notification traffic. You can still run pretty much anything there and you could also start building your own push list.

It's definitely the easiest way for someone looking to get started in AM.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

I would say whitehat. These days, I would like to build a business out of the things I spend my time on. And we know that's impossible to do with blackhat.

Plus, I think cloaking and black hat isn't as easy as people think. So if you are going to put some serious effort into it, why not put it into something that has value and can make an exit later on.

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4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

Pops is dying and adult is stagnant.

On the rise I still see Natives, FB and push notification traffic.

As for verticals, I see pin submits slowly dying too.

There is a rise in lead-gen offers (finance , life insurance etc) , info products and physical ecom products.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

On a limited budget and low risk, I would go for push notifications.

If I had a bigger budget and wanted to scale, Native Ads.

Finally FB is always a good option anytime because of their huge reach and mature platform.

Taiwo Balogun ('cashmoneyaffiliate' on STM), Affiliate and Blogger

Website: CashMoneyAffiliate.com

1)Self-intro

My name is Taiwo Balogun, and I'm based in the UK but spend most of my time travelling. I've been an affiliate marketer for over five years now and also run an affiliate marketing blog cashmoneyaffiliate.com. My favourite vertical at the moment are Sweepstakes, and the main traffic sources I use are Facebook, Google Ads and Push Traffic.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

It's only mid-February, but the biggest change I've noticed so far this year is how it's becoming far harder to use Facebook as a traffic source, which has meant I've started to use Google Ads and Push Traffic more.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

Blackhat all the way. From my experience, the ROI on a whitehat campaign is nowhere near as high as what you can achieve running a blackhat campaign. Running a whitehat campaign doesn't guarantee your ad accounts on Google and Facebook won't get banned either, so the way I see it is that you may as well get the highest ROI you can from these traffic sources. Not to mention that most of the best performing offers on the majority of affiliate networks will inherently be seen as grey/blackhat by most traffic sources, regardless of how whitehat your creative angle is.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

Well when it comes to traffic sources this year will definitely be the year of Push Traffic. It's like how pop traffic was 3/4 years ago - you can literally run whatever you want without having to cloak, and the ROI affiliates are seeing is amazing. The top offer verticals, in my opinion, will be obviously dating and sweepstakes as these are evergreen, and crypto currency trading offers will be huge.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

If I was starting out, I would begin with push traffic using sweepstakes SOI (Single Opt-In) offers. Push traffic is so cheap at the moment you can make money even with the low payout offers, and the volume is there to scale.

Maor Benaim ('maorbn' on STM), Super-Affiliate

Links: [Maor's Youtube Channel](#), [Maor's Facebook Page](#)

1)Self-intro

My name is Maor and people call me "The Wolf" or "Wolfie". I was born in Israel and I'm in digital marketing for 10 years now. I own an agency, an offline business, a network with a couple of our own offers and I'm also an affiliate. I run only with partners I trust and I don't have any employees, when I scale my business – I scale partnerships.

We are focused on Crypto, Loans, Ecom and just about any CPL or CPA offers that would convert well, and we use our privately owned technologies like our SMS platform and our arbitrage monetization tools to run traffic. We're also a lot into Google, Facebook and Native traffic – as I've spoken about on-stage at the affiliate world conferences.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

2018 was the year of Ecom and lead gen for us. We tested a lot of stuff and found that it was a bit harder than earlier years - the platforms were less co-operative with us and Q4 had a lot of platform glitches. Now, in 2019, we do feel a big decline in drop-shipping. It has definitely become harder, but fortunately for us we got in at the right time and we sort-of created a brand. So now when I open up new stores – I only buy stores that are currently running with some unique angle and have at least couple hundreds of people entering it organically .

2019 is bringing new stuff for us like amazing new partnerships with people who want us to monetize their data and rev-share on their ecom / lead gen data, and also it might just be the year of snapchat. We definitely changed a lot of our focus in the way of working, but that's not something that's special to 2019 – that's just something I think that has to be done all the time in this industry.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

Just like I recommend a/b testing all the time (and I even said on stage that if you are not running 2 variations of your landing pages at all time you

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shouldn't at least a period of your life, just because of the knowledge you are going to get by really understanding how the system works and how the platform thinks. BH is not for everyone, but it takes a lot less knowledge in actual media buying, where WH campaigns demand a lot of knowledge and experience, there's not that much ROI margin to make mistakes, and that's why a lot of BH affiliates are trying and failing at WH, they find out that in order to succeed in WH campaigns you have to learn all the time, and make that big shift inside your head with a lot of parameters that the business includes. At the end of the day – BH affiliates are a little bit jealous of WH affiliates and vice-versa. It has always been like that where the other person's work seems like "the thing" you should be doing – when in real life they're both super hard and people tend not to speak much of their failures and hard times so it would always sound better than it really is.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

I'm going to combine BH and WH together and say that (not in that specific order) the stronger verticals in 2019 might be Crypto and Cannabis (Forex), CBD, Casinos, Sweepstakes. I know Nutra would come down by a lot and I know the loan space has gone down and might go up again on Q3-4. On the platforms side I would say SMS would stay strong for people with short codes and good data. Push traffic is going to be bigger and smarter, and Snapchat is going to be bigger - much bigger. I do believe that traffic is going to be taken from facebook towards those platforms, just because I keep hearing from people how unstable this platform has been to them, even when just running WH campaigns.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

I always feel like we're starting from 0 because in this industry you have to cash out really fast all the time. Nothing lasts for long - there would always be a new regulation, a new policy or just a change in placements, strategy or the platforms that would make your currently profitable campaign to go away. So the question is not "IF I was starting at 2019" because we're always making changes. What I would say to someone who's starting for real in 2019 is to learn to distinguish between FAKE and REAL "gurus", I hate the word "guru" but people use it so I'm going to use it here too. The way to distinguish between the two is to understand that fake gurus are making a living only from "teaching" others, that's their focus and main business, they would sell you on dreams of passive income and unreal things like learning how to make tons of money real fast.

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REAL gurus teach for fun, networking and the ego boost they get. They usually won't sell a course to the masses and it's not their main focus. They would tell you that most people aren't going to make it in this industry and most people aren't going to make a lot of crazy money, that's just the way it is – and it's not just because of the industry – it's also because that's how people are. I think it's super important to make that clear because a lot of people started thinking that everyone that teaches is fake, and that's a big block they put in front of them that doesn't allow them to develop and learn and that could be a really quick way down, remember – you don't know what you don't know, till you know it. All of us have big blind-spots.

Dmitry Braun ('mrbraun' on STM), Affiliate, STM Moderator

Link: Dmitry's STM Profile Page

1)Self-intro

I'm from Kaliningrad, Russia. Working in affiliate marketing since 13 years old. Now I'm 21. I tried many different things. SEO, native, display, free traffic. But now my main traffic types are pop and push. I mostly run pins, sweepstakes, dating and nutra offers.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

I see that people are becoming smarter, so I need to work on creatives more and check all details. The same goes for landing pages. I have to renew them and think outside the box. You can no longer just grab landing pages from spy tools, ask your AM for top offers and run. You need to apply more "magic" now.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

I would definitely recommend WH, because it's much more stable. Of course, you won't get as much ROI as you would with BH. But I think you will agree with me that it's better to get +80% ROI for the next 10 months than +400% for only 2 weeks. I don't like to cloak and deceive. It's very stressful you know! I prefer to sleep peacefully.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

Unfortunately, I'm no longer making the high levels of profits with pop compared to in the past. Therefore, I started working with other traffic types like Push and Display. Push is definitely GOLD in 2019. And I would bet on it. If we talk about verticals, pins are still working, but not like in 2016-2017. So now I'm trying to expand into more verticals.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

I would try push traffic with pin-submit offers (antivirus or sweeps), and also nutra. It's the fastest way for now to achieve big and fast profits.

JEd Cabanero ('jennatalia' on STM), Affiliate turned Entrepreneur

Website: JEdCabanero.com

1)Self-intro

I'm JEd, rather entertainingly known as 'jennatalia' on STM (say it out loud). My background has largely been banking and finance on the securities side. Up until I entered affiliate marketing, I was responsible for building out trading algorithms and further automating analysis to make my teams faster and more efficient. I've been in AM since 2014 - although I've experimented in the industry since 2008.

I still run traffic to my core 6-D verticals: Debt, diet, dating, dollars, dick-size, and downloads. The proportions have changed from last year, but the verticals still work. I also still focus on buying from the Alexa 1M websites. However, the ad units and formats I've been buying have shifted. I've been steadily increasing my presence in the push, native, and video spaces.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

By far the biggest difference is the number of campaigns that are kept in flight. Thanks to all the automatons that were developed, one media buyer is easily 10x more efficient and effective today versus a year ago. Our focus has always been looking for ways to more granularly calculate the value of ever shrinking traffic segments in an effort to fine tune and customize the marketing experience of an individual user. This analysis is done with a scale that a more traditional tracker, or a person armed with Excel and pivot tables simply cannot match.

There has been a shift in our traffic mix away from Facebook and more toward native, push, and video largely due to the predictability of Facebook's algorithm changes amidst their attempts to appease aspiring regulators. The reality is that content matters more and more. As marketers, we buy and sell an increasingly valuable commodity - people's attention. Our value-add comes from enhancing and redirecting that attention to generate a conversion.

We've also migrated our tracking platform in-house using Google Cloud

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Platform, which in a way has brought tracking technologies full circle. From self-hosted, to SaaS, and now back to self-hosted. The flexibility this has afforded us allows for ever more granular audience segments for our traffic and some additional insights about individual publishers on a platform.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

Both have their merits. But there's one distinct advantage to white hat strategies - they can produce assets which can be sold.

I've noticed lately a lot of newer aspiring affiliates high on time and low on cash drawn in by the massive ROIs that black hat techniques bring in. But oftentimes, the cost of maintaining the black hat infrastructure eats away at the additional profit. That isn't to say it can't be done. I know personally more than a handful of people who built entire businesses around this concept.

That being said, I'm of the opinion affiliate marketing is becoming less of a solo career option and more of a source of seed funding for something which grows much faster with ever higher margins. I can no longer name genuinely top affiliates whose income exclusively rotates around running offers. They now maintain a portfolio of businesses and cashflow streams, and understandably so. Rip and run affiliates very quickly saturate something that's working. That isn't to say affiliate marketing is dead. Quite the opposite. Affiliate marketing is changing faster than ever, and strategies from a year or two ago are no longer nearly as effective.

TL;DR: Black Hat - Quick Money, White Hat - Big Money.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

The more seasoned affiliates may reminisce about the days of acai berry, the app-promotion heyday, or the early days of dropshipping. But considering the speed with which information travels through the affiliate world, and how that speed is only increasing, I fully expect 'working' offers to have shorter lifespans.

Crypto offers have been on the decline thanks to various traffic sources preventing their promotion coupled with the current price of various mainstream crypto currencies. One thing I've noticed in my operation is that dating offers have undergone a shift. We promote a product highlighting

Tinder hacks, and that has suddenly eclipsed more traditional Match.com or Eharmony.com style dating offers.

One thing which has surprised me the most so far this year is the rise in HELOCs - Home Equity Line Of Credit - products. They often come with fat commissions and finding qualified leads is especially easy. We've also been paying far more attention to recurring payment offers. SaaS platforms have been increasingly lucrative.

There have been mounting attacks on pop traffic as of late. New versions of Google Chrome are putting in defenses to prevent unwanted popups. Firefox, Edge, Safari, and others are likely to follow suit. While there are still opportunities to profit, it is not a traffic source I'd recommend to someone starting out.

There's a growing trend in push traffic lately. By the time you see it on various mainstream affiliate blogs, there's a good chance the big money is moving into the space. Email marketing it seems is seeing a resurgence. We have subscriptions to thousands of lists just to see the kind of copy that people are using.

Something we've been increasingly doing is serving our own native ads into 300x250 ad units, repurposing our publisher partners' inventory in a way which is much more valuable.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

Knowing what I know now, I'd focus on the newest traffic sources available. In early 2019, it's push. The advantage of push traffic is fewer established best practices. That means more undiscovered nuggets to dig up and monetize before the rest of the affiliates arrive.

I'd also focus a bit more on underserved offers. The kind that have fewer landing pages worth ripping. That often presents the best opportunity for growth. Examples include healthcare, services, lead gen, etc. Having read and implemented Zig Ziglar's Secrets of Closing the Sale gives a much greater advantage to building out marketing flows that are hard to discover, and even harder to rip.

Matej Cechvala ('matuloo' on STM), STM Moderator

Website: Matuloo.com

1)Self-intro

My name is Matej, but I'm using the nickname Matuloo in the online world, so that's what most people know me by. I come from Slovakia, a small country in the middle of Europe. I'm 41 years old already, and Affiliate Marketing is what I've been doing for my entire professional life. I've never had a "regular" job since I started to build websites while I was still going to university and thanks to that, I was actually able to pay the tuition with the money I made online.

Eventually, I did finish Uni, and I got a degree in business administration, but the corporate world never pulled me in, since affiliate marketing was working well for me and I didn't want to let the freedom go. On top of that, the salaries in my country at that time were quite low, so I was basically making multiples of the national average online with very little work. I was young and I felt like a king.

If I had to set a start date in my AM career, it would go back to 1998, when I created my first account with an affiliate network. Which means I'm doing this for like 21 years… time flies fast. As most people did back then, I started with building simple websites that were designed to "trade" traffic with others. Then I moved into SEO, when Yahoo and Altavista were the key players on the market. I had my share of fun with Google too, made a low of $$$ with review sites.

But since all the easy things come to an end, so did the rankings of my SEO websites. Google's Pandas and Penguins messed with my organic traffic too much, so I decided to get into paid traffic, around 2013. And that's what I'm doing to this day. I run affiliate campaigns, using different traffic sources that sell various types of traffic. In the meantime, I also run a blog at matuloo.com and I'm one of the senior moderators at the STM Forum, which is the only forum I post to and help other affiliates on.

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2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

I had to make one change yes. While at the beginning of 2018, I was still able to run some carrier billing offers, I had to step away from those completely later on. My adult traffic campaigns remained pretty stable, dating still works pretty well, so not much changes there.

And like pretty much everyone in the business, I started to buy push traffic too. Both of my main verticals, which are dating and sweeps, work well with push traffic, so those are what I've been promoting on push traffic. And if nothing changes, I will continue doing so throughout 2019.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

I've always been a whitehat affiliate. I hate to play hide & seek, so pure blackhat is nothing for me, I'm afraid. But we have to set one thing straight here, the standards are not the same everywhere. For example the stuff I run on push traffic, these networks are ok with it, but if I tried to take one of those campaigns to Facebook, they'd ban my ass in a heartbeat.

What I'm always trying to do, is to play by the rules of a particular affiliate network or traffic source. In case their rules are more lenient, I will push the envelope a bit more. If they are strict, I will adapt and in case it's not working out, there are many others to move to.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

As for verticals, the trends are quite clear - most of the popular ones are rather stable and not showing signs of a strong dying trend. There are some on the way out, such as Nutra trials, Crypto offers and the already mentioned Carrier Billing offers. But then again, they still do work for some people. So nope, don't expect any major vertical to die this year completely.

Leadgen is showing quite a strong comeback, I see a lot of future for this business model. Also ecommerce, that's an ever growing area. CC sweeps are getting very popular too - any of these should be a good choice for this year.

When talking about traffic types, we can't forget about Push. That really exploded in 2018 and continues to grow like crazy. Push traffic works very

well for many, the rules are not too strict, so it's the perfect playground for new affiliates. There is a problem though, some people are literally spamming the users with tons of messages, so I'm afraid we will see some kind of a regulation in 2019.

Another segment that keeps growing is native ad formats. There is a lot of future for these too. The ad CTRs are better than with traditional banners and these formats are less intrusive, so Google doesn't try to regulate them with some "better ads initiative"… at least not yet.

Then there are the social media platforms, many of them are growing rapidly… Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest …lots of opportunities there.

On the less positive side of things, Pops is losing volume slowly, not as fast as was expected but it's happening. I also see less volume in traditional display banners, especially when talking about desktop traffic - only a fraction of the past volumes are available.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

This is an easy one, Push + Sweeps. That's the easiest combo for anyone to start with.

In case we're talking about some plan for the long run, I would focus on building some community, growing the audience and trying to sell to it over and over. An engaged email lists sounds like a good idea, for example.

Amy Cheung ('vortex' on STM), STM Moderator

Link: Amy's STM Profile Page

1)Self-intro

I'm Amy from Toronto Canada. I've been doing online marketing since 2006, mainly doing SEO and Adwords. Joined STM in 2014, signed up for the pilot 6-Week Affiliate Mastery Challenge (6WAMC) course offered by STM and run by the great Zeno (David Savory). Shortly thereafter I was invited to join the forum moderator team, which I happily accepted as I had always enjoyed teaching beginners, and it's a post I've held to this day.

In terms of paid traffic, I've run mainly pop up until last year. Pop was still profitable, but with the increased competition and volatility, increasingly-stringent requirements on landing pages and offers at traffic networks, a decrease in good offers (which resulted from stricter regulations everywhere), I knew my efforts would be better-rewarded if invested elsewhere.

Nowadays, when I'm not replying to posts on STM or working on other STM-related projects, I'm learning energy healing (will explain the relevance later) and doing ecommerce and SEO (more on both later).

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

Answered above for the most part.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

I haven't run blackhat very heavily, but know people that have/are - so know enough to weigh in on the topic.

What I say below will mainly apply to Facebook and Google, although it's also possible to run blackhat on other traffic types such as pop and native (mainly through cloaking, and/or running on multiple accounts to multiply traffic and revenue).

Black Hat - Pros: You can make crazy amounts of money in a relatively short short time IF you TRULY know what you're doing. 5 to 6-figures/day in profits is not uncommon.

Black Hat - Cons: The barrier to entry is high and getting higher. Trying to make back your investment before each account gets banned is getting increasingly difficult. You need a reliable accounts provider (or have the know-how to farm them yourself), a skillful warm-up procedure, genuine-looking safe sites, an effective cloaker (commercially-available or custom-built), etc. And it's not like you can figure it out once and profit forever. Rules are always changing, and FB and Google are getting more skilled at catching and banning accounts. So something that worked yesterday would stop working today, and you'd be scrambling to find a new way to make things work again. It helps to know other blackhatters so you can join forces and compare notes to keep up with the changes, but that kind of network doesn't happen overnight.

Having to manage so many accounts, safe sites etc. will require having a team if you're wanting to achieve any scale.

You'll also need more cashflow to start, because it will take time to figure out how to run blackhat in the first place, and then with each change in algorithm you'll need to figure things out all over again. There are also more expenses from cloakers, accounts, employees, safe sites etc. that come with running blackhat.

Running blackhat is also quite stressful. When you get up in the morning to check stats, you never know what to expect. There's nothing worse than finally finding something that works, only to have it stop working after a week - and knowing you'd still have to continue to pay your employees and fund accounts etc. until you find a new way to beat the system again.

White Hat - Pros: Risks of accounts being banned are minimal (although still possible!) You can build a long-term business and asset that you can potentially sell later on. For example you can build a brand - e.g. physical products or by packaging yourself as an expert in your field. You can build a faithful following or customer base that you can sell to repeatedly once you build a good reputation. You can sleep better at night too.

White Hat - Cons: Competition is greater in general, because most advertisers are running whitehat. Harder to find products/offers/services that convert better than the typical blackhat offers (diet, skin, etc.). Takes more creativity to find angles that can convert well (whereas with blackhat,

you can use aggressive landers). ROIs are usually lower (since you can't use aggressive landers to promote shady offers).

In the end: If you're a newbie, I really wouldn't recommend blackhat - the barrier to entry is so high now that it would take quite some time and money to get things rolling. If you're a pro, then what I've said above would be common knowledge to you anyway.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

Shady/scammy CPA offers are on the decline in general. This is a natural result of the stricter regulations everywhere as I've mentioned above, which makes it harder to promote such offers unless you're cloaking. Examples include crypto and nutra trials.

On the other hand, whitehat verticals are becoming more popular, as it's easier to get campaigns approved when running them. Affiliate networks are adapting to this need. Ecom CPA affiliate offers is a good example.
Push traffic is thriving, no doubt about that. I've been encouraging everyone to get in on it because many people have already seen success, including newbies. Testing offers and landers on the cheaper pop traffic first, then taking the best offers and landers to push and testing ads there, would be recommended.

Having said that, I'm not optimistic about the future of push. Audiences are not targeted, which means people are being spammed with offers that have little relevance. It's just a matter of time before everyone gets fed up, and giants like Google will take measures to protect their users. One update in Chrome and it will be game-over.

Pop is still the easiest type of traffic to get your feet wet if you're completely new to paid traffic - it will allow you to learn the basics for cheap. Basically just rip landers from a spy tool, grab offers from an affiliate manager, and go from there. It's not difficult for newbies to make 2-figures/day or low 3-figures/day in profits within the first few months, but trying to grow beyond that would be more difficult. With google bans and chrome updates, plus increasing competition, pop can only become more difficult from here. But I still recommend for newbies to start here, run a few pop campaigns, learn tracking and affiliate networks and how to test offers and landing pages and how to analyze stats and optimize campaigns, make all the newbie mistakes

for cheap, and THEN expand to other traffic types such as push or native.

Native traffic continues to be lucrative, and even newbies can succeed in a relatively short time - however, a considerably larger budget is needed compared to pop or push, because the traffic is not cheap so typically only offers with good margins can do well, and those typically have high payouts, which means more money needs to be invested into cutting unprofitable widgets.

Facebook continues to be a promising source of good traffic in spite of all the algo changes. Running 100% whitehat helps. Having a brand helps. Giving Facebook what it wants by catering to good user experience helps a ton. I'll continue to run Facebook traffic in the near future.

Adwords can bring huge ROI that would be difficult to achieve with Facebook, due to the laser targeting. I'm planning to spend a lot more time and budget on adwords this year.

A virtually untapped traffic source, which at least a couple of affiliates I know are having huge success with, is Pinterest. This is something I'll definitely start exploring this year.

Lastly: I've been spending time to brush-up my SEO knowledge. Paid traffic is fantastic in that it can bring instant profits, but SEO can bring in traffic for a lot longer than any paid traffic campaign. It would be good to include both in one's portfolio.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

Although this question is hypothetical, I can just talk about what I'm actually doing right now, because I'm going through this transition.
Some tips I can give on Ecommerce:

1. Dropshipping still works if you're smart. As an initial test, set up a shopify site and import from Aliexpress via Oberlo (the "traditional" method), then run traffic on Facebook. For products that look promising, build a separate site/funnel for each individual product (using Clickfunnels/Funnelbuildr etc.), with up-sells / down-sells / cross-sells, and optimize that funnel using split-tests. You can even create a brand name to make the product sound more "catchy" to potentially increase sales -although the customer won't find any references

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to that name when they receive the product.

It's actually still possible to keep doing shopify+aliexpress. You'd just need to test more products. Another thing you can do is test shopify apps that are designed to increase conversion rates - make sure you test one at a time to see how each one is impacting on your bottom line (especially the paid apps - you need to know they're pulling their weight). I'm surprised people don't discuss apps more. For starters, optimize the checkout process - shopify's default checkout is just horrible.

2. Source from the manufacturer to increase profit margin. If the above test shows good results for a product, you can look into sourcing it directly from the manufacturer (alibaba would be a good start, but for innovative products it would be best to attend trade shows), getting a fulfillment centre in the local country to receive, store, and dispatch the goods for you, and a courier service to deliver the goods to customers. Obviously it would be easier to do for the country you reside in, so that you can physically go to the fulfillment centre to resolve any issues, but you can also hire someone locally to take care of things for you.

This is all I'll say about ecommerce for now, as I'm not an expert yet by any means. I may have more to contribute in next year's report.

Next, I want to talk briefly about my new project which I'm passionate about.

I've had natural healing abilities since I was quite young, but have only recently decided to develop and harness them. So I've been taking courses and getting certified in multiple energy healing modalities. And I've also started to offer healing sessions to friends and family. Results have been very encouraging.

As was mentioned, I've been brushing up on my SEO knowledge. I'm getting ready to launch a site on energy healing. There are lots of niche products available, that are relevant to energy healing as well as the more-general new age niche, that have affiliate programs I can promote. (Coincidentally - one of the niches Brent Dunn recommends when answering questions for this report is - you've guessed it - ENERGY HEALING! I got shivers down my spine when I read that. Talk about receiving a sign from the Universe!) So I can push affiliate products to make commissions. I'll be testing adsense as well. And even before keywords start ranking and free traffic starts flowing, I can try

experimenting with traffic from Facebook and Adwords.

I'm also planning on collecting emails using a free ebook I can whip up in a day, and pushing affiliate products in the backend.

Building out an FB page would be a must. And I'll start collecting a list of FB messenger subscribers, which will be another channel for promoting affiliate products.

(By the way: Building a list in general is a very good way to monetize traffic, no matter if you're doing SEO or driving paid traffic. That way you have traffic that you own.)

I will only be promoting products I KNOW will enrich people's lives – this will be the primary consideration, with profits being secondary. And of course, if I ever want to pursue energy healing as a career, all these assets will be put to use to promote my services.

(I may even start a follow-along thread on the STM forum to report on this project. It will probably end up being the longest-running follow-along ever. Please stay tuned if you're interested.)

I would encourage anyone who's reading this, to ask themselves the question "what am I TRULY passionate in?" Instead of just chasing the money, you could be doing what you love at the same time. Sure, a niche site won't make you 5-figures overnight, but it can be so much more fun, and you can potentially develop it into a passive income stream that you can sell later.

Plus, revenues from SEO sites can help to pay the bills in between profitable paid traffic campaigns. All in all just a good asset to include in your online marketing portfolio.

Emanuel Cinca ('manu_adefy' on STM), Founder of Adefy.com and WTAff.co

Links: adefy.com, wtaff.co

1)Self-intro

My name is Manu, I've been in the industry for about 4 years now. Over the years, I've changed my main focus several times, starting with mobile display, then pops, then Facebook.

Currently, I'm only focusing on organic growth strategies and influencer marketing for WHAT THE AFF, a daily email with the latest on all things digital marketing, including plenty of affiliate-relevant topics.

In general, I'd suggest everyone focus on one vertical and gather an email list, push subscribers and perhaps even messenger subscribers for it. Whether it's nutra, dating, insurance, solar, etc. It's very difficult to go big without somehow owning the traffic, without making more on the backend.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

Yes, we ran AdWords and some Facebook in early 2018 but then saw very quickly that those are not the most suitable for this project, so we had to go outside of the typical affiliate media buying space.

We also don't run typical affiliate campaigns so of course strategies had to be different.   We've seen the power of having a community of people who actually want to hear from you. That's why the tip above of creating an owned list is what I'd suggest.

We're doing it with affiliates and digital marketers as the audience, but it can certainly be done in one way or another in the most popular niches that exist in affiliate marketing.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

White hat all the way. It's more and more difficult to do black hat, you cannot create a business around it. The risk/reward seems to be heavily

changing towards long-term white hat business.

4) Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

Well, even though verticals will be thriving, it doesn't mean they are not changing. I've been paying very close attention to everything that's happening in the space - it's the nature of running a daily email with the latest industry news. So I have quite a few thoughts on this. Will take it step by step for each major vertical that I see as still thriving.

Nutra - people will always want to look, feel and perform better so this industry won't go away. It has changed significantly. Trials are taking hit after hit. No more auto-billing after trials for physical products, more chargebacks, issues with merchant accounts, etc.

That said, cash-on-delivery and straight sales are definitely in a good spot to keep the vertical going. Maybe you have to adjust geos you are targeting as well, depending on what you were doing before. I see this as one of the better ones in 2019.

Leadgen - similar story, always needed. Solar, insurance, surveys, etc. The big thing here though is a bigger focus on quality. That means no more misleading ads, targeting an older demographic, using the right brand and angles.

E-commerce - probably the one that continues to grow the most. Not talking about cheap dropshipping though. That's almost certainly not going to work. Too many restrictions in place, too much competition, too much cheap stuff out there that had the customers fed up.

Instead, actual affiliate marketing e-commerce where you get paid per sale or rev-share from real brands that have unique products will be something happening more and more.

I've already said having your own list of subscribers is very useful. **For e-commerce, people have found another way to increase the average value of a visitor - listicles**. They are not new but they have proven to be exceptional for e-commerce.

Basically, you write a longer post recommending more than one product,

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and end up converting visitors more often, and for a higher payout on average. You can google "listicles" if you're looking into this vertical.

For traffic sources, Facebook will stay strong but I think newcomers like Pinterest, Reddit and Quora have some potential and special use-cases in the above-mentioned verticals.

Google, especially with Shopping Ads and YouTube are also something with big reach and potential.

Push notifications are also certainly hot now but whoever gets into them should keep in mind that restrictions from Google are on the way so don't plan on them to stay the same for more than like 6-12 months. That's just my advice.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

Well, it depends on the financial situation as well.

Let's say you don't have much money and need a couple of thousands per month to get you stable. In that case, I'd go with push notifications as the traffic type but I wouldn't restrict the vertical. Test everything.

If you have a safety net and want to go for something big and more future-proof, then I'd certainly go with building lists and communities.

In that case, the traffic source would definitely be Facebook as the main one. Should work with just about any vertical. However, I would also choose a specific vertical - that's a big difference from the above. There's a bigger focus on quality here, so you need to actually understand the vertical and what the people want.

So I'd go for a niche I'm passionate about. WHAT THE AFF actually was created following this train of thought. So I chose marketing as the vertical.

But if you are passionate about fashion, cooking, fitness, gadgets, solar, insurance etc., there's something you can do in any of those verticals. It really depends on what you already know and what you want to learn about. That's why marketing was the answer for me.

John Crestani ('johnaff' on STM), Affiliate

Link: **John's Youtube Channel**

1)Self-intro

My name is John Crestani, I've been fulltime affiliate marketing since 2012, the vertical I mainly focus on now is bizopp, and youtube ads. In the past though I was a major affiliate in the investment, skincare, and diet niches, and have run strong in google search, facebook, and native.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

The major differences between 2018 and 2019 that I see is that the youtube ad space is more competitive, and you need to do a better job of pre-framing the sale, rather than just going for the click. The main change I focused on this year was putting emphasis on growing my products affiliate base, since I am a product owner, and the bizopp space is very fragmented.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

Blackhat. Ad networks are so finicky with all ads nowadays it seems, that I believe it just makes sense as a hedge to use blackhat strategies if possible, even if you're promoting whitehat offers like I do. The affiliates that I see doing 7 or 8 figures in volume consistently always are using some mix of cloaking, farming, etc.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

I believe investment and bizopp is going to be strong again this year, although the bizopp offers available on CPA networks have been pretty stagnant though I seek to change that. The verticals that I don't believe will do as well are survival type offers, since I see the economy being so strong. For traffic sources, I think SMS spam will increase, and I believe google will suffer since they aren't doing anything interesting and they also just made it harder to use custom audiences.

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5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

I would recommend either bizopp or any nutra niche (except weight loss or testo) on facebook traffic using a long survey-type funnel, and a video article (I call them varticles) in the facebook ad. Those video article videos that you see on the Dodo or goalcast work spectacularly, and frankly I'm surprised I don't see more affiliates using them.

Brent Dunn, Affiliate and SEO Expert

Website: PPCMode.com

1)Self-intro

My name is Brent Dunn. Some of you may know me from my blog PPCMode.com. I've been in the internet marketing scene since 2004. Since then I've worked in several large lead generation companies, affiliate networks, etc. Since 2015 affiliate marketing has been my primary income.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

This year I'm much more focused on an omni-channel approach. In 2018 I focused on mainly 3-4 sources when I would scale things out. 2019 I plan to harness retargeting a lot more across all platforms.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

White hat is personally where all my efforts go. Black hat can make money extremely fast, but it can die just as quick. I've been much more focused on building out my own properties and brands which will continue in 2019.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

I think 2019 will be the rise and fall of push ads. They are doing great right now, but it's one of those things that Google can easily destroy with one TOS change. They are a lot more vulnerable than something like pops because Google has full control through their Chrome browser.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

Honestly, there isn't one vertical that fits everyone. If I was starting over, I would make a list of topics I have an interest in or know a lot about, then see what kind of offers are in that vertical. With the goal of building a longer term property that will continuously grow over time. Nothing is worse than being new, getting your first profitable campaign, then having it paused a week later.

In terms of traffic sources, I would recommend push ads as the quality is pretty decent and campaigns are easy to get approved. I would use push traffic a bit differently than most however... I would use the traffic to jump start growing my own blog/site & email list. Making sure to also place pixels on both my landing page and "thank you page" to begin growing my audiences on all the major traffic sources: Google Ads, Facebook, Snapchat, Quora, etc. Which could then be harnessed later with both retargeting and look-alike audiences.

Ian Fernando ('ianternet' on STM), Online Entrepreneur

Website: IanFernando.com

1)Self-intro

My name is Ian Fernando, I have done affiliate online marketing for over 15 years. I have sent leads to sub prime offers, nutra is my biggest as well as dating, basic lead gen offers like email submits, even doing some CPS as well. I am pretty much a versatile aff.

I enjoy testing and 'data dive' multiple sources of traffic from Native to Push. Some of the biggest concentration of traffic has been in Google Display and Facebook Ads.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

Yes, quality of traffic has changed over time, especially new sources that I find and then get exploited. CPC increase due to the popularity of the platform like Google and Facebook. Angles are getting recycled way too many times because of the saturation of the offers and the verticals.

I did have to change focus and verticals. I moved from the popular nutra and tested other popular verticals as well. While others went and took their marketing to eCom, I took it to eCom as well but as an affiliate and even utilizing Amazon FBA and eBay, learning the physical product side of things a bit.

Luckily I can adjust and that is what this industry does. It makes you adjust to the situation. It allows you to make sure that you can adopt to the changing times when CPC changes and traffic sources change. Affiliate marketing is just a marketing skill which can be transferred from one to another.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

Both are good, but a sustainable way is to take BH cash and turn to using your skill set to transform into a WH business. The game with BH is time consuming and a lot of maintenance. BH is rewarding because you can generate a lot in a short time but also lose a lot in a short time. With WH it is slow growth but it

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is over a long time with less headaches on maintenance. In the end I would choose WH.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

I think I said nutra will die for affiliates on the CPA side of things. BUT a lot of people are still doing it. I do not think any vertical is in danger of dying, it is the vision of the advertiser and the network they partner with. Some advertisers want to do a branded business while others just want to be a fly by night one.

The 3 evergreens will still be there, but I think more WH campaigns with branded products will prosper more with the OG affiliates and established affiliates.

Traffic sources that are rising is push, but I also think it will die in 2019 as well. There are a lot of networks that are building their own and even affiliates building their own internal push opt-ins. The networks that are growing their push via their internal sites will have the better quality. The ones that only want to show off billions of impressions will decline because of low quality.

I do think the CPA style will die though but not the performance of this industry. I have noticed that new affiliates (Gen Z) are more about creating value. They have a conscience when it comes to promoting, not that us older affiliates didn't. The fact that we are in a world of infinite information has affected how we promote. The quick money is dying.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

I would still pick google or facebook but with the intention of creating a list in any vertical. This allows you to own the leads and market to them when CPCs are too high and you want to pause your paid advertising. This will allow me to be somewhat sustainable when times are slow or when CPCs spike. I can utilize the list to continuously promote other offers.

Even if let's say Facebook disappears or the government takes over their data business, you'd have an asset of leads to continuously promote offers to.

If I honestly had to choose one, then it would be facebook and nutra.

Erik Gyepes ('erikgyepes' on STM), Affiliate, STM Moderator

Website: ErikGyepes.com

1) Self-intro

Hey! I'm Erik, from Slovakia, living in Thailand with my wife and 2 dogs. I'm a solo affiliate marketer and in the business for 5+ years. I also moderate STM and blog at https://erikgyepes.com.

I like to stir things up from time to time. Last year my focus was mainly on adult nutra vertical and adult display traffic sources.

This year I rather focus on mainstream verticals like sweepstakes. And when it comes to traffic sources I mainly work with push traffic now.

2) Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

I see differences, mainly because I switched verticals and traffic source type as I mentioned above. However, I don't think there are any major differences. All of the same evergreen verticals are still doing well and the traffic sources as well.

What changes is rather new ad formats being introduced at traffic sources, which is a welcoming fact as it gives us more options to advertise.

3) Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

I "grew up" on rather grey to black hat-ish strategies and mindset in this industry, so dark side is naturally closer to me for this reason.

I like to play, explore, and experiment, and black hat gives me 100% freedom in this.

I do prefer white hat though in other areas like building a personal brand and blog.

There are always 2 sides to everything.

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4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

I don't really see any verticals dying to be honest. It's rather the flows that change. Let's look at sweepstakes for example: Some of them used to use pin submit flows, these days they rather use credit card submits. Another example may be nutra trials switching to straight sales and so on.

It's now much harder to make pops work. They work well with aggressive, easy to convert flows, like 1-click mobile subscriptions or app installs, but much harder with more complicated flows. Still doable, just harder.

Push traffic is thriving this year, but it also may be the first traffic format to die sometime soon. It's the easiest to shut down by Google. Ride the wave while it lasts though.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

I would probably still choose the same. I still enjoy to work with alternative traffic sources. They are friendly, you can talk to them, easily get a rep and meet them at shows. Not like Facebook or Google where it's all about AI and policies and in the end it lacks the human touch.

As far as there will be these "indie" traffic sources with innovative ad formats like push, native and who knows what else in the future, I will be for sure one of those to work with them.

IAmAttila ('iamattila' on STM), Super Affiliate & Serial Entrepeneur

Website: IAmAttila.com

1)Self-intro

Hello, I am Attila, I've been a full time affiliate marketer since 2007. I've developed the entrepreneurial spirit early on, growing up in Canada and watching my parents own various businesses. This somehow led me to affiliate marketing early on when I was 14 years old (back in 1997) but I had no clue I was doing affiliate marketing by sending people to an online casino and getting paid for banner clicks.

It wasn't until 2008 that I returned full time to affiliate marketing after multiple-failed all-night dance parties with over 5000 people each in Serbia; that basically stripped me of all my savings I had thanks to parties I organized in Canada. It was either move back to Canada, or figure something out quick I can do from home while living abroad there.

My then gf, now wife Dora suggested I look into what my buddy from Canada, Konrad (Mechbunny) was doing online since he moved to Poland, and owned a BMW and a big house. This was how I found adult affiliate marketing. I started building blogs, SEO-ing them and getting paid $30-50 per sale for every paid membership site or webcam site I referred people to. When Google came out with Penguin, Panda, Hummingbird, essentially killing the SEO of what it used to be, I switched to paid traffic.

I was first a member of a forum called IMGRIND. I was attracted to it by their mobile manifesto and later joined my favorite forum where I met a lot of great affiliates and had my first 7 figure profit campaign thanks to the awesome affiliates I met and started networking with on STM. I've done various verticals over the past 6 years I've been a paid media buying affiliate. Adult dating, mobile pin submits, app installs, nutra trials, nutra cod…these days I am focused on more long term stuff, white hat lead generation, branded ecom, and building companies that provide value and generate a recurring client base. My favorite traffic sources continue to be Facebook and Google, but we dabbled a lot in the past 12 months on PUSH milking it while it lasts!

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

Yes, big differences in terms of what we are allowed to promote on Facebook and Google. As time passes, their AI and detection algo gets better and better. They can read what's inside pictures, they can identify pictures and see what's in the picture, they also scan the entire length of videos. They know when you upload an ad, what is the intent behind it with pretty good accuracy. This is why the easy days of cloaking are over. It was possible to spend multiple six figures on an ad account in the past.   Nowadays, we're lucky if we can get $3000-$7000 spend out of it before they ban it.   I've been shifting for years slowly to truly white hat or at least front-end white. Having to battle a storm, and know you are trying to swim uphill and can't focus on what you should focus on – marketing - makes things super hard. I'd much rather invest time and energy and make less ROI than try and battle google and FB head on.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

I recommend both, because if you don't run on Google and Facebook you can do really well with Blackhat. There's nothing sweet like blackhat ROI. I personally run BH on other sources, take the sweet ROI, reinvest it into white hat projects both offline and online. To give you an idea what kind of businesses: One of them is BannersLanders.com, a company I started years ago to help affiliate marketers get their landing pages, banners, wordpress sites done very fast and for cheap. I created this 'whitehat' recurring business because I had trouble finding good freelancers on Upwork - when I posted a job, I'd get flooded by applicants who didn't even read the job description, and even when I wrote to a few that looked promising, hired them – later I'd find out they didn't have the skills and didn't do what I envisioned. Instead they threw something together that was total garbage so I wasted both time and money. Didn't want this to keep happening, so B&L was created to solve the problem for me and all my affiliate friends.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

PUSH traffic type is doing crazy well in 2019 but it is going to die soon once Chrome comes out with an update banning it due to so much spam ads. So MILK IT while you can!

Trials as we know it are dying. Mastercard laws, credit card regulations make it very difficult to get MIDs; so while there was an abundance of trial offers years

ago, nowadays it's hard to find ones with cap. They are far and few between.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

If I was starting out right now, and knew what I know, I'd get AdPlexity Native and take a look what kinds of offers are being run, and find actual offers running right now.

Next I'd find the CPA Networks that carry these offers, I'd ask on STM first since that's the easiest - something like "anyone know which network has offer-name-goes-here?"

Then I'd download the LPs others are using on the traffic source (let's say revcontent), and then I'd make my own variants of the angles.

Next I'd reach out again to the trusty rolodex known as STM and ask "Yo, anyone got a contact at revcontent?"

I'd get intro'ed, and then I'd have a chat with their rep, and ask them, "what placements work best for this type of offer? Can you give me a list to start off with rather than doing RON (Run of network)?"

If there were 10 placements they'd recommended, I'd do offer payout 3x-5x for each placement and collect data and see how we do – testing 2 landing pages, and 5-10 creatives in the process.

So since I had all the knowledge, I'd spy to learn what vertical to focus on that works well on the traffic source – and I'd pick native because they aren't so nuts when it comes to policy like google and facebook are.

Paul Jey ('synapse' on STM), Entrepreneur

Website: SynapseMediaOnline.com

1)Self-intro

Paul Jey from British Columbia, Canada. I have been in affiliate marketing for 5+ years, in digital marketing for 7+ years. Started out as a cab driver then learned SEO, started building apps, found my way on STM and the rest is history! Mainly focus on lead gen and e-com affiliate offers.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

We focus mainly on Facebook and in 2019 compliance has gotten a lot harder. Anything even remotely aggressive Facebook is quick to shut down. Haven't changed focus on offer types but we have definitely refined our creatives to adapt to Facebook's ever-changing policy lines. In 2019 I think to be a good facebook marketer you need to be a policy expert. There is still a lot of room where you can be aggressive enough to get decent ROI without crossing the line and getting accounts banned. That small middle-ground is where great campaigns live.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

Hmm my predictions for 2019. Affiliate e-commerce offers are going to continue to trend upwards as FB cracks down on more aggressive style offers. I think FB and GDN are still great sources. As for dying sources, I wouldn't be surprised if Chrome does some sort of update to whack push traffic like they did with pop traffic. Chrome is all about user experience and it's countdown till these types of inventory get scrutinized.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

Facebook running Affiliate E-Commerce Offers. These offers are harder to initially get going and the ROI is far from juicy but they are more stable and predictable. If you can find one or two offers to scale hard in this category you are laughing. Even if you can run 3-4 offers at moderate scale you can build a nice portfolio of campaigns this way. PS. Some of the networks will protect

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your landing page and creatives for you. So if you come up with something 110% unique you can have them shutdown other pubs stealing your stuff. This is great because you can keep campaigns running longer without copy cats driving your ROI into the ground.

Tim Konijn ('stickupkid' on STM), Affiliate, STM Moderator

Website: stickupkid's STM profile

1)Self-intro

Hi there, I am Tim from Alkmaar (small town near Amsterdam). Been in the affiliate game for 10 years or so! My main focus is Facebook Advertising, but got some decent knowledge about e-mail marketing, SEO and online marketing in general of course.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

From the beginning I focused on mobile content / mobile click flows / IVR and lead gen sweeps. The only differences I experienced over both short and long term is that I have to jump from geo to geo, from brand to brand. Along the way I changed good working angles slightly and tested some new ones of course. But overall the game didn't change much.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

White hat approach + black hat offers = my winning formula. I don't promote aggressively and try to give my ads/accounts a good reputation. This is best for the long term strategy I think.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

None are dying (unless a platform/service/product goes bankrupt of course), but some are getting harder (due to regulations, more competition, less good converting offers etc. etc). But if things are getting harder, only the winners will continue to find the sweet spot to make it work. And those winners will walk away with the trophy. If you leave a vertical or traffic source and try to focus on another one, you are already behind and you have to be really good to fight the established competitors. Stick to your guns is my advice. Go back to the drawing board and use your current skill set and open your eyes to new ways!

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

SEO (content) + casino offers. In the long run this would be the most profitable combination I think.

Angus Kong ('anguschkong' on STM), Entrepreneur

1)Self-intro

This is Angus Kong from Hong Kong. I have been in this industry since 2014. I mainly focus on Facebook traffic for ecom, nutra, casino and lead gen. We spend 8 figures monthly on Facebook ads.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

Facebook is more regulated in 2019 than 2018. A lot of new guidelines that affect the business. I can name a few here:

1. $450 spending limit for new account
2. Straight banning of body improvement ads
3. Faster banning of accounts if you are violating the policy

Facebook/IG is still the biggest traffic source and also the most scalable one. We still focus on FB traffic. There are always changes in the industry. Every change could be an opportunity. Just be the first marketer to crack the code, be the best marketer to kill the market.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

I recommend whitehat. It is more sustainable and you can actually scale up by building up your team. Blackhat is all about accounts and the blackhat game can be over anytime if Facebook wants to stop it.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

I predict that the guru vertical will be thriving. FX, stock, crypto, real estate investment guru....and Facebook is still the best traffic source.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

Facebook and ecom.

However, I recommend people focus on their sales funnel and try to squeeze every cent from the traffic. Maximize AOV and run follow up email campaigns. If you make a 1% improvement on every single element you can control, you can make decent money even if the CPM increases by 100%.

Danilo Lee, Founder of InjuryCaseWorth.com

Website: InjuryCaseWorth.com

1)Self-intro

Danilo Lee, 33, currently living in Santa Monica CA and started affiliate marketing back in 2007. Primarily focused on search and display at the moment on legal and finance verticals.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

Compliance and regulations have been harder recently. Haven't changed focus on traffic sources or verticals. But have invested a lot of time into creatives, funnels.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

White hat - consistency and lower margins but you can sleep well at night not worrying about accounts getting shut down.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

Main prediction: build own landers on host & post and focus on back end monetization.

I foresee an economy crisis around the corner so mass appeal offers such as debt will thrive.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

Traffic Source: GDN as it's harder to crack the code.

Offers: Mass appeal lead gen, debt.

Josh Mayne ('maynzie' on STM), High Hopes Media

Website: [Josh's STM Profile Page](#)

1)Self-intro

What up Stackers! My name is Josh, but to most simply Maynzie. Born and raised from Melbourne, Australia – yes one of the more rare breeds in affiliate marketing but probably mostly because of the horrendous timezone.

I first got involved in this space during high school in 2009 after a chance article my dad recommended I read in a newspaper about people flipping domains, which soon lead a crooked path of google searches to becoming an early member of STM, and then the first meet of STM members in Melbourne sparked a fire that could not be put out.

Over the years have tried nearly every single source there is, although in the last 12 months Facebook has been the dominant traffic solution and mainly focused in the COD health and beauty space and lead generation.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

I had absence from the industry through 2013/2015, so coming back in 2016 I still felt I had quite a good grasp on campaigns that worked. However, the last 6-12 months I've really noticed a lot changing, and the guys I've known in my career from the start seem to feel it too, a definite need to shake things up in order to remain profitable.

2019 has been a massive difference in approach for my partner and me. It is the year of diversification and away from tunnel vision. What started late 2018 has been a great decision as we've moved away from just depending on Facebook alone and started branching into alternative avenues like pop/push, and also beginning to take on JV projects with new e-com startups.

The awareness of affiliate style campaigns is only growing from Facebook's perspective, and as they introduce more things like poor ad experience or very fast detecting/banning of accounts, we as affiliates have one solution - evolve.

Diversification into those different sources (pop/push) would normally lower overall quality for advertisers but we've been able to offset by keeping our

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quality traffic live from Facebook and began to reinvent some funnels to try and drive up the quality. The monthly revenue is much more consistent than whether or not Mr. Zuckerberg is cranky. In some cases the changes to the funnels have lowered ROI of course, but remaining on the offers is much more important. I forgot how nice it felt to wake up and not worry about a sea of red flagged accounts, and having campaigns to optimize like the old days.

Mimicking campaigns from spytools like the old days is really phasing out, you do have to actually 'think' these days. ROI is not as easy to uncover, BUT that does not mean it's not there! We've hit some of the highest ROI's I've seen in the last couple months, and a close buddy of mine has stupid margins on their ecom products yet they're much more unique (think STM user Wakeboarder's thread on the hog hunting product).

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

No question about it - White hat! I feel the entry level for BH is getting more and more difficult and it is just inevitable it will be a hardcore grind with huge resistance, unless you're built for systematic approaches, a decent cashflow and dealing with rollercoaster emotions. If you do still want to go this route I would focus on WH front ends and maybe tweaking later stages of the funnel with BH tactics to bring up the revenue side. Also keeping content fresh, always changing up angles as far away from the normal you see on the spytools - because chances are by the time you see something in spy tools it's dead already!

Focus on building and bettering yourself in terms of skill sets and focus on your strengths, there is always an edge you can develop. I get a chance to speak to a lot of people and watch many careers over the years, and the theme of the majority is the same – a lot of regret for not having started building some sort of asset sooner.
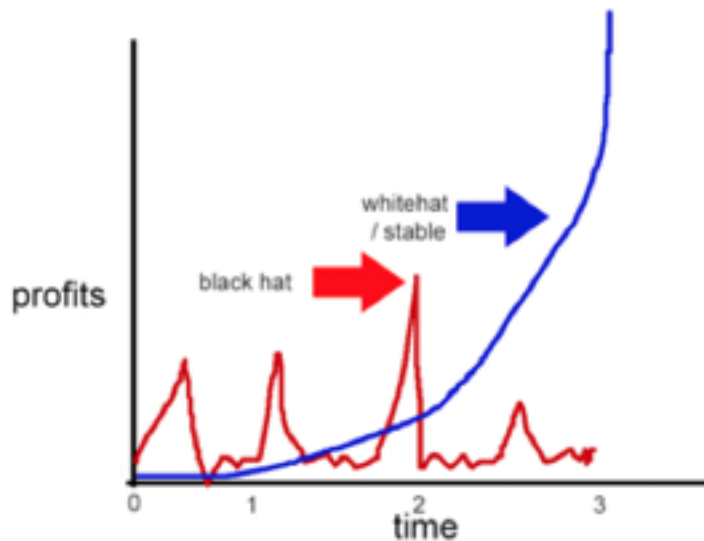
4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

Regarding traffic sources: Facebook/Google – continue to grow. Native continues to grow. Push continues to grow, not sure about pops maybe some issues if more updates from browsers. Definitely will see increase in Snapchat and Pinterest, can already see it happening now.

Regarding offers: Health and beauty continue to grow, although trials may cop more problems with the Mastercard updates. COD is only on the way up as more countries adopt the style - so much potential throughout Asia and developing countries. If you find a good offer – it just lifts off like a rocket! Dating offers to make a big comeback in 2019 with snapchat and push growing. Pin submits on the decline. More people pushing into e-com and branding their own offers.

Additional thoughts: A continued rise for agency startups for those willing to take their incredible skill sets and grow other people's business. The majority of these people with amazing products out there have ZERO clue about online marketing.

Facebook to continue putting pressure on poor ad experience and what they deem okay for their policies – even faster detecting of angles.

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Aggressive BH angles (celebrity) to begin copping heat in the media in some form, I feel like we're just waiting for the day more affiliates will end up in some trouble as its absolutely everywhere these days... FTC knock knock...

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

The holy trinity of Facebook/Snapchat/Instagram. Anything in the health/beauty space focused on either COD or straight sale but own white label or production with a quality product. I really want to emphasize the need to control the brand/asset. The bigger picture over short term relief, but of course easier said than done once cashflow is established.

A focus on passionate projects. Can't tell you how many times I've heard the lacking fulfillment discussion in affiliate marketing.

If starting from scratch there is plenty of easy opportunity in push/pop still although from recent experience I'll give one tip: Do not overlook high-payout offers!

Mitesh Muley ('miteshmuley' on STM), Affiliate

Link: Mitesh's STM Profile Page

1)Self-intro

I am Mitesh from India (Pune). I am in this industry for almost 13+ years. I had taken a break for a few years and explored SEO/SMM and tried my hand again at AM around 6-7 years back. I am running whitehat offers: Nutra, Crypto, Sweeps. Mostly I focus only on Facebook and Google.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

2018 was one of the tough times for me on facebook because of the cambridge analytica scandal. 2019 looks way better compared to 2018 for the campaigns. I have started exploring more whitehat offers apart from the BH ones I was already running.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

My major profits come from BH, but going forward WH is the way to go. I would recommend people to run more WH offers in legit manner, but if you are looking to make some quick money then BH will help you get some cash flow.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

I think Trial offers might take a hit this year because of mastercard new updates. I still see a lot of potential for Nutra. I personally feel that doing COD offers in tier 3 countries is going to be BIG. I think PUSH ads is going to be the next go to traffic source for some leadgen offers.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

If I had to start all over again I would do the following:
Whitehat - ecomm offers in tier 3 countries on Facebook
Blackhat - crypto offers in Tier 1/2 countries on Facebook

Kulwant Nagi ('kulwantnagi' on STM), Blogger and Affiliate

Website: BloggingCage.com

1)Self-intro

Hello Affiliates!! I am Kulwant Nagi from India, doing affiliate marketing since 2012. It all started with SEO when we used to write articles, do the SEO and rank them in Google.

Soon I found that it was not a stable business as Google could kick me out any time and my earnings would go to ZERO the next day. So I started looking for more options.

For the last 2 years, we've been mainly focusing in the Nutra vertical and traffic from Google Ads and Facebook.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

Back in 2018, I made pretty decent money by promoting Nutra offers. Selling trials were so easy back then.

As there are many credit card regulations going on in 2019, selling rebills is becoming a little bit difficult.

2019 is all about Push Notification.

We are trying to encash this new traffic source before Google makes any changes in the Chrome browser.

We have started looking for legit eCommerce offers, software etc., which is still an untapped market.

The ultimate goal is to make money online, doesn't matter whether it's from Nutra, Casino, Crypto or any other products. So we are making a shift from Nutra offers now.

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72

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

I always prefer to go white hat because you can run your campaigns over long periods. Managing ad accounts is a big headache so we always try to run our campaigns white hat only.

We create a small website around 10-12 pages around the product and send traffic to our main page.

As we are selling the products with paid ads + content marketing, it's always easy to bring them back to the website by showing them retargeted ads.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

We have shifted completely from the CPA offers to legit affiliate products as I've said in the previous reply.
2019 will be all about Push Notifications.
I am seeing rebill offers dying and eCommerce picking up in the market again.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

I would focus more on Google Ads. Nothing can beat Google Ads.
My strategy would be to create awesome content around the product, find buyer keywords and run Google ads to bring quality traffic.
We have made a lot of money in the Nutra niche, but if I was starting from the scratch, I would never pick this niche as most of the products are not beneficial for the end user.

The verticals I would pick are:

     1. Software
     2. eCommerce products
     3. Travel

Travel is such an amazing niche to pick as you can create awesome content around this niche and get people to buy your services.

Charles Ngo ('dr_ngo' on STM), Super-Affiliate

Website: CharlesNgo.com

1)Self-intro

Hey, I'm Charles Ngo. I've been in the affiliate marketing space since 2008.

I split my time between building the CharlesNgo.com brand, and running white hat offers on Facebook.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

I'm more focused on building funnels now compared to the typical one and done affiliate mode.

CPC's are only going to keep increasing in the upcoming years and affiliates need to figure out how to increase their profit margins to compensate.

I think building out funnels to promote multiple offers is the most straightforward way.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

Affiliate marketing has been really lucrative the past decade due to market inefficiencies.

A lot of traffic sources have beefed up their compliance teams and software – that has caused blackhat marketing to become increasingly difficult and cost inefficient.

There are always going to be a small group of guys who will make bank with blackhat.

But if you're starting out, it's just more profitable to focus all that time and energy towards white hat.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

At the end of the day, all roads lead to Facebook.

There are tons of traffic sources out there, it's just a headache dealing with the low quality and lack of targeting options.

Figure out what Facebook wants, find a way to make it profitable, and pray your account remains in good standing.

5) Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

Facebook.
Education lead gen.
Funnels.

Andrew Payne ('Mr Payne' on STM), Affiliate and Agency Owner

Website: AffiliateSuccess.com

1)Self-intro

The STM community knows me as Mr Payne. I have been a digital marketer since 2007 with some experience in the affiliate side early on in those years but only returned to the affiliate industry 2.5 years ago.

I work with most of the traffic types but my focus has primarily been with pop and push traffic. Working in many verticals including lead gen, dating, nutra, streaming/media, sweeps, etc. No real limits on verticals.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

Well, we are only one month into 2019 so the timespan is only a short period but I did start to see some changes in my particular methods starting in the last part of 2018. For many, last year in 2018 was a rough year but for a small group of affiliates it was some of the biggest years.

Over the last several months there has been an increase of fraudulent traffic and bots on push traffic. That plus almost every ad network is using some questionable tactics to resell or arbitrage this type of traffic now.

I will say as trends become popular and traffic compliance changes, these have big influence in the affiliate industry. You have to adapt and I would venture to say that things are evolving every 6'ish months, it's important to stay on your toes.

I've not entirely changed focus but I have made diversifying a higher priority in order to stay competitive and keep my business growing.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

I think a better approach to this question is to adapt this according to the type of traffic you are running. In general, blackhat is getting quite difficult on some sources but yet with fairly lenient terms on other sources.

There is no right or wrong answer but I suggest you err on the side of caution if you go the blackhat route.

In the end, blackhat equals strong potential profits but also high risk in many cases.   While, whitehat requires more upfront effort to see results but you can build a more sustainable business over the long run (and have less stress).

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

Nutra is doing really well right now, bigger than previous years even. I see more thriving verticals than I do dying verticals.

Partly because of the growth of push traffic, it really opens the door with a fresh way to promote lots of offer types because of the added way to qualify the subscribers. Offers that were previously best suited for facebook, adwords and native can now be extended to push traffic which has less compliance headaches. And if done right, the performance is good.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

Let me break it down into two forms, based on what I know AND based on a big or small budget to work with...

Big Budgets - I think in the long run, Facebook and Native offer the best growth potential due to the targeting abilities and the level of scale you can achieve.

Small Budgets - I think a great place to get started is Push. It has sort of replaced pops, it's easy to set up campaigns and test things quickly with lots of offer selection.

For offer type or vertical, I think the lead gen space is gaining strength in general. As I mentioned, nutra is super hot right now, international credit card trials are returning, sweepstakes and dating is also working well for some although it did very well last year.

Sebastian R ('twinaxe' on STM), Long-Time Affiliate

Website: LoneWolfAffiliate.com

1)Self-intro

My name is Sebastian, I am 38 years old and from Germany.

I've been doing affiliate marketing since 2015, ran several different traffic types and different offer verticals.

For several years my main traffic was from torrents, made huge money there with Usenet subscriptions but also with adult communities, dating and stuff.

Then for many years my main traffic was from PPV (Adware), there I made my money from traditional affiliate programs like clothing online shops, telco, electronics online shops and so on.

Still have some campaigns running there basically on autopilot, but unfortunately PPV is not that big anymore to keep as main source.

Nowadays most of my traffic is from Pops promoting leadgens, some higher paying CPA offers, installs and some mobile content.

I also tested several other traffic in the past, in 2009-2010 for example I made real good money from FB until they started to ban my accounts each day.

Then I stopped running FB because it got too annoying for me.
I also had some great classified campaigns running with a very good angle resulting in 80%-90% CR on the offers.

Additionally I also tested some other traffic types but with no big success.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

Sure there are some differences but no major ones for me.

Also, for me, these differences did not result from big changes in the networks or offers. It's just that I've been running the same stuff for quite a long time, and at the moment I'm enjoying testing some new things.

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78

My main traffic is still Pops, and the verticals I've been running are still doing well so I keep my campaigns running, and I guess I could just continue with that for some time.

But recently I had some good new ideas that I want to test so that's probably the biggest difference for me between 2018 and 2019.

Also it's fun to do something new and see success there as well.

Apart from that, I have some campaigns running on autopilot for several years already and they will probably continue running through 2019 as well.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

Nice question, I would say it depends on what you run and where you run it.

But in general, in my opinion, everyone should start or even has to start with whitehat.

In the end you need to know how to run campaigns whitehat to do blackhat anyway.

Whitehat is basically just learning how to set up, run and track campaigns on the specific source or specific verticals.

To run blackhat you need to know much more because there you need to know basically everything you need to run whitehat, plus you have to be smart enough to trick the traffic source.

To be successful in whitehat it's mostly enough to just be persistent and learn the basics. To run blackhat successfully (without getting caught) you need to be much smarter so it's not for everyone.

There are some things that can only be run blackhat, but a big misunderstanding from many beginners is that you have to cloak or run blackhat to be successful.

And this is simply not true, you still can run so much stuff completely whitehat and be successful.

4) Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

For verticals there will be the evergreens like Nutra, Dating, Gambling etc. that will just stay solid like they've been for ages already.

The biggest changes probably will be in mobile offers.

Carrier billing got harder although PIN submits are still doing well.

But there are markets in Asia or LATAM for example that were strong with DCB, that are too huge to let go just because carrier regulations got harder.

I imagine that we'll see new conversion flows or offer types coming up for these big markets.

I don't think that advertisers will give up on hundreds of millions of mobile users just because of some regulations.

Many setbacks create new possibilities.

Also there are new markets coming up - maybe we'll see more action in Africa for example.

I am confident that e-commerce will become bigger. It's been steadily growing for years and will probably continue to do so.

About traffic types, I think the most or biggest changes we will see will be with Push traffic.

Many people were worried about the crackdown on Pops with the new Chrome updates but then nothing happened.

I can imagine that the crackdown on Push will come this year and will have much bigger impact than the recent Chrome updates had for Pops.

Everyone is jumping on Push now so the traffic type gets raped left and right, and probably will be much more spammy than Pops soon (maybe it is already).

Competition gets bigger and harder from day to day, traffic prices are

increasing a lot, many new push networks are popping up, and existing networks are adding push to their inventory.

There are spammy and zero-value websites whose only purpose is to collect push subscribers.

The way the platforms and people run push is just asking for trouble and stricter regulations.

It can't be stopped completely because many reputable websites are also using Push notifications, but I don't think it will continue running like now forever.

Probably many people will wonder how fast something they run can be killed and then it's the good old "adapt or die".

But of course these are only my personal predictions - who knows what will really happen.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

The same as what I'm running now.

If I was just starting now with the same knowledge I have now, I would be in pretty much the same situation, so I would be running the same stuff I'm running now anyway.

'RubyTunes' (on STM), STM Moderator

Link: RubyTune's STM Profile Page

1)Self-intro

Hey there! I'm originally from NZ, but based in Europe. I've been in the affiliate marketing space for over 5 years now and ridden many waves, from the old POF days, to pop, Facebook, native ads, and a whole lot of others in between. These days the focus for us is on ecommerce & Facebook.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

Not much has changed for us in terms of different traffic types or verticals as we've been working on a longer term ecommerce project. Although we have found media buying on Facebook to have become even trickier to crack for ecommerce compared to past years. We've tried to focus more on building assets (e.g. email lists) to make every dollar spent more of an investment.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

White hat all day. Sure there's money to be made in black hat, but do you want to ride that roller coaster to make a quick buck, or build a business that you can enjoy and continue to work on and improve? I know which I prefer!

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

Ecommerce is always going to be around - new businesses were being created and built well before the internet. But I believe you need to have more of an edge and be smarter about it, as the days of drop-shipping trash on Facebook are fast fading away. I've also been hearing a lot about push being the next biggest thing for 2019.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

Personally for me it would still be ecommerce (preferably my own product) on Facebook. Not because it's the easiest or quickest thing out there, but because of the potential to build a long term quality business if you put in the effort and you're passionate about it.

Kelly Sheffield ('thedudeabides' on STM), Affiliate and STM Moderator

Link: Kelly's STM Profile Page

1)Self-intro

Hey there, my name is Kelly Sheffield, and I've been in this industry for about 7 years now. I've lived in San Diego for 3 years now and love it here.

For the last few years my focus has been entirely on native ads, running mostly nutra and VSL campaigns.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

Yes I've found it's gotten harder to find "quick wins" on native, at least on Revcontent where I feel like the traffic quality has decreased over this last year.

I've changed my focus to running more universally whitehat campaigns that can run on higher quality and volume sources like Outbrain, Taboola, & Facebook with ecom offers and leadgen.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

If you want to be in this industry for the long term, whitehat seems like the more sustainable option, plus in general it forces you to become a better marketer and develop a more well-rounded skill set.

Beyond that, I think more affiliate media buyers should take a serious look at creating their own lead capture funnels, making money on both the front-end and back-end channels. There seems to be huge opportunity there, in large part due to those who are great at emailing tend to suck at media buying and vice-versa.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

Nutra continues to hit crazy numbers, but ecom and whitehat seem to be hitting even bigger numbers with greater consistency and less headache overall.

Push traffic seems to be making waves at the moment, but who knows what Google and other browser vendors have in store for it.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

If I were starting all over, I would gear my approach around building lead capture funnels for whitehat products and leadgen offers on the big sources (Google, Facebook, Native).

Either by taking regular campaigns I already have working or see others making work, and then capturing the email before sending them to an offer, with the carrot being a survey/quiz or a free resource in exchange for their info.

For starters, I would try and get my opt-in rate as close to the initial landing page CTR as possible, although realistically that might be ~20-30% less CTR than regular click-through LP with no targeting changes. If you can achieve that then you're paying effectively the same cost per click to an offer as before, but now you also have the chance to follow up and generate money from those who didn't convert right away. From there I would split test the initial email, autoresponder sequence, before getting more complicated adding in other channels like push and messenger.

Once things were dialed in and I really knew my numbers, I would start looking towards SEO and acquiring websites in that vertical to drive organic traffic to those funnels and build up a brand/authority site of sorts. Whether you continue to sell others products or create your own is up to you. The end goal being to exit that business for a solid multiple, rinse, and repeat.

I'm glossing over a ton of info here, but I think that's a solid framework to approach things from.

Servando Silva ('servandosilva' on STM), Affiliate and Blogger

Link: ServandoSilva.com

1)Self-intro

My name is Servando and I live in Mexico.

I've been in the affiliate marketing industry for 7 years and mostly focused on paid traffic for the last 5 years.

We've run a ton of offers and verticals. We got started with mobile pops and redirects back in 2013-2014 and dominated them for several years. Most of our winning verticals were sweepstakes, AV, apps and toolbars.

In the last couple years we moved to bigger traffic sources (white hat) and mostly focused on Facebook for some of our own products and lately we've been working with Native and Push notifications as well.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

Yes, there are some key differences but it's mostly due to us learning different traffic sources. In 2018 we ran a lot on Facebook until one of our own info products died off after 10-11 months. Then the trend of push notifications started and we've been running a ton of those lately along with Native ads.

As for verticals we're still running the same ones we used to run back in 2017 with pops/redirects with push traffic. For FB and Native we're pushing different verticals which are more white hat (mostly lead generation and some eComm) but not because other verticals stopped working. It's just due to the nature of the traffic that we need to run different stuff there.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

I'm a white hat man at heart. I prefer running businesses in the long term keeping everybody happy instead of trying to hide everything from everyone. Cloaking to avoid competition is one thing, but when cloaking needs to be done just so you can still run or get paid that's too much for me.

It's one of the reasons we switched to FB and tested a lot of products until we found a winner and scaled it to 7 figures in 2017-2018. We also focus a lot on lead generation and email marketing, always providing value to our subscribers while promoting with content marketing.

As to what to focus or what would I recommend, I guess everybody has a different hat (whether it's gray, black or totally white) and I'm OK with it. Honestly you can make money with all of them if you know how to dominate it. If you're a newbie I'd recommend sticking to gray/white but other than that it's up to you. Who am I to judge?

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

Offers and verticals... hmmm. Alright.

I've seen a lot of crypto, finance, gambling offers thriving since last year, while other verticals like nutra or sweeps when using some conversion methods (not all of them) are harder to promote. Think CC submits or trials.

Also I noticed how many networks entered the eComm space yet most of them failed to capitalize on it, except a few who have more experience or focus on white hat traffic.

eComm as a whole has been getting more difficult every year no matter if you run direct or via a network. This is specifically talking about drop-shipping. I have no idea what's going on out of that space.

As for traffic sources, from what I've seen and many friends share the same idea as me, pops are still very hard to work with and Google keeps adding new updates to kill them every year. Pops are not dead, but there's less volume if you check the networks stats and compare them to 2015-2016 and it's difficult to find proper offers to monetize the traffic (and have the lead quality match for the advertiser).

Push notifications are rising fast, and volumes are growing bigger and bigger, but at the same time I think the faster you grow, the faster you could fall. After all, those ads are very intrusive and spammy so all it takes is a few updates to kill a lot of the performance. It has happened before.

Every day more and more users are being added to the push databases,

however I'm sure every day a ton of them also unsubscribe, or at least they learn how to ignore all the SPAM they're receiving. This is different to other sources where organic traffic makes a huge chunk of the volume and you're not hitting the same users every day multiple times with the same ads.

We'll see what happens in 2019.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

It would depend on the budget.

If you're just getting your wet feet and have a small budget I'd start with push notifications or even redirects.

As for verticals, the same ones that have always worked there like sweepstakes, dating, apps/toolbars are a good choice with lower payouts.

If you have a bigger budget or just want to go the white hat route I'd focus on social media, like Facebook or Snapchat and dominate it. As for verticals I'd say anything that's based on lead generation, unless you want to focus on eCommerce.

Some examples of lead gen offers could be finance, solar, loans or even building your own list and monetizing it with several offers in the back end, although that requires to develop skills in email marketing and can be daunting at first.

Christina Szekeres ('imqueen' on STM), Affiliate

Links: [IMQueen Consulting](#), [Christina's FB Page](#)

1) Self-intro

I am Christina, also known as IMQueen. I was born and raised in Hungary, currently living in Newport Beach, California. I have been an affiliate marketer for more than a decade, started at the age of 14, grew up with affiliate marketing. This year I am mostly focusing on lead gen campaigns and ecom offers. As always I've been sticking to Facebook as my #1 traffic source.

2) Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

Yes, 2019 has brought major changes for me, started focusing on legit 100% whitehat ecom offers. Still running as an affiliate as running your own ecom empire takes a lot of time and attention, and running as an affiliate is always more convenient, less headache, no need to worry about inventory, fulfillment nor customer support. I like to focus on running traffic – that's one thing I'm truly an expert in. This way I still get to live the dream and have lots of free time.

3) Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

Blackhat will ALWAYS do great, there's no doubt about that. The question is, are you mentally prepared for a roller-coaster ride? Blackhat is a little bumpier than Whitehat.   You will always make higher ROI with it. However, whitehat allows you to run more stable. Whitehat is harder in terms of complying with the rules and limitations on what you can put in your ads or on your landers. I think it's a matter of preference, you can thrive in both whether it's blackhat/white, it's just a matter of focus, knowing the right information and consistently applying what you know.

4) Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

Regarding offer verticals, COD, leadgen and eCom are hot right now. When it comes to traffic sources, Facebook is always hot. A new hot trend is Snapchat!

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88

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

I'd either start running debt relief on Snapchat or eCom on Facebook. Don't divide your focus by too many traffic sources or too many verticals, pick one or two and master them.

Yi Hao Ten ('adsflo' on STM), Internet Marketer

Link: Ten's STM Profile Page

1)Self-intro

I'm Ten, from Malaysia. I have been in the game since 2014, close to about 5 years now. Right now my focus is on Dropshipping using Facebook as my traffic source.

2)Changes in traffic types / verticals from last year?

Comparing both years, dropshipping is slightly harder to make bank now, with the rising CPM costs on FB, and the market being overly saturated. I think that this answer would apply for any other affiliates in other verticals as well, as change is always constant in our industry.

However, that's not to say that dropshipping is not viable anymore. We see more creativity in the space, as well as a shift of focus to building edges in this vertical, such as putting in more efforts in cultivating good customer services (Page scores), a larger emphasis on brand building, and optimizing the customers' buying experience for a higher ROI, right from the moment they land on our landing pages.

3)Blackhat vs. Whitehat?

Both work, and both have no shortage of success stories. Even for Ecommerce, strategies that us affiliates think are White Hat – they may still be considered as aggressive in Facebook's terms, and will still get us banned. At the end of the day everyone has their own boundaries to draw – take your pick.

4)Which traffic types / verticals are thriving/dying?

None. As always, there will be affiliates making certain verticals and certain traffic sources work. As an example, Dating – everyone assumed it was going to die off after Facebook banned dating offers, but look how stable it is right now.

I do think this year will be quite crucial for survival for a lot of affiliates. The affiliate marketing landscape is always changing, and only the fittest will be

able to adapt and survive. Focus is key – Be the master of a traffic source or vertical, and build an impenetrable moat around you.

I'm predicting that Dropshipping will definitely still thrive for 2019. That goes also for Nutra, White Hat Leadgen and Ecom offers, and Casino. Also Push traffic and Snapchat would be something worth checking out as well.

5)Which traffic source/type and vertical if starting this year?

I still would be doing dropshipping with Facebook. Ecom remains the lowest entry barrier for anyone to get into Internet Marketing. However, if dealing with angry customers and tons of fulfilment chores is not your thing, an alternative would be to run White Hat Ecom offers with networks – you handle the traffic, they handle everything else.

Insights From Ecommerce Experts

Dee Deng, CEO of Right Hook Digital

Website: RightHookDigital.com

1)Self-intro

I am the co-founder & CEO of Right Hook Digital, an eComm growth agency that builds & scales brands to multi-7 figures and beyond. I also serve as an advisor to agency owners & tech & eComm founders - helping guide them through their journeys towards greatness.

2)How to choose niche + products?

Choosing a niche really comes down to homework (research) and knowing what you're passionate about. Naturally, the more you are passionate about a niche or product - the more likely you are to be invested in your business and see it through the tough times. In terms of research - I tend to look at whether a niche is a quick trend or one that can provide longevity. High AOV? Great! High margins? Even better. Look at the numbers and see if it backs out after accounting for your ad spend.

3)How to acquire customers?

Get into their heads to understand what excites them & what they desire! This will provide you with the ammo you need to produce creative that's on-point and angles that slay all day. And don't simply rely on paid acquisition either - build brand equity and community - this is IP that your competition can't easily swipe or steal.

4)How to maximize LTV?

Maximizing LTV is all about continuing the conversation with your customer-base - whether it's via email, messenger, SMS, your content channels... whatever it may be! Give them a reason to come back, delight them time and time again and segment your customers properly to contextualize the message. There are so many awesome tools to do all that cool stuff. This

doesn't only pertain to marketing though- innovate on products too so that your customers have new shit to get excited about.

5)Factors for your success?

Always maintaining a growth mindset - everything can be improved. Focusing on the customer and their experience - I love studying Zappos because they really set the bar on how eComm brands should be treating their customers - which informs not just the level of customer service, but also the entire business model and how to support an amazing level of service while driving profitability.

6)Advice for newbies?

Just because a "guru" says that something works, doesn't mean that it will work for you. I know so many people that hang on every single word that their chosen guru spouts - fuck that! Apply your critical thinking and make sure that the advice applies to your situation! Just because Arnie did 10 reps of 1,000,000 lb squats in his prime doesn't mean that I should be doing EXACTLY the same - I'll probably break my back instead of get ripped AF. It's all about context, no?

Timotej Gracner ('wakeboarder' on STM), Founder of Adnalytics.io

Website: Adnalytics.io

1)Self-intro

I'm the founder of Adnalytics, a SaaS software and the first marketing intelligence tool for Pinterest ads.

After my last ecommerce follow along on the STM forum, I scaled a family-owned hunting brand, The Wild Boar Liquidator, and generated 6-figures using Facebook and Google advertising in just a couple of months.

2)How to choose niche + products?

I believe there are two main factors that can drastically increase chances to select the right niche as a newbie.

1. Passion
Are buyers really passionate and can talk about it for days? If so, that's a good sign and a first checkmark.

2. Research
Facebook Audience Insight is a great way to start doing research. You can easily find blogs, forums, and online magazines related to your niche and do more in-depth research.

Regarding the product research, I'm starting on Amazon Category best-sellers landing page. It's free and it gives me ideas about what's working in particular sub-category.

Attending trade fair shows is even better for sourcing, but it's time-consuming, expensive and It's not newbie-friendly.

3)How to acquire customers?

There is no one-size-fits-all answer for this one. It's important that you don't assume. You need to do your own research, run some traffic, test it and analyze the results.

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For general stores, Facebook and Google are the best places to start with.

When you are selling to niche-focused segment it's worth trying popular online magazines and blogs and run advertorials with them. They have very targeted traffic, authority and with the right approach, it can be super-powerful.

4)How to maximize LTV?

The easiest way to do this is to increase AOV. Using cross-sells and upsells nowadays is a must. For Shopify and Woocomerce there are extensions available and you don't need any coding skills.

But the biggest impact on LTV will have your post-purchase actions. You need to keep them happy after they place an order. Fast delivery, good customer support, great product, just to name a few.

If you take care of this, the customers will come back and buy again. This is the best way to maximize LTV.

5)Factors for your success?

Well, when you have a great product to promote, it's easier to find success. Like with sweepstake offers, if the offer is bad you can't make it profitable. Fact.

Besides that, I believe persistence and consistency are the most important factors.

But from a more technical point of view, an analytic-mindset gives me the ability to see where I'm leaving money on the table and where I need to put my focus on.

6)Advice for newbies?

First, focus on the product!

Finding the right product first is more important than adding that scarcity app on the product page. You can have the best web-shop design and scarcity technique, but if you don't have the right product you cannot scale.

And the second-best advice is to join STM Forum and start a follow along!

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Zack Franklin ('Zack' on STM), CEO of AMZKungfu Inc., STM Moderator

Link: AMZKungfu.com

1)Self-intro

I'm Zack Franklin, an American expat living in Shenzhen, China – the global hub for ecommerce and the "factory of the world". I've been in Affiliate Marketing and Ecommerce since 2014. I currently focus on Amazon, and I've generated more than $10 million in Amazon revenues over the last year.

2)How to choose niche + products?

When it comes to Ecommerce, this is THE question. For me, I like to pick niches that are easy to create communities and content for, have recurring revenue potential, and a range of price levels. I don't like to pick small niches. If you're having trouble thinking of ecommerce niches, use Amazon's category and subcategory lists – these are gold. I also like to go on platforms like Aliexpress or Amazon and type in random words like "blue" "outdoor" "accessory" with filters to just show me thousands of random products. It's a different way to start brainstorming and I've found some incredible products that way.

3)How to acquire customers?

Even with increased competition, Amazon Ads are my first choice for traffic and orders. Click fraud is almost non-existent, purchase intent is high, and Amazon is releasing new features almost weekly, including offsite retargeting and placement adjustments. Google Shopping and "BOFU" Search Ads are probably the next thing I usually set up, followed by Facebook Groups. I've recently started working on "PBNs" of Facebook Groups – they all feed into each other and tackle different benefits/angles. For example if I'm selling phone cables – I make groups for tech news, apple fans, android fans, etc. and then soft sell daily. At a certain level, Facebook is just going to recommend your group and you get great organic traffic.

4)How to maximize LTV?

If you want to maximize LTV, you either need to sell a consumable product

that requires repeat purchases, upsell like crazy, or keep coming up with brand new offers to sell them. Mix ecommerce and info products. Pick a physical product that can act as a tripwire offer and upsell informational products. If they're buying Garcinia Cambogia, why not sell them a fitness info course, a diet ebook, etc. Pick products that have an aspiration or an end goal. You're not just selling a knife, you're helping them become an amazing cook. Then you can easily create more and more offers.

5)Factors for your success?

Shenzhen is the absolute heart of the ecommerce world. I wouldn't be as successful if I lived anywhere else in the world. The entire city seems to be doing ecommerce and there are events and meetups every single day. Living here has accelerated my ecommerce journey a thousand times over.

6)Advice for newbies?

Don't learn with your own money! If I was brand new at affiliate marketing, I would get a job at an Affiliate network for a year as an affiliate manager or an internal media buyer and get paid to learn. Surround yourself in the industry, go to affiliate world conferences, and have people in your city you can talk with about marketing. All internet business is about people and your relationships are your best competitive advantage in this industry.

IAmAttila ('iamattila' on STM), Super Affiliate & Serial Entrepeneur

Website:

1)Self-intro

I first started ecom in 2015, used to run NCAA bracelets drop-shipped from China then. Then sold yoga stuff after that in a niche store. In both instances I stopped doing it because BlackHat sucked me back in with their BIG ROI, and focused on marketing only – no need for customer service, logistics, or other nightmares that come with ecom.

I re-started ecom in 2018 after being introduced to the concept of CPA ecom, where all I do is focus on marketing and they do the rest. No dealing with angry customers who didn't receive their order the next day. (Yes, American customers are spoiled thanks to Jeff Bezos and his PRIME).

2)How to choose niche + products?

When picking products, I look for a product that has broad interest, but good and interesting. Solves-a-problem product. Sadly, the reality of things is that people always want something that isn't truly possible like FREE TV from a little plastic knob you plug into the power outlet and miraculously get 100s of HD premium channels for free. It sounds plausible because it sounds cool. It is also broad-interest where everyone wants it. I mean who wouldn't want free TV?

There are also many other interesting offers like that all around, like Trakr for instance. You attach it to stuff and you can find on a gps map where you left it. Again broad interest because everyone loses their keys, but what they don't say is since it's bluetooth it only works in a 5-10meter (15-50 feet) radius. Plausible but by no means a good product that will get 5 star reviews.

If you want to build a brand, you gotta follow product due diligence that I learned from an amazon course I purchased. You need to find products that are actually good, and have raving good reviews, make your own brand, improve it, then sell it with your marketing magic. This is what my friend Tim Tetra did with kwik charger. Their charger truly works. People love it so much they give great reviews, and this in turn produces more customers because

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word of mouth advertising is best. I am now into branded ecom, and building good products that I sell on Amazon and also push via Paid Ads.

3)How to acquire customers?

First use Facebook to build awareness / get initial sales, then use Google search to target branded terms to get the '2nd thought' shoppers and everyone else that heard from word of mouth.

Here's a way that works to get the best results for your Facebook ads: Run PPE, determine which Ad is the best. Next run WC > Optimize for add to cart. When you hit 100 add to carts, edit adset switch to Purchase.

Also if you run video ads, generate a lookalike based on 95% or more viewed video. Then create a CBA campaign, with 10-20 adsets and test various lookalikes from 1-10% in the CBA. Every LLA should have 50$ budget. So if you have 10 adsets, then your daily budget for the CBA camp should be $500.

We use this above method with great success running CPA ecom offers.

4)How to maximize LTV?

If you are running CPA ecom offers, you cannot do anything. If you run your own shopify store, the best way to maximize the LTV of each customer is not to sell crap first and foremost, secondly try and have the item shipped from as close a location to the customer as possible to get it to them fast. Nothing, I repeat nothing makes a customer as happy as getting the product they ordered FAST, and that it's a good product. If you score here, they will come back to shop more and more and will respond to your emails where you offer monthly deals, special holiday deals, etc., much better than if they had waited 3 weeks for an item, and it turned out to be low quality crap that didn't even do what was advertised.

5)Factors for your success?

I am successful in ecom thanks to my ability to test like a maniac. I love testing - that's probably my favorite thing about paid affiliate marketing. I am always thinking what kinds of funky lookalikes can I make, what kinds of cool interests would work to target, what kind of ads to write that will resonate with

the audience and produce great engagement? These sorts of things is what I do and enjoy the most, and is why I am successful.

6)Advice for newbies?

Do not rip and run other people's ads you see on Facebook. Facebook knows who made the ad, and they enjoy 'owners' benefit. Meaning if you rip and run it, you won't get the same kind of quality reach that they did. Make your own shit - it costs like $100-150 to get a good video made – don't be a cheap ass. Also when looking at products, ask yourself, would you use this product or recommend it to grandma? What problem would it solve? If it's a stupid product that just looks cool, you will have less chance of selling it since people won't know what the benefit is. But if it's a product that solves a problem, let's say someone's paranoid about using q tips in their ears, and they are concerned about having dirty ears, you can sell them those cool twisting ear gadgets – everyone will get what it does. But if you try and sell them something that isn't obvious and you have to educate people so they get what it is/does, you will already have less of a chance of selling it and making a profit.

Angus Kong ('anguschkong' on STM), Entrepreneur

1)Self-intro

This is Angus Kong from Hong Kong. I have been in this industry since 2014.
I mainly focus on Facebook traffic for ecom, nutra, casino and lead gen. We spend 8 figures monthly on Facebook ads.

2)How to choose niche + products?

Two methods:

1. Choose the biggest niche like health and beauty to enjoy the scalability.

2. Choose the small niches to enjoy higher ROI and less competition.

For newbies, go for smaller niches first. Treat it as a newbie playground to gain all the techniques. After you are more comfortable with your ads copy, video, funnel, cs, logistics....you should challenge the big niches for a HOME RUN.

3)How to acquire customers?

Facebook/IG is always good for ecom. I heard people doing great in Native and Pinterest as well.

For targeting it really depends on the type of products. We usually go broad for general products.

4)How to maximize LTV?

Don't ignore emails and FB messenger.
They can further squeeze 10%-40% of extra revenue.

5)Factors for your success?

1. We have a strong private checkout funnel which is 100% better than shopify.

2. We have strong cashflow.

3. Good customer service: We have 400 staff for customer service.

4. Low product cost. As a Hong Kong resident, I can always go to China to bargain the best prices.

6)Advice for newbies?

1. Join Ecommerce Mastery Live

2. Join Tan Brothers' mastermind and their facebook group

Depesh Mandalia ('Depesh Mandalia' on STM), Ecom Veteran

Website: DepeshMandalia.com

1)Self-intro

Hey this is Depesh Mandalia, I've generated 7-figures for affiliate offers in Ecom and over $100M driving direct to Ecom sales for branded and print on demand stores. I've successfully invested 7-figure budgets into TV, paid search and affiliate marketing campaigns, but since 2012 I've switched focus more heavily onto Facebook ads with now well over $30M in ad spend for clients and owned accounts. I'm delighted to contribute and be part of the STM family.

2)How to choose niche + products?

There are a few options when choosing your niche and below I'll share some ideas to get you thinking:

1. YOUR PASSION. Go with something you can get passionate behind. For example one of my stores was footwear and in particular I created something which would stand out from the crowd. I like this kind of footwear. So with that set I would research Aliexpress for footwear for men and women that was different, to create quite a unique look and feel and stand out, whilst selling stuff I'd like to buy too.

2. THEIR PASSION. You may not have pets but you'll probably know the pets niche is super passionate. Did you know many spend more on their dog's healthcare than their own? Dog + Healthcare = $$$. So you may find products that help keep a dog strong, supple, happy etc because a caring dog owner will treat their dog as a member of their family, not a pet. It's a niche that keeps giving if you can find products to match.

3. TRENDS. Research on Google Trends for product based keywords and use sites, Facebook groups, your own personal networks, even magazines, newspapers and TV shows to find upcoming product ideas. When it comes to selling Ecom products you either create the curve, join after stores have already made 6 or 7 figures or you miss the curve. For the majority starting

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out, you want to find products that are already selling rather than create the new product curve because starting out, you're already trying to learn so much. Once you've mastered traffic, conversion, sales funnel, research, logistics etc. then absolutely start shifting.

4. PROBLEM/SOLUTION. Everywhere you look there's a problem that needs solving. My kids close doors loudly in my house for example which, when you have young kids waking up at 6am on the weekends (and waking up LATE on weekdays!) as a parent you want them to keep the noise down so you can maximize sleep. Problem: Doors closing shut really loud. Solution: Soft, sticky gel pieces that buffer the noise. Now you can sell a SOLUTION. What many fail to do is find a need or purpose for something, so with the same item, one seller might say that these soft gel pieces are great to buffer things around the home, which is nice for a DIY enthusiast. But if a parent saw an ad with a funny video showing how you could gain extra hours sleep with kids making less noise closing doors - BOOM! And what's better is for example in Facebook it's far easier to find parents than DIY enthusiasts.

3)How to acquire customers?

Acquiring customer is more than thinking about a single channel - it's figuring out where you customers are and how cost effectively you can reach them. Facebook ads is an amazing platform because the sheer reach blasts everything else into insignificance. In fact the nearest competitive advertising channel is TV in terms of reach and impact when you think how you can literally dump products and services in front of someone that isn't in buying mode. However not everyone needs to start with Facebook. In fact I remember speaking to the founder of the Shore Project, a watch brand exclusively scaling through Instagram and Influencer Marketing, at how he didn't even care about Facebook at the time. Sure he probably left money on the table but they had so much success on Instagram at the time he went all in. Others have started making serious money with Snapchat - sure it may not have the volume of Facebook but it's also way more untapped which allows for first mover's advantage.

Now in terms of audience targeting and creative I always start with my avatars - splitting their functional and emotion needs against my product or service to build a picture to how we'll evoke emotion into the sale. Just like selling those gel pieces to parents to solve a real problem will make it easier to find the audience and build creatives. Building and continuing reviewing

your avatars will ensure your campaigns focus on your target customer, their needs, desires and outcomes.

4)How to maximize LTV?

When building out a Facebook ads account I used my 4 Funnel System which is split by new customers (COLD - prospects, WARM - engagers, HOT - site visitors) and existing customers. As far as building life-time value goes, it starts with the type of ads I'm running at the top of my funnel (COLD). Here's an analogy for you: The reason why so many fail at Ecom is because they're trying to jump in bed with their 'prospect' on the first date; a one-night stand. This is great, if your goal is the one off 'interaction'. However, it's unlikely the best way to build a long term relationship with that person. The same works in business. If your ads are focused on discounts, limited stock, buy now etc. etc. and you're desperate for that sale at all costs, then chances are your customer lifetime value will suffer. If however you build the avatar from the top of funnel and build rapport through your funnel to conversion you'll give them a reason to buy again with you. Then running offers to them will flow much easier, whether you're doing this immediately after purchase in the checkout, or via email, messenger or ads post purchase. Also think about whether there is a natural pattern for repurchase - I ran a post purchase campaign for a candle selling website, and we simply retargeted everyone 30-180 days after their last purchase with the latest releases (created monthly), knowing that on average (via customer research) the candles lasted 30-60 days. The results were 40X Return on Ad Spend - that's $40 back for every $1 spent on existing customers!

5)Factors for your success?

The single biggest factor in my success in Ecom is putting myself in the shoes of the customer and building the bridge between the products and what problem I'm solving, or what new opportunity I'm creating. Everything else is strategy and tactics but this is the underlying factor. In fact, I call it Brand-driven, Performance Marketing. It's the new frontier for how the usually analytical performance marketer needs to take a leaf out of the brand marketer's playbook, to focus more on the consumer experience in building fast growth engines that performance marketers are so good at.

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6)Advice for newbies?

The advice I give to all Ecom newbies is this: Choose between learning media buying or learning ecom store management. Doing both together is extremely hard. I love that affiliate networks cater better for Ecom affiliates by building product offers with high scale and opening it up for media buyers. It means media buyers learn how to market for Ecom without worrying about the store management, product fulfillment, customer services and more.

Dim Niko ('dimniko' on STM), Director of DimNiko.com

Website: DimNiko.com, Dim's FB Page

1)Self-intro

Hey guys! I'm Dim Niko. I've been in the ecom game for a couple of years now, building both my own brands, and brands for my clients at our agency, EPOCH. I recently stepped down from my position as CMO at Ape Athletics (an online fitness apparel company), and have now shifted my focus into scaling our new hair extension brand. Amongst all this, I love speaking about the ground-breaking strategies we use to scale our own and our client's companies at major industry events like Affiliate World, iStack Training's FB & Ecom Mastery Live, Digital Marketer's Australia (Home soil!), and a bunch more. This year, we're also running our own first event, an eCommerce Mastermind in South Africa, bringing some of the greatest marketers from around the world to speak, which will be an absolute blast!

2)How to choose niche + products?

For me, ecommerce has become about building a massive brand – an asset that holds its own inherent value, with brand equity, inventory, marketing assets, etc. It's no longer a game of dropshipping hype products to make quick, unsustainable cash, so I may not be the best person to talk to about finding a "winning product".

However, if you do want to build a brand and real business, there are a couple of characteristics, or 'boxes' I like to check when delving into new products and markets.

These include:

1. Market behaviour: I like to work in markets where buyers are often fanatic. That way we can sell without having to use the old school tactics like fake urgency or sell based on hype. One such industry is the beauty industry. Many females spend like crazy in this space, and to sweeten it further, many beauty products are perishable (i.e. makeup), so people need to buy again and again, maximizing the LTV and supporting a profitable back end.

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2. Market scale: I like to work in huge markets. These often come with competition, which should not be a deterrent, but rather an indication of market potential and that there is, in fact, money to be made. Again, the beauty industry is a good example of this, along with fitness. If you can fight the competition and come out on top, these markets are bottomless money pits.

3. The final, and arguably the most important characteristic, is that we look for products that solve a clearly defined problem. These products, when compared to discretionary products like clothing, are far easier to sell with paid traffic, particularly when implementing interruption platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat or Pinterest (as opposed to intent based platforms like Google Search).

3)How to acquire customers?

When it comes to acquiring customers, the number one piece of advice would be to acquire at break even. If you are making your first sale and are profiting from it, you are not marketing at maximum potential.

Instead, the profit should be made on the backend, from the second purchase onwards. This is done with mediums such as email marketing, paid retargeting for cross sells, etc.

By doing this, you're able to invest a lot more into the top of funnel, and in scale. This is the fastest way to grow to true scale, and is the mindset you have to shift to if you want to grow to $1m/month.

Practical advice I would give, however, is to before looking to the 'hottest' channel to acquire customers right now, rather understand the fundamentals of marketing and buyer behaviour, so that your marketing withstands the platform changes, increasing advertising costs, and any other changes that occur in the extremely dynamic platform that is marketing.

But because I know you guys are just itching for the 'answer' when it comes to new platforms and where to look – I think Snapchat and Pinterest will be big ones for ecom in 2019. Particularly Snapchat as the platform continues to mature.

4)How to maximize LTV?

There are two sides to this question, the latter being often overlooked. Firstly, there are plenty of technical tools and strategies you can use to increase LTV. I'm going to skim over this, because in the concept of scale and building huge companies, it's the basics, and you can Google it. It includes things such as email marketing, cross-selling with retargeting, messenger, etc.
The more important part is the community, brand, and product. There is no element more valuable than having an incredible product, and building community around it.

More so than these technical strategies, the number one thing that will keep people coming back is having a truly great product, that has customers coming back for more with an insatiable thirst.

Brand can be built in a number of ways, and with a number of tools – and it's a discussion that I could write a thesis on. However, one strategy to implement today would be incentivized user generated content.
Use "Yotpo" to collect customer reviews. Incentivize the collection process by offering a free goodie or cheap product to anyone who posts a video review and tags your brand.   This will achieve a number of outcomes:

1. You will have user generated content to use in your ads (a truckload of it).
2. You will have a ripple effect amongst social media. Every customer you acquire will post in order to receive their goodie, and your reach will be extended exponentially – for every customer you acquire with Facebook, you could make 2-3 extra organic sales from their post – essentially tripling your ROAS.
3. You are building community on social media.
4. You will have a truckload of testimonials for your sales page which will also increase conversion rate and ROAS.

Other things you can do to build brand is use PR to be featured in major media publications, utilize facebook groups and communities, and constantly post on socials and email your list to foster your existing customer base, so when you have future product launches or offers, you have a raving customer base that will re-order, increasing their customer LTV and skyrocketing your profits as you circumvent acquisition costs while making these sales.

5)Factors for your success?

I think the primary factor I would attribute my success to is seeking out and spending time with people who have already far exceeded the level of success I hope to achieve.

Simply being around these people, and often not even really talking about the specific marketing tactics and strategies we're using, has caused a huge shift in mindset for me.   It is through these relationships that I have learned most of the highest level marketing strategies (stuff you can't find in courses), but more importantly, have grown to aspire to achieve greatness, and view building huge businesses in much the same way I looked at making 100k/year back when I first started. Now I dream of building a $100m ecom brand, and have the network and support base to do exactly that.

6)Advice for newbies?

To best illustrate my point here, I'll use the analogy of video games.

Business, and specifically ecommerce, is the complete reverse of playing video games. When gaming, in the beginning it is very easy to level up and score points, and as you progress, it becomes harder and harder, until you finally challenge the boss – which is the most difficult part of the game.

Business is a reversal of this. If you are reading this, congratulations – you've already overcome the greatest challenge of getting started. In the beginning, wins are scarce, and ecommerce is extremely difficult to succeed in. It's hard to create a converting store that's profitable, but once you've achieved this, it gets easier and easier. So stick it out, because it only gets easier to make more money as you progress as a marketer.

In terms of technical advice, I'd recommend you get very clear on your LTV numbers, and push your marketing as far as possible, to the point that you're just breaking even on the customer acquisition, so that you're acquiring customers and growing as quickly as possible.

Subsequent to this, do not underestimate the value of brand. Not only does branding turn an ecom store into a valuable asset that can be acquired, but it also increases returns and overall ad performance (if done right), allowing you to grow faster.

If you guys want to connect, I'd love for you all to reach out and have a chat – message me on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/dimitri.nikolakakis. Can't wait to catch up and hear your stories!

'Pekadis' (on STM), Ecom Expert, STM Moderator

Link: Pekadis' STM Profile Page

1)Self-intro

[Pekadis prefers to remain anonymous.]

2)How to choose niche + products?

I'd go for a niche where there's competition. Not the cut-throat kind, but enough competition to indicate a significant market.

It's so much easier to find a winning proposition in an existing market, than to develop a market yourself.

Do the research before you start, so you know where the pain points are, who the competition is and where they position themselves.
Then, focus on products that generate the main sales volume.
For those products, the ideal ones are:

- the ones that can have your own brand
- are easy to ship
- have a decent amount of profit and percentage of profit
- are easy to use (do not require a lot of instructions)
- do not generate tons of returns
- come in one or a few versions only
- can be sourced reliably

3)How to acquire customers?

Every channel can work. But you have to find out which channels work for your business and your customers. Just because something works for the competition, or a completely unrelated business, doesn't mean it will for you.

So test. Then scale what works and drop what doesn't work.

A non-paid way to get customers is word of mouth. And the best way to generate word-of-mouth sales is to deliver on your promises.

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4)How to maximize LTV?

Of course, you can implement funnels. And you should.

But again, keep your customers happy and your name top of mind are the best investments.

It's hard to track the results, so I only have anecdotal evidence to support this statement.

5)Factors for your success?

I focus on the customer in the sense that by their buying decision, they tell you what works and what doesn't. So if they decided to buy X instead of Y (which might be a product I prefer), we focus on X.

In that sense, we are constantly testing and at the same time changing the business and how we work. That's not to say we forget the basics and start doing something new, but we do evolve.

I always say that if we are still doing the same thing next year as we're doing this year, I have failed. The same goes for personal development.

6)Advice for newbies?

Do your research, but once that's done, focus on execution. Get the domain, set up the site, set up campaigns, get feedback.

You'll only learn from real-world feedback. Which is whether you make the sale or not.

So focus on getting sales, so you know what works.

And don't limit yourself to Facebook. Try organic, Youtube, Adwords, Instagram, every channel. Try Amazon, Ebay or any other platform you might have in your country. Try every place sales can be had.

And don't forget about different geographical markets either. Especially when you are in a relatively small country or niche, going international can seriously increase business volume.

Ace Reddy, Ecommerce Expert

Website: EliteEcomMastermind.com

1)Self-intro

I'm an Ecom expert. My team and I have been making a killing selling T-shirts and other simple products. I have over 3000 students in over 119 countries, and have helped over 100 people to build their businesses online.

2)How to choose niche + products?

Tips on Choosing the Perfect Niche:

-Pick a niche you're passionate about.

Don't pick the "Golf" niche if you're really not a Golfer.

When you pick a niche you're passionate about - you are going to know how people in that niche think, their slang, etc. and that's going to help you really zero-in on the market.

-Don't pick a super narrow or broad niche.

You don't want to pick a niche like "Vegans living in Nevada".

That's too narrow and you're going to run out of new product ideas very soon!

Instead you can pick a medium-sized niche like - "Health and Nutrition" instead of "Vegans living in Nevada".

If a slightly narrow niche has a pretty large cult following - you can pick it! (Example: Vegans.)

But in most cases - I recommend somewhere in the middle.

-Here's a list of a few niches:

Guns, Family, Travel, Gaming, Fitness, Nutrition and Health, Cute Stuff, Entrepreneurial, Animals, Fantasy and Mythology, Occupations, Special Skills, Food, Literature.

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-Stick with a niche once you choose it. One of the biggest problems I find newbies making is moving from niche to niche very quickly. It's similar to how people in the CPA industry would move from vertical to vertical.

Remember that the grass is never greener on the other side, its green where you water it - the rest is just an illusion.

Pick a niche and crush it! Don't move from niche to niche constantly.

-Research Your Audience. Knowing your audience is a very important part of the business. There's this concept I termed the "Magic Eye".

The Magic Eye is this fingertip feel you have - where you know what product would convert and what wouldn't for your audience.

You can only get to that level if you're an absolute master at reading your audience.

Know the hidden slang people use, what they like and what they resent, etc. so your message can also be consistent!

You can research your audience by joining forums related to your niche and reading through the threads.

How to Find Winning Dropshipping Products:

-Products that solve a problem.
-Products that attract a passionate audience.
-Products that are not available everywhere = people shouldn't have the
  ability to walk down the street and buy whatever you're selling.
-Something that has viral + buying effect = a product needs to be good
  enough to go viral and good enough to be bought and used.
  Some tshirts with super funny memes won't convert but will go viral.
  It's a delicate balance.
-Something that is usable. You don't want to promote non-practical products, you want to promote products that people can actually use!
-Something that is unique. A unique product will convert as long as it meets the other criteria too.

You don't want to promote a blue tshirt like this one:

Anyone can get that from the street corner.

Instead, you want to be promoting products like this (we did close to $146k in sales with this one):

3)How to acquire customers?

Me personally - I love facebook ads!

Influencers, Google shopping etc. are good platforms to run ads on, but the majority of our money comes from facebook ads!

I can't go into specifics because Facebook changes every day, but here are a few tips:

-Never touch a working adset! If you have an adset with a strong ROAS, don't go in and try to change the budget, creatives, etc. Let it run as-is!
If you want to edit something, duplicate the campaign and make changes to that.
-Test as many products, angles and creatives as you can!
Many people try to master the art of Facebook ads before they've even run a single ad.

You can go through as many courses as you want but the best way to learn is through experience.

Get into the trenches and start experimenting with things!

That's the easiest and the best way to learn and master Facebook ads!

-Always start the ads during the timeframe of 12-3am, that's when FB really tries to plan out the next day!

-Be as data-centric as possible!
One of the biggest blunders I see people making in this industry is getting sucked in by their emotions.

They have this strong feeling that their design/product converts and they ignore the numbers!

Do not do this – it's dangerous to your business.
Trust numbers, not emotions.

-And also - track every number!

4)How to maximize LTV?

-Strategic upsells.

When we were selling the mug, we tried a few different upsells.
The one product and page that converted the best was this:

So the upsell angle we used for this was:

"You bought "X" product so we'll ship you "Y" too for just $30 more!"
-Threshold shipping / conditional shipping.
Offer free-shipping if your customers spend $75 or more and actually give them a reason to buy more products from your store!
That's going to bump up your AOV.

-Use funnels to scale your winning products!
When you have a winning product, use funnels to scale!
Funnels generally bump up your conversion rate and increase your AOV!
You can use Clickfunnels, funnelbuildr, etc. to build funnels and scale your products!

5)Factors for your success?

Just being super persistent honestly!

Testing a lot of stuff, lot of methods, watching a lot of courses and implementing, etc.

I would say that the one most important thing really is the way you think and look at things!

If you have the ability to think creatively, come up with great ways to solve your problems, and test a ton of things - you'll be able to crush it too!
At the end of the day, you are going to face disappointments....

You are going to have ads that don't convert very well...

But - you got to keep waking up the next day and trying something else out!

And this would be my answer to question #6 too.

6)Advice for newbies?

[As above.]

Jenia "Jay" Yakovlev ('JayLev' on STM), Entrepreneur & Digital Marketing Expert

Website: **JayLev.digital**

1)Self-intro

I started my "internet money making" journey in 2016 when I left my 9-5 job to immerse myself in ecommerce. After failing forward for a while I managed to lift 4 stores that were doing amazing. Consequently I started helping people who were struggling with their stores across the major ecommerce communities at that time, and as a big surprise to me I managed to help dozens of people generate their first revenue goals in their stores and having long term success smashing the 6 and 7 digit barriers. The positive responses from the ecommerce community pushed me further to make a thorough course on how to have a successful ecommerce store which helped even more people reach their revenue targets in their stores.

During that time a connection was created with Affiliate World Conferences which eventually gave me the opportunity to go on stage at AWA17 to give a speech about how to lift a profitable store. During that time I opened my own digital marketing agency and I started taking clients across the globe, ranging from restaurants to large corporations.

As of 2019 I have a successful digital marketing agency in 2 different languages, a partnered digital marketing agency geared towards German speakers, a co-owned affiliate network, a call center and countless short term projects. Currently my team and I handle a large variety of advertising channels, advertising both "white-hat" and "black-hat" offers. It's a big honor for me to have a chance to share my knowledge and experience with the STM community as I hope to help as many people as I can.

2)How to choose niche + products?

Before actively advertising a new project or a new niche I have to consider 2 things: First thing - how saturated the niche is with competition, and the second thing - how much ROAS I can squeeze out of that product/niche.

Competition is a healthy thing, however if the whole "offer" is already flooding

the desired audience through other affiliates, breaking through the saturation barrier for a beginner will be an issue.

Advertising is like bidding in an auction, if there are too many "high bidders" participating in the auction, chances for low acquisition prices shouldn't be expected.

As for the ROAS measurement, take your time to find an offer or a niche where you can get the most out of your ad spend & other expenses. If you are a "lone ranger" and the only expense you have is ad spend then low-paying offers can be ok for you, but if you have a team, apps and other stuff you are spending your money on to make your campaigns perfect, then having low return on your efforts is out of the question.

Promoting a trending ecommerce product is an example of a low paying product/offer. For example, there is this amazing drone offer where the price tag on it is $45 and you get a 30% affiliate commission - which means that if you sell one you get $15. Out of those $15 you have to pay for ads, apps, team, etc., so the profit that makes it to your pocket is pretty small for such an amount of effort & headache. It will be hard to get a good ROAS in this example because if it is a trendy drone that everyone is selling - then you have a ton of competition, and all of that for a few dollars as profit.

If it's done properly on a large scale you can make a lot of money.

The offers you should look for are those with the highest return possible on your spending & effort. As an example, you can take on a real-estate project where you generate leads that would be interested in buying a property, and per each sale you get, let's say even 0.5% of the property's price. In other words you can generate leads & of course you have to make sure they convert later on to give a hefty commission on the property's sale - on a $100,000 property you can get anywhere between $500 - $1,500 commission. This way you have more room for improving and scaling.

3)How to acquire customers?

Oh boy what a subject... I cannot just touch on some topics as there's a whole science behind a well-oiled client acquisition system.

To even start running any ads you MUST read the following books:

-Scientific Advertising by Claude Hopkins.
-Cashvertising by Drew Eric Whitman.

My suggestion - don't even bother running any ads on any platform before you read those 2 books.

Let's say you didn't read the books I suggested - if I could give you some words of advice on how to acquire clients/leads in any niche, I would suggest the following:

1. Don't be yet another copy paste affiliate.

There is this obsolete & completely broken saying that goes around our industry - "oh just take what works, take that landing page that works, that ad copy/design, and copy paste and run traffic and sure as magic it will convert just like it's converting for that guy, and it will make you rich as well." This is just the biggest bowl of nonsense that anyone can give you.

Why? Very simple - let's say that there is this amazing landing page + set of ads that are converting for the original creator, and they spent huge amounts of money advertising it to a particular audience that might be interested. Let's say 5 "wise guys" just copy paste/swagger jack everything and they too promote it to the same interested audience that the original creator targeted.

Now instead of 1 guy enjoying the whole "pie", 6 people have to share the same pie resulting in less money for everyone. After a while 6 "crazy" scaled campaigns from different people targeting the same audience saturate that audience very quickly (remember the previous point?)

Now that the targeted audience either accepted the offer or declined it and pretty sure they are sick and tired of seeing the same ads and the same landing page already for the hundredth time, then you copy paste the whole funnel and try promoting it to that audience….what would happen? Ad spend down the drain!

I'm not saying the whole offer is getting saturated, I'm saying what the end customer sees is getting saturated with time, so bringing a new landing page, ad copy and design might result for you in higher ROAS and subsequently ROI.

Of course take your inspiration from what works! Don't re-invent the wheel, but don't disgustingly copy paste everything "as-is".

2. Don't use cheap & free creatives for your advertising.

I can't believe I have to actually touch on this point as it seems as logical as science. However to this day I witness advertisers and affiliates using cheap creatives for their ads (which eventually convert half-$##).

As a minimum - familiarize yourself with Canva as you can create converting creatives there (better-converting than some free low-res pictures roaming on Google). Better yet - invest in a designer that will make the creatives professionally which will result in higher conversion rates.

Don't say - oh, I will just start with these crappy images and once I make money I will invest in a good design - this approach is broken and will only result in the opposite.   You should invest upfront in stunning creatives to make better returns on your ads once you launch them.

3. Ad copy = conversion rate. Period.

If you are using Facebook to promote your offers (no matter blackhat/whitehat), don't go too low on the copy! There are some platforms that don't offer an option for too much copy, or for any copy at all, however on a platform like Facebook you have to put copy in your ad. Don't make it ridiculously short because you heard the 10% rule or the 20% secret or whatever other B.S. & vague opinion you've heard about copy.

The cold prospect that is facing your ad has to make the most vital decision - clicking the link and proceeding down your funnel, or not. If logically they don't understand what you're advertising, then it will be hard to make them click your link and go further down your funnel.

A catchy slogan alone won't convince them, nor anything too vague and general with no call to action. One of the worst examples I can give you is this: Let's just say you chose a forex offer and your ad consists of one sentence asking "do you want to make money?" with a link and a creative attached. Even if the ad viewer wanted to make more money, they wouldn't understand what they need to do next, why they should even click on that shady link, or what would happen after they clicked that link.

Do you see the pattern of the un-answered questions in a short copy that makes no sense? Even if it makes perfect sense to you, it's not guaranteed that your audience will see that as well. Don't make the copy too long and boring but don't skimp on words that are necessary to explain why they need to click on your link.

If we can use the previous example (the forex offer), instead of asking "Do you want to make money?" you can write something like: "Do you want to make money trading Forex? Our highly-advanced robot generated over $XXXX using Forex platforms over a period of XX weeks! Sign up now and start using our robot." Do you see the difference?

Now here's a special bonus for you because you read up to this point.

Here is my copy formula that I use to drive 3 times the standard conversion rate in any industry/offer I promote, and it can be applied to anything: Ad copy, flyer copy, landing page copy, whatever copy...as long as you're looking to convert.
The formula is very basic. You have to address the following in the specific order:

1. Call your audience out. You can call it the headline. This is the first sentence you should write. Address your audience as if they were sitting in a bar and they were about to leave and you have to shout this headline to intrigue them enough to stop them. (Examples to follow below.)
2. Define their problem / desire better than they could. This creates a sense of rapport and shows your "expertise" in what they desire / have pain about. It basically answers the question that will pop in their mind, such as "who the hell is this, why should I even keep reading and do they really know what I need?"
3. Explain how your offer can be the easy and attainable solution to their problem / desire. The tricky part is to make your offer sound like it's the perfect remedy and they can use it without too much headache, time spent, and any other factors that they can get lazy about and decline your offer.
4. Proof that what you are offering might work for them. Specify how many people are already using your offer to see results, how many years the offer has existed, how many experts were involved in making this offer, any testimonials you can get from past consumers, etc.
5. A call to action. Some advertisers & affiliates think that it's pretty logical to write copy without a clear call to action, as they think that the people

who read it "are smart enough to click", but they are NOT! You must specify exactly what you want from the prospect as a "closing section" to your ad copy, without a wishy-washy all-over-the-place call to action, for example "sign up now and you may be able to get one of the 100 spots we offer for free for a limited time to a specific amount of people." An example of a clear call to action: "Click on the link below to sign up!" See the difference?

Let's use our "Forex offer" example to illustrate all the points above.

1. Are you tired of not earning enough? // Do you want to discover the possibility of earning more money through Forex trading? // Are you sick and tired of your 9-5 routine? Forex trading may be the key to your liberation.
2. Finding the right investment opportunity may be a tricky task nowadays, as there are so many different methods and opinions to choose from. // The majority of the population nowadays is stuck in the never ending 9-5 loop with no clear path to financial freedom. // Finding the right investment opportunity to get you out of the 9-5 loop seems like an impossible task for someone who's not familiar with the financial markets.
3. Our Forex robot was designed specifically for those individuals who don't want to get the headache and waste their time on reading and learning the financial markets, our robot can generate Forex income on autopilot. // To be successful (and profitable) in Forex trading you must study the markets and monitor the fluctuations constantly, worry not as our sophisticated Forex robot will do all that hard work for you while maintaining a positive ROI on most of your trades without your involvement!
4. Our robot has already generated well over $XXXXXX in the past XXX days/months/years. // Our robot has generated outstanding results for more than XXX people in the past XXX years/months/weeks/days!! // It took us XX professionals to put this robot together, resulting in XXX whopping hours invested.
5. Do you want to get out of the 9-5 loop? Sign up now to receive immediate access to our robot! // Sign up now and receive immediate access to our Forex robot! // Don't waste your time, sign up now and start using our robot!

The "//" is there to divide between the options you can choose for each step. As you can notice, this copy is not too long and boring and it does cover some of the logical hesitations about clicking the link that the cold prospect may have. For landing pages you can use each point as a standalone paragraph with a headline for each point. This formula works like magic for me and others who use it.

Here's another bonus for you (thank you for reading this far):

Here are some "conversion" triggers that your prospect would probably ask themselves while considering your offer:

1. Are there real people who truly care about me behind this offer? Is the offer too cold and discorded for people? Does someone really care about my problem/desire? (And any other questions regarding the "real people" behind your offer.)
2. Is there any authority behind the advertised offer? Is it well known? Established and regulated by large corporate entities? Is it publicly viral that other people may recognize it? Is there a possibility that someone I know has seen this offer?   (And any other question that may arise about the authenticity of your offer.)
3. Do they (the people behind the offer) really know my problem/desire? Can they relate to me? Can they define my situation better than I can? (Questions on whether you are an expert in their problem and whether they could rely on you to solve it.)
4. Do I have to take action now? What will happen if I close the offer mid-way? Are there any limited spots or is the offer time-limited? (Here comes the scarcity. Don't overkill the offer with scarcity everywhere, but you have to show that someone else more appreciative of the offer can take their spot if they don't act quickly.)
5. Will I see the desired end result by taking the offer? Will it last or will I have to find another solution later? What are the exact benefits of participating in the offer?   (Basically the question is whether the offer will solve their entire issue, or will they have to keep looking for another solution afterwards.)

On the landing page you should cover as many of these points as possible, but don't overdo it in short ad-copy - 1-2 conversion triggers would be more than enough. Trying to cram everything into a short copy may yield bad results! Combine the 5 point sequence with the 5 conversion triggers and see the wonders it will do for your conversion rates.

As a summary - you have to make the copy clear and attractive enough that a 6 year old and a 99 year old person will understand clearly what is required from them. Don't overcomplicate the logic, don't tangle the point just to shove another "scarcity" trigger. What seems completely logical and clear to you, your audience may not understand.

4. Targeting IS important. Audience size DOES matter.

When it comes to targeting, on any platform (except from some broad-targeting native/display platforms), its super important to understand a few things before actually conducting your keywords/interests research.
For newbies, targeting is the act of choosing your desired audience on the advertising platform that will most likely convert for your offer (or convert better compared to without targeting). With the right choices in your targeting you may reach the ideal consumers for your offer which may result in higherconversion rates, rather than if you would just throw your ads on a broad audience.

For non-newbies, you can just advertise broadly with no specific targeting to get the first conversions you need for your campaigns to pick up the pace, then later on the conversion pixel will do all the hard work and bring you people who will convert.   However, I would still recommend using detailed targeting in the beginning (prior to generating audiences from your website's traffic) as the data will contain higher quality conversions than just broad targeting.

With that said, there are some key factors you have to consider when conducting the initial targeting research.

Age:
My suggestion would be to target 24~60 year olds as most likely they have money in their pockets to spend on your offer and have more serious intentions, compared to 18 year olds. Don't think to yourself "oh but an 18 year old can afford it as well!" or "I saw many 18 year olds acquire/sign up for similar things", the question here is whether your targeted audience as a whole has the money and is serious about their intentions to buy, which you'd rarely see in people under the age of 21 (on the internet), as most kids are there to engage & ask a ton of questions, just to later on decline the offer.

You don't want to spend your advertising budget showing your ads to tire-kickers, even if there is a slight chance that one of them may buy something. You want an audience that takes your offer seriously, has the money to acquire it and won't waste your time.

Keywords/interests research:
When you are conducting your targeting research, make sure to focus on interests/keywords that are specifically about your ideal audience and not just

related to it. To explain this point let's take for example the golf niche and let's just say you want to promote e-commerce products to golfers. If you just put "golf" or "tiger woods" in your targeting then you will probably hit A LOT of people who are not even half passionate about golf. How's that? Very simple. Tiger Woods (same for Michael Jordan and Mike Tyson) is a famous figure that a lot of people have an interest in, not necessarily just golfers. So by just targeting Tiger Woods you might hit a lot of people who will decline your offer.

The remedy for that is asking yourself "what are the keywords/interests only die hard golfers would be interested in?" and do the research accordingly. What are the gatherings only golfers go to? What are the magazines that only golfers would read?   What are the brands that only golfers are using? Etc.

Instead of targeting "golf" or "Tiger Woods" - interests that may bring you people who are slightly interested in golf, try targeting GolfWRX.com (a big, golfers-only magazine) as only golfers will like/follow it, as it will be hard reaching in this interest someone who is not passionate about golf. Get the point?

To summarize - target the most passionate interests that move your desired audience and target only those. Thinking "oh but someone may go for my offer from a broad audience" is not entirely wrong, but if you want to spare your advertising money while gathering the highest quality data you possibly can, make the effort and go that extra mile in finding the most passionate keywords/interests for your audience, so that you can convert them with less convincing than with a broad audience.

Audience size:
Having a passionate, targeted audience is crucial for the initial (and continuous) success of your campaigns. However, an audience that is too small may kill your campaigns. You have to understand that eventually the platform that you use to advertise your campaigns (if it's not broken and obsolete) will use its A.I. to find people that are most likely to convert for your offer, and will scan the whole targeted audience for that specific segment. If your audience is too small, it will be hard for the A.I. to roam freely and bring those conversions you need, which subsequently can result in a ridiculously high cost per conversion. Often times if the audience size is too small the ads won't run as the platform will give up on the audience size.

If you have a small audience and the ads are performing well, you have little room for scaling, as you can saturate your audience with the offer way before

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you have gathered enough data to create lookalike audiences effective enough to convert. Let's say you have 85,000 people in your audience and you have gathered only 80 conversions from that audience, and now campaign performance is declining. 80 conversions may not be enough to create a strong enough audience to rely your further operation on. (Of course you can launch more ads, but why suffer all the headache in the first place?).

Jay's Rules of Thumb:
-An audience with 100K people and below - tricky.
-An audience with 100K-500K people - enough to start in hopes of getting enough conversions for LAA.
-An audience with 500K people and above (up to tens of millions, depends on what I promote) - perfect for everything.

Summary on targeting tips:
Aim for 24+ years of age, choose the most passionate interests/keywords that only die-hard fans of your niche would follow, and don't go below 100K people in your targeted audience size.

5. Every penny you spend on advertising starts with multivariate testing. No excuses.

Every campaign MUST start with multivariate (or at least A/B) testing. NEVER launch only one ad which contains one creative + copy on one audience, ever.

Why? How do you know that your choice is the best-converting one? Always check multiple combinations between as many variables as possible. As a bare minimum if you are just beginning, perform A/B testing on 2 creatives against 2 copies on one audience for a full 48 hours.

Thank you for taking the time to read all of this so far, for your effort, I want to give you my "bare-minimum" testing method that has never failed me. In this example I will use Facebook as our advertising platform. I will detail it in a sequence that if you follow, your scaled campaigns will perform like conversion beasts.

For this test we need 3 different copies (touching the same subject), 3 different creatives (again, touching the same subject), 1 targeted audience (as I detailed above), $10 per variation per 1 day of testing, and we will conduct the tests over a period of 3 days. The main objective of the test is to determine which 30% of

the bunch of ads performs the best, to pause the remaining 70% and scale the winners.

During this test we are looking for ads that bring you the most conversions (opt-ins/purchases/add-to-carts/ etc..), the highest click-through-rate and the cheapest cost-per-click (high CTR and low CPC go hand in hand, but sometimes when you have ads with almost similar metrics, you have to check both to make better decisions on which ads to pause).

Copy:
When I prepare the 3 copies for the first multivariate test, I always try to hit the targeted audience with 3 different approaches that talk about the same topic. Let me explain further.

Copy 1 - Bad Emotional Copy

The first copy I write is what I call "bad emotional copy", which is designed to stir the targeted audience's emotions by focusing on their pain, or lack of desired outcome. Basically I detail what bothers them in a visceral way (of course without offending anyone) so they will be emotionally moved to take action to remove that pain (or lack of what they desire).

Let's go back to our Forex offer example to show you what I mean:

"Are you sick and tired of the never-ending 9-5 loop? Sign up for our Forex robot and start creating the financial freedom you desire."

(I know that the length of this copy contradicts what I wrote above, it's for the purpose of giving you an example.)

As you can see, I talk about the pain of being locked in a "day-job-of-doom" with no freedom as the remedy that I suggest to them is the Forex offer I promote.

Copy 2 - Good Emotional Copy

The second copy I write is "good emotional copy" which is designed to excite the audience to make them feel how amazing it would be if they took the offer, without pointing out the lack that they feel currently. Some people plainly hate bad emotional copies and won't click. They don't experience a deep feeling

of pain or lack of some desired outcome, but rather just want to expand their potential. By invoking negative emotions with "bad emotional copy", you can lose a lot of these potential clients.

Example: "Would you like to expand your financial capabilities? Our Forex robot can maximize the results of your investing portfolio to reach its peak potential. Sign up now."

Copy 3 - Neutral Copy (or what I call - "statistical" copy)

The third copy I come up with is emotionally-neutral copy. This type of copy has to speak about facts, statistics, public opinions, articles, etc., to be as emotionally detached as possible so the cold prospect won't feel either bad or good emotions.

For example: "Did you know that according to [some magazine], each year XX% of Forex traders are becoming financially free?. Sign up now to our Forex robot and you may be included in those statistics as well."

Now that you see the 3 different copies that can attract different types of people to your offer, let's cover the creatives part really quick.

Creatives:
To conduct the test I use 3 square images (1080*1080 pixels). I use square images the size of an Instagram post rather than rectangular images to cover as much visible "real estate" on the mobile screen for the cold prospect to view.

Image 1 - Bad Emotional Image

As discussed in the copy section above, the first image should stir some negative emotion. Use a real life picture (not animation/3d) with a slogan that describes the lack/pain. The visuals of the creatives must match the bad feeling vibes of the slogan.

Tip: It might seem strange to attach a good emotional copy to a bad emotional image.   However, sometimes strange variations between a "good emotional copy" and a "bad emotional creative" can bring the highest conversion rate. Go figure (this is why this test is conducted!).

Using the forex example from before: You can place a stock photo of a guy clutching his head while sitting in his office with a slogan that says "had enough of the 9-5?"

Image 2 - Good Emotional Image

As the title says, in this image we want to stir some warm feelings in the viewer. Use a real life picture here as well (not animation/3d) with a positive slogan.

For example you can place a stock photo of a cheerful businessman in a suit with a slogan that says "Unlock your financial potential" (again, using the forex example before).

Image 3 - Cartoon/3D Image with a neutral approach

Strange enough, cartoonish creatives convert like crazy, however they are not always appropriate. In the 3rd creative selection we want to test if the cartoonish/3d image will fit the desired audience with the copies written above. This image has to be emotionally neutral, and have no slogans but instead a "dry" call to action.

For example you can use a cartoonish image of Forex charts or an analyst that scans the charts with a written call to action on the top or bottom of the image that says "Sign up now".

Now that we have 3 different copies and 3 different creatives promoting the same agenda, we can schedule our campaigns.

The campaign objective I suggest starting with is a "Clicks" campaign (CTW, clicks to website, whatever name you are familiar with, as long as it's not a conversion campaign). We are not launching a conversions campaign straight away simply because there is no data yet to rely on to launch this type of campaign. Of course some veterans might argue with my statement, however this is the most "by-the-book" approach. Because you don't have the data to rely on, you look at what brings you the best results in a clicks campaign - ads that work well on such a campaign objective (meaning bring you conversions!) indicates that they are good convertors. This is exactly what you want to find out with this test.

It's VERY IMPORTANT to schedule the campaigns for 00:00 (or 12:00AM) the next

day as you want the daily budget to be spent equally over the whole 24 hour cycle. If you launch your test ads at 6 pm, Facebook will rush to spend your money in the next 6 hours and you won't have a balanced picture of the data you gather over the 3 day testing period.

The daily budget you have to set is $10 per adset. I create 1 campaign with 9 different adsets, with 1 ad per ad set – NOT 1 campaign with 9 ads in 1 adset – as we don't want Facebook to determine which variant performs the best, this is why we isolate the variants from each other to have a fair test without Facebook's A.I. meddling with it.

You want to set the testing period for 3 full days. We are throwing the test at a 100K+ (500K+ preferably) audience that you have gathered through your targeting research.

DON'T touch the placements (veterans might argue here as well but this is what works best for me.)

IMPORTANT: Make sure Facebook's conversion pixel is placed on your funnel/landing page, and that each page is segmented with a different conversion!

Eventually you will spend close to $270 during the 3 day period to test which ads perform the best.

Here is a cheat-sheet of the variations that you need to test. I put each variation as the ad-set name to have a clear picture on what performs best (the ad name should be the same):

Copy 1 | Image 1
Copy 1 | Image 2
Copy 1 | Image 3
Copy 2 | Image 1
Copy 2 | Image 2
Copy 2 | Image 3
Copy 3 | Image 1
Copy 3 | Image 2
Copy 3 | Image 3

Conclusion:
When the 3 testing days are over, you should choose the 30% that have the most conversions, highest CTR and lowest CPC. Pause the rest.

In our example, you should leave 3 best performing ads so pause the other 6.

BONUS (not for beginners):
Duplicate the campaign and change the campaign's objective to "website conversions" and launch the 3 winning ads with the help of Facebook's A.I. Go to the original "Clicks" test campaign, activate the "budget optimization" option at the campaign level for $30 (3 ads for $10 each).

Do the same with the new conversions campaign (i.e. activate budget optimization) after 3 days. Scale accordingly.

6. Conclusion - Stay liquid.

First of all, thank you for reading all of this. If you took notes it's even better. I have put a lot of effort in this section to bring you what works best for me on all of the advertising I run. Make sure you have enough money to support the scaling as it will be a big shame that you have an amazing campaign and you don't have enough liquid cash to feed the advertising platform.

I wish you the best of luck running your campaigns, I hope I spared you a lot of money and headache.

4)How to maximize LTV?

I would say that in order for the customer to stay and keep coming back to buy more, you have to constantly keep them engaged with your brand with relevant and exciting content that's interesting and relevant for them. You have to make them want more of your brand without constantly pushing them to buy anything. Your goal is to turn your first time customers to raging fans of your brand.

First of all, keep the social media of your brand alive and kicking with interesting content. Second, use e-mail marketing not only to push more sales, but also to send them interesting e-mails with tips, ideas, stories, etc. so they will look forward to your next email. Once you have that "raging-fans" customer base, even if you don't push promotions and upsell aggressively, they will be on the lookout for new products from you and jump at the opportunity to purchase them. Definitely use email marketing for sending them more offers to buy more products, however some brands overdo it and lose the effect of having a "raging-fan" client base.

5)Factors for your success?

I would say that the main factors responsible for my success not only in ecomm, but in the digital sphere, are the following:

1. TEST TEST TEST! Everybody says "you have to keep testing to reach your success", that's true, but I went the extra mile by testing many variables against each other to craft and polish the conversion-maximization blueprint for my marketing endeavors.   Some people may tell you to stop at some point but the truth of the matter is you have to test as you progress in your digital career, as seasons change and what's working for you today may not work tomorrow, so don't get too comfortable on what's working now. When you wake up to a drastic decline in your revenue, it may be too stressful and too late to resume testing, and then you'd spend more money on testing to find out something that works again, compared to if you had done the testing when yoru ads were converting well.

2. Spend your money with a smile. Don't go cheap on anything, i.e: hire a designer before you launch the first ads for your offer, don't say "oh once I will make some money then I will invest in a designer". WRONG. You want everything to appear visually amazing before you even launch anything. Get the apps you need and don't look for cheaper but crappy alternatives. Get all the professionals in your team before you are crushed under the pressure from an increasing workload once your offer converts. The inability to handle all the work that comes in through your digital gates may become your downfall. Basically ditch the notion that "I'm not yet profitable so it's ok to have everything half a$$ed before I'm making money". Your competition is already investing in all that and now you want to compete with them with an offer that looks like you have crafted it by yourself in your mom's basement. Make your offer competitive enough and trustworthy enough before you launch it, whatever the costs will be. It will make your offer lift off the ground faster and you will not only recover the invested money but you will be much more profitable compared to if you hadn't made that investment from the beginning.

3. DON'T STOP until you make it work! Something I have noticed a lot during my digital marketing career is how many people have failed because they weren't consistent with their efforts. As soon as something turned out not to be working as predicted, they'd jump on another offer that seems to be easier or more profitable. The neighbor's grass always looks greener when you are in your

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launching stages. Don't go bankrupt from jumping from opportunity to opportunity. EVERYTHING that's worth your while will take time and persistence, you will fail and get stuck a lot, and you will lose your pants if each time it happens you jump to something "simpler" or "more profitable" (in your opinion). Nothing that makes a lot of money is simple or smooth in the beginning. Don't throw your efforts down the drain because you have reached some obstacle. PUSH it until it works – there is always a solution.

6)Advice for newbies?

1. Don't open another jewelry store! Just stay away from watches, general accessories, whatever your potential customer can go to a nearby mall and purchase. Focus on audiences that don't have an abundance of physical products to satisfy their love or passion for in the specific niche and focus on that.

2. Look for unique niches that have demand for physical products that they cannot easily acquire! Then look for products that you can sell to them. If not Aliexpress dropshipped products, you can always go for print on demand.

3. Do POD! A lot of dropshippers dismiss the POD aspect of ecommerce and this way lose a lot of potential clients. POD can differentiate you from others even in the most competitive niches.

4. Don't go for cheap products that people won't really buy. No, they won't buy that ridiculous dog ring just because they have a dog. Make sure that the products you promote are appropriate to use and are not some cheap stuff that you think "it's only $1.5 on AliEx – I can sell it for $15 and make a fortune!" Just…don't.

5. Make sure you can find demand for the products you're considering on promoting, AND it's not overly competitive for you to penetrate that niche. A lot of people invest their time and money on building a store, to later on discover that no matter how much they put on ads nobody would buy their stuff.

Insights From SEO Experts

Brent Dunn, Affiliate and SEO Expert

Website: PPCMode.com

1)Self-intro

My name is Brent Dunn. Some of you may know me from my blog: PPCMode.com - I've been in the internet marketing scene since 2004. Since then I've worked in several large lead generation companies, affiliate networks, etc. Since 2015 affiliate marketing has been my primary income.

2)Easier/harder to rank in Google?

Google is becoming harder in the sense that their organic listings are getting thinner and thinner. They will continue to flood the results with more of their own properties and ads as CTRs continue to decline. Another metric to pay attention to is the rise of voice search. Unlike Google search results through text, voice search has one result.

3)How to choose niches?

I like to find niches where the audience is very passionate and will consume a lot of information in the space. This also makes it a lot easier to acquire links if you create high quality content and don't have the resources to build your own PBN.
A great example of a low competition / high passion niche is "Energy Healing" (freebie for ya).

4)On-page SEO tips?

Don't regurgitate the same crap you see on almost every SEO blog. Make your site as clean and fast as possible. Nothing is worse than trying to find answers and land on a slow or non-user friendly site.

5)Best backlink strategies?

This really depends on the niche, but one of the easiest ways is to actually link

to blogs/sites in your niche when you make content. Then once you publish let them know that you've linked to them. Linking out to other authority sites is a powerful indicator in itself, but also getting your site on the radar of other bloggers / influencers in the space is by far the easiest links I've ever generated.

6)How to avoid Google penalties?

In all honesty I don't even think Google knows the answer to this question. My mindset in SEO is that it's a bonus traffic channel. I've had competently white hat sites where everything was done by the book and got canned. I've also had blatant black hat sites that still rank to this day. With that said, Google is in love with strong brands. The more people that search directly for your site is a huge indicator. The only way to make sure this happens – ironically - is to generate traffic from as many other methods as possible.

Greg Morrison ('GregMorrison' on STM), SEO Expert and Coach

Website: OMGMachines.com

1)Self-intro

I am 34 years old and live in Landenberg PA (right outside Philadelphia area) with my wife, son, step son, and soon to be newborn!

I got my start back in 2006 when I came across The Rich Jerk product. Made money online a lot of different ways back then, did pretty well. Eventually in about 2010-2011 I started really focusing on SEO.

I was able to quickly build an SEO presence after doing SEO for a large drug rehab call center that was nationwide - generating thousands of calls for them and ranking for some of the toughest terms in the market.

That was when Mike Long and David Mills asked me to team up and do OMG Machines. Since then I have mainly continued doing SEO and working with students to help teach them SEO.

2)Easier/harder to rank in Google?

Nothing major has changed in quite a while for ranking sites on Google. It has gotten harder in the sense that it takes longer to rank now.

That is the major issue that most people have with SEO these days - the time needed to get to the top of the search engines.

I personally love that this is going on because it has pushed a lot of people out of search engine optimization, and that's the part that has made it easier. Although it takes longer to rank, if you have patience and know what works in SEO today, you are going to make a whole lot of money!

3)How to choose niches?

This depends on two things: Experience and budget.

For a new person with a lower budget, they are really going to want to niche down. A good example of a niched down site is my example site bestlatindatingsites.com which makes a couple hundred dollars a month. Because it is so niche-specific it ranked pretty quickly with little resources (but ranks for limited keywords and has limited potential).

For a person with experience and a larger budget, you're going to want to attack at a broader niche level. For example something like datingadvice.com - which would cover ALL different areas of the dating niche.

The thing is, the broader you are, the more resources you are going to need to rank (and the longer it takes). So a site about general dating is going to need more budget to build up the authority. But once you get it going, you can get more bang for your buck (and this ranks for a lot more keywords and has a ton of potential).

As far as picking a niche, always do research for the types of keywords you're planning on going after. What types of sites are ranking? How are they monetizing? Are there other affiliate sites? Are they selling affiliate products (if so what type of commission)?

These are all important questions to ask when choosing a niche.

4)On-page SEO tips?

Focus on the basics.

Get your most important keywords in the domain\URL.

Get your most important keywords in the title.

Get your most important keywords and variations of those keywords in H tags.

Do NOT overuse keyword in the text on the page, if anything underdo it.

The actual content plays a very small role in telling Google what your site is about. They mainly grab this info from domain\URL, title, H tags & backlink information. So trying to use keywords more in the actual content is going to do very little to help you, and will most likely just hurt you.

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5)Best backlink strategies?

Man, this depends on so many factors. I could write a whole book on it. I'll try to keep it as simple as I can.

For local sites, the most effective backlink strategy is citations, especially for any sites that are exact match domains (EMDs) or have a niche keyword in the name of the domain. I won't take the time to explain why, but it's huge having a keyword in the domain name. But citations are my favorite links for local sites because they're safe and effective - always start a local site with citations.

Outside of local sites, the most effective strategy is really going to depend on the goal of the site. There's different strategies for small affiliate sites, big affiliate sites, those trying to establish a brand, etc. etc.
For larger affiliate sites and people trying to build a brand, the most effective strategy is probably going to be great content with outreach. Part of outreach would be reaching out to sites in your niche and writing for them to get links back to your site. You can build your contribution portfolio and work your way up even writing for huge sites like Huffington Post, Forbes, etc.

Guest posts are also still very effective, especially if you have good guest posting resources.

And PBNs are still the most effective single link when you know how to do it correctly. The problem with PBNs is that they are more complex and you need to know what you are doing. So there is more risk with them, but they are the most powerful "single link" tool there is (when done correctly).

6)How to avoid Google penalties?

Follow the on page rules I listed above.

Outside of that, most penalties are going to come down to your linking.

The most important part of linking is the beginning stages. If you send low quality links in the beginning stages of your site, you're screwed.
So especially in the beginning, focus on getting higher quality links going to your site to build trust.

The reason for this is because Google is probability based and they need to consider negative SEO.

If your website is not ranking anywhere, no one cares about your site. So no one is going to negative-SEO a site that isn't ranking - it's not a threat.
So this is why sending low quality links or links from penalized sites will totally screw a site in the beginning.

But as your site gains trust and moves up the rankings, the probability of your site being negative SEO'ed increases. So low quality links are less likely to hurt you as your site gains more trust\authority\rankings.

Even with this said, you should always focus on high quality and RELEVANT links.

Relevancy is very important in today's SEO.

Matthew Woodward, SEO Expert

Website: MatthewWoodward.co.uk

1)Self-intro

Do you want to increase your search traffic?

Well pay attention because my name is Matthew Woodward and I've helped thousands of people just like you to increase their search traffic.

And I would love nothing more than to help you do the same.

So pay attention and most importantly, take action!

2)Easier/harder to rank in Google?

I think that ranking sites on Google has only gotten harder.

There are more and more people joining the SEO world, which has led to more competition across the board. Therefore people have been forced to grow and develop to keep on top!

There haven't been many huge changes to Google's algorithm – building backlinks is still the best ranking tactic supported by a strong on-site foundation.

12x LINK BUILDING STRATEGIES FOR 2019

MatthewWoodward.co.uk

If you want to increase your search traffic this year...

PAY ATTENTION!

Because these 12x link building strategies are all you will need to succeed in 2019.

Strategy #1
Testimonial Link Building
Learn how to score powerful homepage link placements with my simple testimonial link building process.

Strategy #2
Link Roundups
Take advantage of link roundups in your niche to score awesome links that generate referral traffic.

Strategy #3
Resource Pages
Get links from powerful resource pages with the added bonus of quality traffic hitting your site at the same time!

Strategy #4
Internal Link Building
Internal links are seriously under rated, so apply one of my 3x internal link building strategies.

Strategy #5
Expired Domains
If you want to score easy links from places like the BBC or Wikipedia, expired domains are for you.

Strategy #6
Guest Blogging
If you do guest blogging the right way, you can grow your sites rankings & traffic rapidly.

Strategy #7
Broken Link Building
A magnificent opportunity to build relationships with website owners and to increase your rankings.

Strategy #8
Reverse Engineering
Why do the hard work when you don't have to? Steal all of your competitors best backlinks this year.

Strategy #9
Newsjacking
Take advantage of popular news topics to attract waves of links and traffic to your site easily.

Strategy #10
Influencer Marketing
Take advantage of influencers (and their ego) in your niche to build powerful links to your site.

Strategy #11
Data Driven Content
Use unique data to make your content the "go to" resource on any given subject in your niche.

Strategy #12
Link Reclamation
Reclaiming your links is one of the easiest and most effective link building strategies you can use.

Pick JUST 3x Link Building Strategies To Focus On This Year...

...And I promise your search traffic will increase!

Learn how to execute each strategy-
MatthewWoodward.co.uk/tips/link-building-strategies/

The only major change is the latest update of Penguin where you don't need to disavow links anymore. Before Penguin, links were either positive or just ignored but after Penguin, links were then either positive or negative which was the start of negative SEO.

Google finally folded with the latest update and we have gone back to links being either positive or ignored, which means you can now go heavier on link building with much less risk than in recent years.

3)How to choose niches?

There are three things to consider first when you are deciding what niche to choose.

1. Do you have a passion for it?
2. Are you knowledgeable about it?
3. Do you want to learn about it?

If the answer to these questions is yes, then you can start exploring whether there's an opportunity for you in that niche.

I have 2 spreadsheets that you can use to find vulnerable niches and steal your competitors' SEO strategy. For example, by using one of the spreadsheets you can automatically build a keyword strategy based on your competitor's current rankings.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
	Keyword.	Volume.	Difficulty.	Live Featured Snippet?	Featured Snippet Potential?	Intent.
2	how to make videos on youtube	1300	12	No	Yes	Informational
3	best url shortener	2900	15	No	No	Commercial Informational
4	how to make money on fiverr	1200	16	Yes	Yes	Informational
5	blogspot vs wordpress	1000	19	No	No	Commercial Informational
6	grammarly review	17000	19	No	No	Commercial Informational
7	how to make money online without paying	5000	22	No	Yes	Informational
8	how to get more subscribers	1300	23	Yes	Yes	Informational

You can use these spreadsheets to review niches in less than 5 minutes based on intelligent data and have a clear strategy in place in the time it takes to make a cup of coffee.

4)On-page SEO tips?

I would recommend paying close attention to copywriting for SEO.

Why?

Copywriting rich content keeps visitors hooked, increases your conversion and turns those visitors into fans or more importantly, subscribers.

I have a ton of copywriting SEO hacks including:

-Writing awesome introductions that attract people to your content and actually gets them to read it! One tip you can use here is to always ask a question as people have a subconscious need to find out the answer! (Like I did at the start of this section)

-Structuring your article to include the most important information first! This is because no matter how hard you try, a huge percentage of your visitors won't actually read the full article. So it's important to give them the information they were looking for as soon as possible.

-Create emotional and unique meta descriptions and title tags to stand out in the SERPs. These are the first thing your potential visitors will see when browsing on the search engines, and will be the difference between clicking on your website and your competitors. Adding emotion to these will make them much more interesting, appealing and well… emotional.

5)Best backlink strategies?

I mentioned earlier that I had 2 spreadsheets that will automate your SEO strategy. We looked at one spreadsheet that creates an intelligent keyword strategy, well the other automates the perfect backlink strategy by stealing your competitor's backlinks.

Backlink URL.	Page Score.	Page Trust Score.	Target Page.	Target Anchor.	Type.
https://yuchenkuang.com/	26	2	js://www.bigcommerce.com/blog/ecommerce-seo/		Expert Roundup
https://yuchenkuang.com/	26	2	js://www.bigcommerce.com/blog/ecommerce-s	The Ultimate Guide to Ecommerce SEO: How to Attra	Blog Post
https://www1.vizury.com/blog/must-read-complete-ecommerce-marketing-cheat-sheet/	25	29	https://ahrefs.com/blog/ecommerce-seo/	quicktips.png	Infographic
https://www1.vizury.com/blog/must-read-complete-ecommerce-marketing-cheat-sheet/	25	29	https://ahrefs.com/blog/ecommerce-seo/	Ecommerce SEO: 116% Increase in Search Traffic &	Resource Page

The spreadsheet works by analyzing the data from your competitors' backlinks and then providing you with a list of the best backlinks for you to steal. It eliminates spammy links, low authority links and gives you a strategy to follow depending on the type of link.

In other words, this intelligent backlink stealing spreadsheet does all the hard work for you!

Let's take a look at another couple of methods which can be used effectively to build backlinks.

Testimonial Link Building:

By reaching out and offering to leave testimonials for products or services you have used, this can often turn into a valuable homepage link being placed when the testimonial is featured.

Here is an example of a homepage link back to my blog after giving MyThemeShop my testimonial.
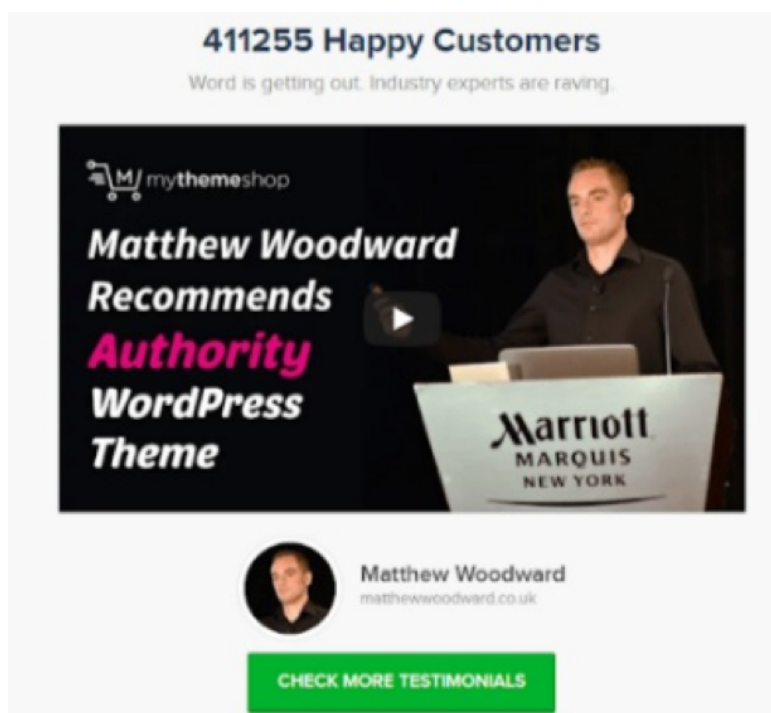
Link Roundups

People who publish link roundup posts are always on the lookout for content to feature in their roundups. Reaching out to them with your awesome content and exactly why they should feature it helps them out too.
It's simple and easy to do:

1. Find blogs in your niche that regularly post roundups.
2. Find an email address or contact form.
3. Pitch your content.

To find out more about testimonial link building and link roundups head over to my Link Building Strategies Guide and learn another 10 awesome link building tactics.

6)How to avoid Google penalties?

As I mentioned above, you can be significantly less worried about links now with the latest Penguin update.

I recommend you stay focused on creating top quality unique content that solves people's problems and deserves to rank.

Use the power of observation by reviewing search results and see what type of results Google is returning. Then compare these results with your pages. Get a copy of the search engine evaluator guidelines and read them thoroughly. Then critique your site and run a full site audit, and fix any issues. Keep on top of this by doing it annually.

Insights From Traffic Networks

Adcash, Antoine Padavani, Head of Demand

Website: Adcash.com

1) Self-intro

Adcash has been in the digital advertising industry since 2007 with over 12+ years' of ad tech experience. The Adcash online advertising platform unifies direct and programmatic media buying through one interface. Our advertisers get access to web & mobile-web traffic from our exclusive publishers and over 200+ trusted programmatic partners.

We have advanced in-house optimization technology that automatically removes manual work and optimizes ROI. Plus, our transparent and easy-to-use platform offers advertisers full self-service campaign management experience to run, manage and optimize all ad campaigns in one place. At the same time, we also offer account management for both advertisers and publishers to help them reach their online advertising goals.

When talking about traffic volumes, we receive around 200 million ad requests every day. The combination of our direct and programmatic supply gives us a "sky is the limit" reach and we have extra strong demand and supply in the US and Europe. In terms of ad formats, we work with all the main industry standards like Native, Display, Interstitial, Pop-Under and Push Notifications - so we have something for everyone.

We also have zero tolerance to ad fraud and we filter out a lot of traffic to ensure that we provide only clean traffic to our advertisers. Our in-house fraud team fights very hard against it and last year saved advertisers over $11.8M thanks to our advanced fraud filters.

2) Expanding/shrinking ad formats? Traffic prices going up/down?

Prices are constantly evolving - we could consider that global prices are going down, but targeted prices are definitely going up. We are providing more and more tools and data to our customers so they can segment their acquisition. It brings more accurate buying, better user experiences and

definitely better monetization. The market has become quite mature and both advertisers and publishers know the value of what they buy or sell.

3)Did Google's better ads initiative affect you?

The "better ads initiative" is definitely a good thing and our aim is also to provide a good user experience by showing relevant ads that match with user interests and needs. This initiative hasn't had a lot of effect on us but the whole industry is always a bit worried about Google's next steps and decisions.

4)Changes in verticals? Most-promoted verticals?

The main verticals remain similar, only products within these verticals are changing: e-commerce, gaming, finance, gambling, adult/dating, nutra/beauty, and utilities/services.

The changes come also from the type of campaigns, following updates in formats and the evolution of devices and the way they are used. Gaming, for instance, used to be client gaming, then browser gaming and now it is applications. Native shares the same placements with the banners environment, push notifications is the new format that's a bit more "intrusive", but verticals remain the same.

Our target is to welcome more and more e-commerce, insurance, banking, travel offers that are currently performing well on social media.

5)Views on push traffic?

Push Notifications has been creating quite a buzz during the past year and is definitely the hottest ad format in the industry. We also offer this ad format to our clients and they are seeing some great results with it. This new format is the perfect way for advertisers to reach their target audience by delivering notifications straight to users' devices.

Affiliates and marketers across the globe have started to adopt push notifications and we see the volumes growing day by day. However, many players in the industry are still learning how to make the most of this powerful ad format to drive engagement and ROI.

The key is to not overuse this ad format to ensure that users are not receiving too many messages too often.

Therefore, the use of frequency caps is a must when adopting this ad format.

6)Changes for current year? Tips?

All the main historical verticals are still very valid, but the methods of advertising have changed since users cannot be aggressively flooded with ads anymore. User experience and data will become the norm.

In terms of formats, native is definitely leading the way because it gives new chances to promote a wide range of verticals that were not performing as well with other formats.

We highly recommend to focus on creativity and trying to imagine yourself as the user seeing the ads. That will help create more attractive offers and most importantly convert more users.   Data and metrics are media buyers' best friends. It's absolutely crucial to constantly test and optimize campaigns to improve performance and find new ways to lower your acquisition cost.

Look out for what's hot and what people are interested in. For example, mobile app stores give good insight into the tastes of users in particular geos - find what's trending and make it work for you!

Of course, find a partner to rely on and who's willing to put time and resources into proprietary technology! Machine learning and data science are key components to competing at high scales. At Adcash we use this tech to increase advertisers' ROI, to increase the revenue of our publishers and to keep our platform clean.

Adskeeper, Sergii Chalap, Native Advertising Expert

Website: Adskeeper.co.uk

1)Self-intro

AdsKeeper is one of the first ad networks that adapted native traffic for the needs of affiliate marketers. Introduced to open market in 2013, AdsKeeper has proven to be a solid network with scalable volumes and up-to-date technology.

At current stage we serve native ad and push notification traffic worldwide. What really defines us in the market is the internal quality assurance system created by our in-house team, which filters the traffic in several dimensions.

Essentially, AdsKeeper remains a mainstream-oriented network with strong presence in English speaking Tier1 countries, India, APAC, Latam and Europe, reaching up to 11 billion impressions daily.

However in 2018 we decided to respond to increasing adult demand among our advertisers and initiated the complete adult expansion.
We muscled up pretty fast and by the end of 2018 were ready to offer 1-1.5 million adult clicks daily.

2)Expanding/shrinking ad formats? Traffic prices going up/down?

We don't see much volatility. CPC rates are pretty stable as we managed to ensure simultaneous growth in demand and supply numbers.

We also released a price-recommendation engine to help our advertisers set up accurate bids. The algorithm takes into account several factors and represents real-time demand vs supply ratio in the specific geo correlated with ad CTR.

One mistake advertisers may still make is ignore recommendations, setting up the minimal bids, and expecting to climb out.
This would be a road to nowhere. Bidding 100-200% less than average market value, they risk ending up with remnant traffic.

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3)Did Google's better ads initiative affect you?

Well, actually we have never done anything to harm our publishers by serving distracting ads. Fewer ads are covering our native units now and we get more CTR and volumes. At the end of the day, it leads to higher CPMs for publishers/websites. Advertisers are refocusing their budgets towards Native and Push so we get more quality advertisers and publishers which is great.

In terms of the entire affiliate marketing space - I'm sure it will affect volumes and quality and now you know what to do to catch up with it all.

4)Changes in verticals? Most-promoted verticals?

We did not see any significant changes over the past few months. Since we serve several types of traffic, I'd like to break down the top performing stuff as follows:

Mainstream Native:

1. Trading
2. Dating
3. Nutra and ED
4. Casino and Betting
5. Video Games

Push:

1. Dating
2. Casino and Betting
3. Gaming
4. Trading

Adult:

1. Adult Games
2. ED/ME
3. Adult Dating
4. VOD
5. Live Cams

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5)Views on push traffic?

Push-notifications is already a big thing and many networks in the industry at least doubled their inventory and earnings. I believe that some regulations should be applied within the next 12 month but overall this segment will be developing and AdsKeeper will stay sharp on any updates.

6)Changes for current year? Tips?

The verticals will remain the same but according to the Better Ads Organisation and Google Chrome updates, there will be some changes which will affect advertisers.

Basically the old way of serving ads will be less available, and everyone will be finding another way out.

AdsKeeper is on it already and we are thinking about the development of our native to have it more interactive, relevant and catchy as well as new ad formats for us like video ads and few more.
Stay tuned with AdsKeeper.

Exoclick, Evan Zirdelis, Sales and Ad Operations Director

Website: Exoclick.com

1)Self-intro

ExoClick began in 2006. We have huge volumes of high quality traffic and we serve over 7 billion daily ad impressions globally.   Traffic can be purchased via our ad network or programmatically via our ad exchange. We have an excellent range of display traffic from a range of different verticals and our exclusive members' area dating display and email traffic.

Targeting features include language, GEO and regional. Additionally site, contextual, keyword targeting are great for reaching users that are interested in a specific vertical. Our IP range targeting allows an affiliate to use ExoClick's own IP range database or use his own IP range list or a combination of the two. Additionally we offer retargeting, frequency capping and day parting.

2)Expanding/shrinking ad formats? Traffic prices going up/down?

Nothing is shrinking - in fact ExoClick is growing, serving 7 billion daily impressions helped by the large range of ad formats that we offer and our publisher network of 65,000 websites. The CPM/CPC does fluctuate which is because more of our advertisers are using our Bidder tool which is adjusting the CPM/CPC, in fact the Bidder is proving highly successful and is now being used on over 3,000 campaigns, an increase of 375% over the last 2 quarters.

3)Did Google's better ads initiative affect you?

We ensured that our publishers stayed compliant with all Google regulations so we introduced new labels that publishers can action in one click in their admin panel to block non-compliant ads. We also educated advertisers/ affiliates about Google's advertising restrictions labelled as "Abusive Experiences," with examples of acceptable & non-compliant ad creatives which can be found on our blog.

Additionally we introduced several new Google compliant ad formats for desktop and mobile including: full page interstitial, native interstitial, native

exit, rich media billboard banner and two additional in-video banner sizes 728×90 and 486×60.

4)Changes in verticals? Most-promoted verticals?

The offers and verticals are more or less the same, here are the top verticals that our advertisers are targeting: Paysite/VoD, Nutra, Dating, Games, Gambling:Casino, Free Content Sites, Broadcasting. During 2019 we have seen an increase in the Dating sector due to our exclusive traffic sources and email clicks ad format, and Nutra is growing in APAC.

5)Views on push traffic?

We introduced push notifications in October 2018 and we are seeing rapid adoption of this format. The CTR rate is very high compared to other ad formats. For example, here are some verticals with average CTRs on our network: Gambling:Sports (CTR 2.47%), Dating (CTR 2.17%), Games (CTR 2.13%), Utilities:Movies/Music (CTR 1.85%), Sweepstakes (CTR 1.82%), Broadcasting (CTR 2.68%), Paysite/VoD (CTR 1.32%), Nutra (CTR 0.80%). To drive further engagement, emojis can also be added to our push notification ad format. We cap the frequency of sending messages up to 4 messages per day so as to not annoy users. Currently we are seeing an average growth of 500k new subscribers to push notifications daily. We will have to wait to see what the long term effect will be but right now it's a strong ad format.

6)Changes for current year? Tips?

Automation is getting more and more important for affiliates and advertisers because it really allows them to scale up their campaigns. As previously mentioned, our Bidder features allow advertisers/affiliates to automate the optimization of their campaigns by adjusting their bids by ad zone and/or by blocking non-converting ad zones. We are seeing more and more advertisers becoming creative when it comes to automatic optimization with ExoClick's bidder. Advertisers are now using a wide set of rules combining automatic bidding adjustment and additional rules from blocking zones based on CTR, Clicks, Conversions, ROI.

With our new platform API which launched in March 2019 advertisers can now use the API to automate all platform features that are inside our admin panel. That means advertisers can now create their very own dashboard or even

their proper Bidder algorithm based on their needs.

Of course, even when advertisers opt in to use the API, they can still take advantage of the advanced algorithms within ExoClick's platform, such as the automatic offer and landing page distribution, and then combine them with their in-house rules.

EZMob, Shai Weinreb, Head of Push Marketing

Website: EZMob.com

1)Self-intro

EZmob was founded in early 2013 primarily to facilitate acquisition of affiliate networks through innovative creation of ad formats. We have since then embraced RTB and XML as our main tech drivers for display and native marketing (RTB) and pop and push notification ads (XML). EZmob also employs a dedicated team that focuses on performance marketing thus able to scale any campaign.

2)Expanding/shrinking ad formats? Traffic prices going up/down?

Although none of us believe 15 years ago pop will be around today, it is still alive and kicking and converting as well. We do see a decrease in the native demand compared to the surge happening with push notification ads at EZmob. We currently serve over 3 billion daily ad requests so are certain we can provide coverage at any country and operating system or platform. CPMs have been fluctuating as usual in 2019 but no dramatic increase or decrease has been noticed.

3)Did Google's better ads initiative affect you?

Google means regulation in our industry, and although the random and sometimes surprising guidelines Google puts out force us to think creatively (and quickly), we appreciate the fact that Google does enforce its rules on rule-breaking companies, which allow companies that focus on cleaner marketing to compete.

4)Changes in verticals? Most-promoted verticals?

Mobile content demand has been increasing with the introduction of push notification. The fact that push is billed on CPC and not CPM helps more advertisers tap into this inventory and the fact that it converts very well for various type offers helps much more to motivate advertisers to keep their campaigns open and converting. Affiliate offers have always worked well with pop, and app marketing campaigns show great results with display and native marketing.

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5)Views on push traffic?

We believe push is here to stay. The gold rush for more users and more direct push supply shows results already in early 2019. The quality of the users and the delivery strategy of the inventory owners is key to be able to serve successful campaigns. While some companies take a more aggressive approach with their user base, we believe in a slow trickle instead of a huge steam when it comes to communicating with our direct users. With that reason in mind we expect this not to be affected dramatically over 2019 - although it's anyone's guess what / when / how Google will deal with push notification marketing.

6)Changes for current year? Tips?

We never expect a year of the same old. We were one of the first companies to launch push notification very early in 2018 expecting it to explode and it did. We plan to do what we did last year, stay in touch with the great community at STM to understand what users want and attempt to supply it first.

Megapush, Sergey Konrad, Marketing Manager

Website: Megapu.sh

1)Self-intro

We've been in the traffic business for more than 10 years, but Megapu.sh is the first public project that has run for more than a year.

2)Expanding/shrinking ad formats? Traffic prices going up/down?

The market of online advertising is growing constantly. As for the prices of the push-traffic specifically, they periodically rise and fall. At the end of the day, the traffic may get more expensive.

3)Did Google's better ads initiative affect you?

Yes, it affected us as well, but more in a positive way. Some of the traffic sources generating new push-notifications have become cheaper. In our mind, this did not affect Affiliate Marketing in any way. The only influence was that on some traffic sources the competition became bigger, on others smaller.

4)Changes in verticals? Most-promoted verticals?

It seems like binary options have been pushed to second and crypto offers have become more popular, despite the fact that interest towards crypto currency has decreased. Additionally, offers such as casino and dating show stable results.

5)Views on push traffic?

The format of push-notifications will run for a long time, but it will definitely change. In the end, only big and honest ones in this market will stay in business. This will happen, as over time it will get more difficult to obtain new users, and unsubscribing will become much easier. However, as we have mentioned above, the big players that will follow the rules and etiquette of the game will not be affected by these changes.

6)Changes for current year? Tips?

We expect new ad formats and, of course, market broadening. The main recommendation is to keep things clean in general. The more products there are that can be promoted without any troubles, the better the quality of affiliate marketing will be.

Plugrush, Jørgen Bogetveit, CEO

Website: Plugrush.com

1) Self-intro

Proud to say, we are one of the pioneers in this business, starting way back in 2007 with two traffic types – plugs and pops. Plugs were our invention – a simple static picture with text underneath it linked to an offer. Sounds familiar? Today, you call them native ads.

As our publisher base grew, due to traffic trading, so did our portfolio and we soon expanded to banner and redirect adult traffic. In July of 2018, we've incorporated mainstream pop traffic. And in December 2018 we've introduced push notification traffic for both adult and mainstream.

Starting 2019 strong, our main focus is the record speed growth of push notification publishers and advertisers. Our advertisers that use their landing pages to collect subscribers is becoming fruitful to them in ways we couldn't even predict. We have big plans for 2019, so stay tuned for the news!

2) Expanding/shrinking ad formats? Traffic prices going up/down?

Ad formats we see expanding currently are push, banners and native ads. In our opinion, this indicates a shift in focus from sheer traffic volume (as seen with pops) to quality (from clicked traffic generated by display ad units).

On pops, we have seen a decline in overall volume, while rates are increasing. We attribute this trend to two things:

1. Google's recent changes have made more website owners fearful of using pops on their websites.
2. Fraudulent traffic rouse due to Google's recent changes. In 2018 we've created a plan to attack that even better and made vast improvements in recent months in the way we detect fraudulent traffic, which often plagues pop traffic in particular.

These quality filter advancements have led to a positive outcome: lower amount of traffic volume with a higher quality standard, which made our media buyers pleased.

In order to provide more transparent and useful information for publishers, we are now updating on a weekly basis the average CPCs for publishers in 20 top

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160

performing GEOs. This goes for push notification traffic, banner and native ads.

It benefits advertisers as well, since the higher CPCs for publishers give them insight into what's hot right now.
In conclusion:

- Pops are shrinking in volume but have a higher quality standard due to our advanced fraudulent traffic detection system and thus have a higher average CPC since advertisers are bidding to buy quality traffic.

- Banner and natives have pretty stable average CPC prices looking back 6 months, but if you take shorter periods of time, the average CPC goes up during holiday seasons, drops in the beginning of the year and now it's picking up a slow growth and will go up again at spring time.

- Push notification traffic is really hot right now and we're seeing growth in average CPCs in Tier 1 GEOs and, surprisingly, in Tier 3 GEOs! Tier 2 GEOs are remaining more or less steady. We're expecting more growth in the upcoming months.

3)Did Google's better ads initiative affect you?

Yes, it certainly affected us. We've updated our creatives approval policy accordingly. In the beginning, the time to approve the creatives was longer due to everybody's confusion with regards to the clarity of the new 'rules' - publishers didn't want a potential penalty, advertisers wanted their creatives to be slightly modified and we were stuck in the middle trying to do the right thing.

For example, we no longer accept certain ad creatives that may be deemed as "misleading" or "abusive" by the powers that be (Google). We've picked up the pace and communicated clearly to our advertisers what can and what cannot be approved. Now, the approval times of creatives is shorter and we're happy there were no more changes in that area.

4)Changes in verticals? Most-promoted verticals?

The evergreen vertical continues to be dating, casual and otherwise, which still dominates. In recent months, we've also noticed a larger focus on finance and

crypto-currency offers compared to previously.

5)Views on push traffic?

Yes, we do offer push notification traffic and we're very excited to see its potential. It's a unique way to reach end users that have opted in to receive push notifications, which primes them for stronger engagement with the advertisements they are served.
In our opinion, a conservative approach should be taken with this ad format. Push subscribers should not be messaged to the point where it annoys them and they have to unsubscribe. If this is how it's utilized by some, then we do believe that regulation of the way push notifications work could occur in some manner.

6)Changes for current year? Tips?

Oh, it can never be the 'same old' in this business. Diversity is the keyword for 2019 - for advertisers, publishers or traffic network. In 2019 you cannot expect to focus solely on one thing and expect great results. Those who do so, forfeit the game and scream that affiliate marketing and online marketing, in general, is dead.

For us, as a traffic network, simultaneously focusing on various pieces of the puzzle: Having a great anti-fraud system that will produce more quality traffic for our advertisers; offering great payout terms and plenty of options for our publishers; having a referral program that rewards you in pretty $ (for referring advertisers and publishers alike); working on including more exclusive RTB and DSP partners as well as publishers and advertisers; constantly upgrading our stats system; introducing new and advanced features in our interface; expanding our portfolio of traffic types…

With regards to the latest, the way push ads can reach an end user in a more direct way than virtually any other ad format is ground-breaking in our opinion. In addition, you can promote your offers say on display traffic and by using your own landing pages and collecting subscribers - you can monetize those with us as well. Or buy pop traffic to collect subscribers and then monetize them - and this is a completely new 'business model' that did not exist a few years back. It's the evolution of buying traffic for impressions in various GEOs for the sake of the traffic itself and then selling it.

We recommend to focus on diversifying your advertising or publishing portfolio to include more display traffic for 2019: Be it push ads, banners or native ads. A mix is likely to give you the best results. This applies in general to both webmasters looking to monetize their sites and also media buyers making traffic purchases.

PopCash, Radu Burcheci, CEO

Website: **PopCash.net**

1)Self-intro

The people within our team have been active in this industry for more than ten years and since 2012 we've been united under the PopCash brand, working continuously to satisfy our clients. We were focused exclusively on pops until recently, when we started to work with push ads as well.

2)Expanding/shrinking ad formats? Traffic prices going up/down?

Taking into consideration that our area of expertise is pop traffic, we will share the results of the analysis of that segment - the volume slightly decreased in comparison with last year's, but it's a small decrease, so nothing worrying for now. Also the CPMs are stable with a small increasing trend.

3)Did Google's better ads initiative affect you?

We like to think about PopCash as a binder for publishers and advertisers - in order for them to cohere, we need to ensure performance for both parties involved, so we always had rules in place. The guidelines' objective resides in obtaining politically correct behavior both from publishers' side (no fake/ bot traffic, respected frequency capping, good quality traffic, etc.), but also from the advertisers' standpoint (no scary ads, no tech support, or any other forbidden type of ads). So until now we didn't have any encounter with the Google's "better ads initiative" or its consequences.

4)Changes in verticals? Most-promoted verticals?

Well, in terms of expansion, we can confirm the increase of popularity for lead generation campaigns that are willing to get push subscribers. All the other verticals remain stable with no significant fluctuations.

5)Views on push traffic?

At this very moment we're running tests for push notifications ourselves in order to be able to make this model available for our advertisers as soon as

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possible. We consider this to have the potential of being a long-term trend, but in order to be so, regulations must be applied, because there are many opportunists that are abusing the subscribers with multiple ads (even 10+) delivered during one day and this phenomenon must not be perpetuated.

6)Changes for current year? Tips?

Back in 2018 we've noticed more and more companies that didn't have a strong and healthy business model, have closed their doors. The problem is that some of them let unpaid debts destabilized other businesses as well.

We believe that 2019 will be a relatively tough year for many other companies in this industry and some of them may also stop their activity. The businesses that will continue operating will be the ones with serious minds behind the brands, those who really bring added value to their clients' tables - both for advertisers and publishers.

In terms of 'tips and tricks' we can only reveal what we consider to be the 'evergreen secret recipe for success: Focus on very few offers at once, fructify everything you can from others' experiences, but perform your own tests at the same time and once you find the 'four-leaf clover', do your best to scale it up and make it stable. Then repeat the process.

Revcontent, Sharon Lyon, VP of Sales and Operations

Website: Revcontent.com

1)Self-intro

Revcontent has been around since late 2013 with a strong focus on creating direct partnerships with publishers to monetize their web traffic.

2)Expanding/shrinking ad formats? Traffic prices going up/down?

While placements directly below article content continue to be top revenue generators, I see a trend of publishers moving away from feeds and towards less intrusive formats that take up less real estate and improve user experience.

As advertisers become smarter at managing their data, I anticipate CPM's & CPC's to stabilize as bids better align with quality.

3)Did Google's better ads initiative affect you?

As a member of the Coalition for Better Ads, Revcontent has always prided itself on being at the forefront of positive change within the advertising industry. We will continue to align our policies with initiatives to improve user experience on the open web, as we have done in the past.

I believe that these stricter rules have had a positive impact on affiliate marketing overall. Not only do consumers benefit as the industry moves towards a user-friendly, more personalized environment, but improved ad formats allow advertisers to feel more comfortable buying traffic without the risk of accidental clicks eating away their ROI.

4)Changes in verticals? Most-promoted verticals?

Given the high budgets of Q4, Q1 always tends to be more DR (direct-response) heavy; that trend upheld over the past few months. So far in 2019, we're seeing the highest volume coming from finance, business, and health and lifestyle.

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5)Views on push traffic?

Push has proven itself to be a valuable traffic source within the Revcontent network, but only when it's done right. Because Revcontent offers both bid by placement and fractional bidding, advertisers buying within our platform only pay what the traffic is worth to them. Push traffic comes in high volumes and performance can vary widely in terms of EPC. To succeed with push, it is imperative to isolate pockets of positive ROI based on what your data tells you.

Given its high volume and susceptibility for abuse, I think push will inevitably get regulated in some way. Finding trusted partners that can provide advertisers with quality traffic is key.

6)Changes for current year? Tips?

I don't think we've ever seen a year of the "same old" when it comes to the business of traffic acquisition, especially with technology developing faster-than-ever. One thing I don't see changing, however, is the importance of testing and data collection in overall strategy. Advertisers need to spend their time testing and familiarizing themselves with every traffic source available. What may not perform on one platform might excel on another; testing is the only way advertisers can ensure they are capitalizing on as much traffic as possible. In addition to testing, advertisers in 2019 should continue to diversify outside of Facebook, take advantage of the high volume push traffic has to offer, use advancements in technology to their advantage, and, of course, stay informed about the ever-changing trends in the space.

RichPush, Igor Pavlov, Head of Marketing

Website: RichPush.co

1)Self-intro

We started selling traffic from about year 2010. Our DSP AdMachine.co is for Pop-traffic, Native, Display and Video. That was it until 2018 when Push-traffic emerged.   Here is when RichPush.co appeared. Push are our focus right now and probably will be in the near future.

2)Expanding/shrinking ad formats? Traffic prices going up/down?

Push traffic is definitely expanding a lot, since it's a growing market, we see about x2 growth each month. That's perfectly predictable, since last year only affiliate marketers even knew about the format and started testing it. Now it's becoming more popular in other industries, more companies test it, more ad networks appear. Other formats are not shrinking, although growing much slower.

3)Did Google's better ads initiative affect you?

Better ads initiative can't affect us since we also work on ads quality ourselves and we think every ad network should. Better ads deliver better results and lowers unsubscription rate, which is extremely important in push advertising. We have our own strict policy, and our account management team constantly share best practices with our advertisers. Everyone profits from this.

4)Changes in verticals? Most-promoted verticals?

There was a sudden boom of ICO ads, because of that industry's development. Push ads' most popular verticals are now nutrition, gambling, sweepstakes, betting, finance. Nothing too unusual, they perform better at least on our platform - they became popular.

5)Views on push traffic?

Yes, that's what we do. We offer push format and we're growing our subscribers base each month. It has chances to last long and to be banned totally as on iOS. Push ads are screwed if Google decides to wipe it from existence.

But banning it will require some push licensing for trusted websites, a lot of regulations for what you're allowed to send to your subscribers. Google usually does only things they can profit from and push regulation seems like a lot of work for nothing.

6)Changes for current year? Tips?

We think there will be some changes in push traffic. We can speak for ourselves at least. More granular targeting, advanced optimization, premium publishers, much more subscribers and much more advertisers - that's what's going to happen for sure.

We strongly recommend affiliates to work more with push traffic for 2 reasons:

1. It's really profitable right now if you take it seriously and let our managers help you.

2. The more you use it and the more feedback you share with us, the better we can make your experience and results.

And who knows - maybe a new ad format will emerge this year, something AR or VR related. So stay tuned!

Toro Advertising, Beatriz González, Business Developer

Website: ToroAdvertising.com

1)Self-intro

TORO Advertising has been in business for 7 years. Our core business is divided into two areas: An affiliate platform, which operates on a cost-per-action performance; and ads.cafe, a transparent ad network specializing in entertainment traffic.

2)Expanding/shrinking ad formats? Traffic prices going up/down?

We are currently seeing a decrease in popunder traffic and an increase in native traffic, push notifications, voice search and video advertising. Regarding CPM, we see price increases from sources such as search or social, due to higher demand. But not such big increases in newer formats like push and native.

3)Did Google's better ads initiative affect you?

Google reinforced its rules sufficiently in advance so that we had the time to prepare for the new regulations. In this way we were able to advise our clients on the best way to comply, so it was a process of adaptation, and it hasn't had a negative effect on our business.

4)Changes in verticals? Most-promoted verticals?

Last year one of the biggest verticals for us were finance campaigns. However, this vertical is now starting to slightly decrease in 2019. Big verticals for us continue to be binary, sweepstakes, e-commerce, dating and add-ons.

5)Views on push traffic?

Push notification traffic is giving us great results so far. It's being offered on our affiliate platform to our advertisers and to our publishers on our ad network ads.cafe. Indeed some affiliates are adding emojis which is driving better performance. Push traffic has been the lifeline of many affiliates in 2018

and will continue to be so throughout 2019. Chat bot traffic has great potential but it still has to be perfected.

6)Changes for current year? Tips?

Here at TORO Advertising we are working on offering new technologies for advertisers and new formats for affiliates. We do not expect the 'same old', because sources of traffic continue to reinvent themselves. Regarding what to focus on, we believe that e-commerce will continue to grow. This sector has been undergoing major changes since it first began and buying from mobile devices is the new normal, surpassing desktop. Its consolidation is undeniable.

Furthermore, there is the change in user behavior: We consume 24/7, the proliferation of super sales days (Black Friday, Cyber Monday, Singles Day, etc), new tools such as Shopify or cashback and sales through devices such as Amazon Echo and Google Home make this vertical one of the most lucrative.

Traffic Factory, Deborah Ferren, Project Manager

Website: TrafficFactory.com

1)Self-intro

Traffic Factory was founded more than 10 years ago and is one of the market leaders specializing in adult traffic. We are the exclusive representative of xvideos & Xnxx. We pride ourselves on over 6 billion daily worldwide ad impressions and an estimated daily network traffic of over 205 million visitors.

2)Expanding/shrinking ad formats? Traffic prices going up/down?

Globally, our level of traffic is forever increasing with no actual drop in traffic encountered on any of our ad spots. Generally speaking, the ad spot that generates the greatest amount of traffic would currently be the mobile header banner. On both desktop and tablet traffic, the principal outstanding spot would be the footer banner.

Both the prices for CPC and CPM campaigns run in accordance with the law of supply and demand; hence they can fluctuate depending on the exact demand for a particular ad spot. Individual prices have evolved from the early days of Traffic Factory, due to the success and demand for our traffic.

It should also be noted that even if there has been a slight increase in the evolution of our prices, these prices remain considerably lower than that of mainstream advertising spots. Let's face it and not lie to ourselves; the mainstream user is also the very same adult user that we cater to!

Yes, prices have increased but so has the quality and quantity of the traffic that we serve!

3)Did Google's better ads initiative affect you?

The "Better Ad Standards", recently introduced by Google, has undoubtedly had an affect both on our network and that of other traffic suppliers, with changes having to be implemented rapidly to keep in accordance with the demands.

We were able to adapt and integrate these rules onto our network whilst being helping our clients to adapt accordingly as well. We noted that many of our affiliates had to swiftly adapt to these new demands, with many having to wait for fresh new creatives to be made available from their affiliate platforms. In some cases, this gave rise to additional costs to be invested on their behalf or a loss of time which in turn had a slight effect on their potential earnings.

4)Changes in verticals? Most-promoted verticals?

Since the implementation of the new digital ad rules of 2018, it is fair to say that we have noticed "cleaner" offers with greater transparency to the user. But this has not been noted as a "major" change as of yet. Recent trends have shown a large increase in the number of dating offers being proposed. At Traffic Factory, we take a strict stance on these types of offers with each individual campaign being manually verified prior to being distributed on our publishers' websites.

5)Views on push traffic?

Since the very beginning of Traffic Factory, our aim has always been about creating the ultimate user experience on our publishers' websites. It is due to this ethic that we have been able to establish ourselves as a market leader with a very high quality of traffic being delivered. Push notification ad spots appear to be the most talked about placement currently, being implemented by several peers across our community but, in keeping in alignment with our ethos and the type of ad placements that we deem correct, the P\push notification is not a spot that we are currently investigating and shall not be for the foreseeable future.

6)Changes for current year? Tips?

All principal changes that are expected within the realm of the traffic business will ultimately be implemented on our platform in order to bring an even greater customer experience to our clients.

The main tip that we always share with all our clients is to test different ad spots and then evaluate which ad spots, under which parameters, best fit their promotion and their target audience.

An example of this would be our recent launch of Native Banners! These ad spots have a high CTR due to their implementation amongst our publishers' content. They respect our ethos of a high quality user experience as they are not deemed intrusive and having been recently launched - the competition amongst these spots is still building so a great opportunity to secure a premium spot at an affordable price!

It is paramount that each affiliate gains knowledge regarding our multiple features that we offer! These have been created in order to maximize their campaigns by being able to setup certain parameters which could be key to the success needed in targeting their particular audience.

The importance of patience is also key as results do not appear overnight so testing different "strong" creatives that target particular audiences will be of great importance.

Finally, communication is our final tip. We ask all our clients to remain in contact with their designated Account Managers as they may hold the information that can be the difference between a successful and a dead campaign!

Traffic Junky, Steve F., Marketing Coordinator

Website: TrafficJunky.com

1)Self-intro

We've been selling adult traffic since 2008. Traffic Junky focuses on selling our premium adult publishers such as Pornhub Youporn and Redtube, all of which we own.

2)Expanding/shrinking ad formats? Traffic prices going up/down?

Interest in pre-rolls has risen over the past few months. Thanks to the quality of our premium publishers and the demand for our traffic (super affiliates have seen success with our network and continue to run and grow on Traffic Junky), Traffic Junky has seen healthy growth in CPM over the last year. Rates of Traffic Junky's traffic still remains below those found on Google, Facebook and other native networks.

3)Did Google's better ads initiative affect you?

Yes and substantially. In response to Google's Better Ads Standards and Abusive Ad Experiences, Traffic Junky implemented rules and regulations specific to advertising on Chrome browsers. The immediate effect was that affiliates who were running creatives that broke the new rules had to scrap proven methods. However, affiliates have since adapted, and Traffic Junky allows affiliates to run the old creative styles on non-Chrome browsers.

4)Changes in verticals? Most-promoted verticals?

Nutra, Dating & Gaming still remain some the most popular verticals being advertised. Gambling and casino offers have also picked up in European markets, we are also starting to see new interest for it in USA. A new trend everyone should keep an eye on - and look into running offers for - is Cannabis and CBD which we allow on the Traffic Junky network.

5)Views on push traffic?

We do not offer push notifications but we make sure to keep an eye on it and other new trending ad formats. That being said, it looks as if the excessive nature of the format could potentially lead to stricter regulations.

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6)Changes for current year? Tips?

As we mentioned above, Cannabis and CBD is definitely a space they'll want to explore.   Being leaders in adult traffic, we keep an eye on what's trending while embracing what is trending and focusing on innovation. Whether that be features or new verticals. Traffic Junky gives you access to a dedicated account manager. Speak to them and help them help you grow your affiliate marketing profits.

Traffic Stars, Peter Rabenseifner, CEO

Website: **TrafficStars.com**

1)Self-intro

Traffic Stars was founded in December 2014 by industry veterans, and has been around for just over 4 years now, focusing on premium adult site traffic across various ad formats such as banners, native ads, popunders, video-ads, postitials and recently also push notifications.

2)Expanding/shrinking ad formats? Traffic prices going up/down?

These days a lot of things change within the online advertising sphere. After the first big google guidelines updates we saw a for example a decrease in popunder impressions, since the user actions triggering a popunder got restricted. At the same time this restriction has led to an increase in CPM prices of pops. Another result of these updates was that working with banner ads got more and more complicated. Traffic Stars came up just in time with the right solution which is switching more and more banner spots to native ad spots. The results speak for themselves. In most cases publishers see higher ecpms and advertisers see better conversion rates due to the high CTR that comes with this format.

Another solution to compensate the shrinking volumes of popunders is to move your business to video ads, which is a big part of Traffic Stars business. For mobile we offer the mobile postitial format which is a powerful full page ad, following better ads standards and probably at one point even replacing the mobile popunder in the case that it gets penalized by google.

3)Did Google's better ads initiative affect you?

This goes directly hand in hand with the previous question. It had a huge impact on the whole advertising space. We at Traffic Stars try not only to follow, but even be ahead of these changes in order to provide the best possible solution to both advertisers and publishers.

4)Changes in verticals? Most-promoted verticals?

Cams, dating, games and nutra offers are the most promoted on our network.

Mobile carrier offers nearly disappeared but this is not a very recent trend - we all saw this coming over the past year(s). One trend we do see is that livecam providers are probably the most creative ones at the moment, constantly working on new ways of serving the most relevant ads to their audience. Dating and nutra offers perform extremely well on our native ads and therefore a lot of native traffic goes this way.

Gaming, both adult and mainstream have started entering the competition more, and we see them being able to utilize formats such as video, native and postitial (newer formats) in a very effective way. We will start to see more of these players coming into the adult industry to take advantage of the same users but in a different format / source (i.e. adult traffic).

5)Views on push traffic?

Push notifications is not the next big thing - it is already THE big thing. Traffic Stars has been working with this format for a few months now. Since we focus on premium publishers that care very much about their user experience, we are sensitive with this format and try to not overload the users with tons of messages. We let our publishers decide.

Our prediction is that it will get regulated very soon and it probably should be. Still, it is a good way for browsers to bring users back a lot so it might remain an accepted format for the long term.

6)Changes for current year? Tips?

What we've seen so far from google will not be the end. They will keep pushing publishers to follow even tighter rules and guidelines. For this reason a professional partner for ad-serving - like us - will be key for publishers. It will get harder and harder for small brokers to serve ads in the near future.

In terms of advertising we strongly recommend to get your offers ready for native ads since this is overall the part of traffic that grows the most whilst volumes for classic banner ads will keep shrinking. Anyone who is in doubt of how to get started in native advertising is welcome to reach out to us. We are here to help.

If you have the resources to produce effective video ads, this is a format to focus on as well since it is still young and there is not yet much competition for it.

Zeropark, Neill David Burton, Head of Account Management

Website: Zeropark.com

1)Self-intro

Zeropark has been around since 2012, I joined in 2013 when we only had domain traffic.

2)Expanding/shrinking ad formats? Traffic prices going up/down?

With the efforts to improve traffic quality (an ongoing process since 2017) we have actually seen CPM, Pop and Domain traffic costs rise, but also the conversion rate along with it. CPC for push in general is much higher but you are paying for clicks and quality.

3)Did Google's better ads initiative affect you?

The rules that google set in 2018 actually have served to benefit our network, as they have stripped out a lot of the suspicious and low quality traffic from our bidding.

4)Changes in verticals? Most-promoted verticals?

Push has seen the resurgence of high payout verticals, Gambling, Casino, Finance, and Crypto have all seen growth in the last few months.

5)Views on push traffic?

We are the biggest push network, with our blend or aggregated and unique traffic sources we can offer volume in any geo. They are very fresh now and have high conversion rates. I would suggest jumping on this bandwagon before the market becomes oversaturated.

6)Changes for current year? Tips?

2019 is the year of push. It will be the hottest traffic source for at least the next 10 months. My advice would be to work on your creative skills - nothing improves CTR on push then good copy.

Insights from Affiliate Networks

Adcombo, Constantine Gor, CEO

Website: Adcombo.com

1)Self-intro

AdCombo is a CPA network that works on the international market. Using our platform people can have a sustainable income online. More than 45000 affiliates work with AdCombo right now. We help them grow and increase their profit. Also, our network has more than 4500 offers and we are a direct advertiser for some of them. Our most popular COD verticals are Health, Beauty, Diet, Adult, and Ecommerce. But we have such verticals as sweepstakes, mobile, bizop and dating as well.

2)Are carrier-billing offers dead?

The era of mobile apps and subscriptions is over. Governments around the world have started regulating this market too tightly, so it is unlikely that mobile offers will become popular in CPA.

3)Best verticals for mobile? Performance on 3G vs. Wifi?

One of the most popular mobile verticals is definitely sweepstakes. The Internet is full of people that want to get some extra money, a new iPhone, MacBook or something like that. And this race for a freebie is the key to high CR. Both 3g and Wi-Fi are absolutely ok with it.

Some really good 3G offers will remain but there will likely appear new direct offers that will ration 3G and Wifi ones. Moreover, such payment methods as Applepay, SamsungPay, and AndroidPay are getting more popular with every passing day and that may cause the increase of the conversion rates from mobile devices. So we expect a rapid growth of mobile sweepstakes, ecommerce and mobile apps that use some smart tricks for the traffic involvement in such niches as gambling, dating, forex, nutra, etc.

4)Rising and declining verticals?

The CC submit offers are definitely growing. They appeared a few years ago as a sweepstake DCB payments replacement and now they are on the top.

The forex/crypto vertical is dying, US nutra will get through some rough times this year and the global trend of 'whitehat' internet will affect all other verticals more or less.

Carrier billings will be stable in the third world countries and will be limited in other ones because network operators won't deny such a great opportunity. A select group of people (that includes top and trustful webmasters) will keep access to good landings and good flow seldom available to the general public.

5)Stable and lucrative verticals?

Ecommerce and all of its sub-verticals (nutraceuticals, dropshipping, electronics, health & beauty offers) will continue existing and, moreover, their quality will increase in the nearest future.

Financial offers like insurance, loans, and personal consultants will remain the same as well as education and digital educational/recreational products.

Actually, popular verticals are not as interesting as emerging and developing traffic sources. 2018 was the year of push traffic. And who knows what 2019 is going to bring?

6)Blackhat vs. whitehat?

We strongly recommend white hat promotion instead of a black hat. As we said before, ecommerce is the future of affiliate marketing, at least for the next 2-3 years. And ecommerce implies white hat promotion strategy. However, there will definitely be big black hat players in the niche that can adapt to the changes in the market.

Addiliate, Christoph Brughmans, Co-Founder

Website: Addiliate.com

1)Self-intro

We are Addiliate, a global affiliate network founded in 2010 with more than 1,500 direct and exclusive campaigns across the globe. Our main verticals are Sweepstakes, Dating, Gaming, Gambling, Apps and Browser Extension offers.

2)Are carrier-billing offers dead?

Yes, absolutely. Mobile content brings less than 5% of our total revenues. This is not a vertical where we see a lot of potential in the short term.

3)Best verticals for mobile? Performance on 3G vs. Wifi?

Apps and gaming offers are definitely very strong verticals for mobile traffic. They perform very well across 3G and Wifi.

4)Rising and declining verticals?

We don't see any particular verticals that are on their way out in 2019. On a positive note, we strongly feel that casino and sports betting offers are gaining a lot of traction.

5)Stable and lucrative verticals?

Finance offers (binary, forex, payday loans) have been around for a very long time and is a very stable and lucrative vertical to be in. We predict that in 2019 this vertical will keep on performing strongly for us.

6)Blackhat vs. whitehat?

We recommend white hat as it's more stable, more long-term and will lead the publisher to build a structural win-win relationship with both the network and the traffic source. It's also a lot easier to optimize white hat offers.

Affiliaxe, Oran Furman, Senior Affiliate Manager

Website: Affiliaxe.com

1)Self-intro

Affiliaxe had been around for 8 years, working globally and in various niches but the main focus is eCommerce, Health, Software and Finance.

2)Are carrier-billing offers dead?

We stopped running mobile subscription offers a long time ago to be honest. Much longer than a year as we saw that this niche was dying.

3)Best verticals for mobile? Performance on 3G vs. Wifi?

I wouldn't say there are verticals that are working best with mobile. I say that, unless the offer is specifically designed for desktop, all our main verticals are performing on mobile. Fast Wifi, fast carrier traffic and big mobile devices with excellent screens mean that mobile traffic is great for health, finance, sweeps, and even eCommerce. Of course advertisers are now fully aware that their offers should be fully optimized for mobile users.

4)Rising and declining verticals?

I don't feel like there is a vertical that is clearly on its way out. I do think the industry is shifting more and more towards clean offers. Of course crypto and such are still making a lot of money, but offers that offer real value to the users/customers are getting bigger and bigger pieces of the pie.

5)Stable and lucrative verticals?

I don't think I'm surprising anyone when I say that eCommerce is big! And it will only get bigger.

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183

6)Blackhat vs. whitehat?

There are pros and cons to each, and although I can understand why some will opt to run black hat, I personally prefer WH. If we consider ourselves to be professionals, career marketers that are looking to build real assets and businesses, then I believe WH is the way to go.

Aragon Advertising, Brian Schwartz, Director of Network Distribution

Website: Aragon-Advertising.com

1)Self-intro

Aragon Advertising has been in business since 2012. Our core verticals include Pay Per Call (Finance, Insurance, Home Services, Legal), Desktop Browser Extensions, Lead Generation & Mobile Content.

2)Are carrier-billing offers dead?

We've experienced a downward trend in mobile subscription offers the last couple years but there is still business to be had in certain categories and geos. Some of our global partners in that space have pivoted into more transparent business models including CC Submit and Mobile App installs.

3)Best verticals for mobile? Performance on 3G vs. Wifi?

Entertainment & Streaming offers tend to do well with mobile traffic sources as of late, particularly with Android devices. Not seeing a clear winner when comparing 3G vs. Wifi.

4)Rising and declining verticals?

Aside from carrier billing on the downward trend, "Sweepstakes" seems to have plateaued. Majority of people would prefer not to take their chances at a reward (they never win) but signup to receive something tangible and guaranteed such as Free Samples. According to conversations with our network partners and affiliates, crypto is still getting traction as well as nutra sales (non-rebill), including the up and coming, controversial CBD Oil. Also – now that the U.S. supreme court ruled sports gambling legal in select U.S. states, we're starting to put some more focus into the gambling vertical.

5)Stable and lucrative verticals?

A lot of our focus have gone into pay per call as our primary vertical. For the second year in a row (2018 & 2019), we were rated #1 Pay Per Call Network by

mThink. There is still a lot of room for growth across many sub-categories to help drive calls for small to larger companies.

6)Blackhat vs. whitehat?

Black hat may be used to earn a quick buck, but ad platforms are becoming smarter causing users to lose their accounts. White Hat is the more sustainable & preferred approach.

Brokerbabe & Glize, Stefan Muelbaur, Co-Founder

Website: Brokerbabe.com, Glize.com

1)Self-intro

I manage 2 networks. The better-known one is Glize, that started in 2016 with the focus of mobile offers and developed in the last years more and more into Leadgen, Nutra, COD, Sweeps and Gambling. But mobile content still remains a very strong vertical.

The other network is the adult network Brokerbabe. This program has been around as an advertiser since 2010. Since 2015 we also use Brokerbabe as a network with a focus on Adult Dating, VOD, Cams and Male Enhancement.

2)Are carrier-billing offers dead?

Like others, I was calling it a declining vertical as well, and indeed the numbers dropped in 2018. Some countries stayed strong, and new ones have opened up. Others dropped big time. With the high margins the carriers are having here, it is predictable that there will be always attractive mobile billing markets open.

3)Best verticals for mobile? Performance on 3G vs. Wifi?

The biggest increase in mobile we had is Dating promoted on Push. If you have not tried Push yet, don't hesitate – it's an amazing source and a lot of our pubs use it in the meantime as a traffic source. Another vertical that increased in mobile was Gambling.   It's actually a bit surprising for me, but the majority of the FTDs were made over mobile devices.

4)Rising and declining verticals?

For sure the crypto offers have declined. It was never a strong market for us, but we had nearly daily requests. Now nobody is asking for those, but the advertisers in this vertical became super pushy. Also CC subs that were booming in 2018 have declined a bit because advertisers have lost MIDs or gone bankrupt.

5)Stable and lucrative verticals?

COD is extremely stable for us, the offers last forever and we have there tons of pubs that put them up on their websites. The biggest growth we've had in 2019 so far is VR in Brokerbabe. We took over the entire affiliation of Reality Lovers - one of the leading adult VR portals. In the meantime VR is kind of mainstream so I see there an increase, not only in adult but also in mainstream.

6)Blackhat vs. whitehat?

There was definitively a time when it was easier to do blackhat. There will be always a market for it with bigger earnings in a given time. In the long run it makes sense to build a business model on WH too. Looking into something from both worlds can also make sense, such as Dating and Gambling offers that are whitelisted on FB for example. We see for example also the first successful affiliates promoting our exclusive adult VR Portal Reality Lovers on Adwords with family-friendly landers.

Clickdealer, Henry Whitfield, Global Head of Supply

Website: Clickdealer.com

1)Self-intro

ClickDealer launched in 2012 when a small team of ambitious marketers decided to combine efforts - the result has been an evolution from a startup network to a global marketing agency that aims to make performance marketing accessible, convenient, and human. Last month we celebrated the one year anniversary of launching our in-house platform - an all-in one solution with new features launched monthly to help our partners meet their goals, including Custom Affiliate Domains, Rotations and SmartLinks.

2)Are carrier-billing offers dead?

While mobile subscription offers are not completely dead and buried, it is obvious that the market has declined drastically amid the many issues that we saw between carriers and operators - you just will not see the same volumes and campaigns being run to the same level of success with the strategies of the past. A 2019 report from Fortumo shows expected growth to come, however it identifies segments such as transportation, ticketing, marketplaces and financial services versus wallpapers, emojis and games as the areas to see that expansion. Adjust accordingly.

3)Best verticals for mobile? Performance on 3G vs. Wifi?

The simple truth is that mobile continues and will continue to dominate when it comes to the argument of desktop versus mobile. Because of this you see more and more verticals picking up on mobile that we have not seen in the past - with many opting for simple, straightforward landing pages to increase their performance on mobile versus the more detailed and expansive pages on desktop.

4)Rising and declining verticals?

Instead of focusing on one vertical, I think the biggest trend we've seen gaining traction near the end of 2018 and early in 2019 has been the massive swing towards push notifications. Its simple and straight-forward approach

means that affiliates of all sizes can utilize its volume, even if we've seen a slight decrease in the quality of leads coming from this traffic. Like any other traffic source that takes off, the masses have flocked to it like moths to a flame. Expect browsers to try to stem the tide and make changes that will regulate it similar to Native traffic a few years ago. Those who adapt will reap the rewards.

5)Stable and lucrative verticals?

We mentioned this last year and it has not changed: Dating continues to be our most stable and evergreen vertical. We've got a team of experts who continue to grow and expand our offerings in the market and results continue to impress. In addition, we launched our first in-house SmartLink this spring and we chose Dating as the first vertical for its debut because of our relationships and history in that market. It's not like humanity is going to stop dating anytime soon, so this vertical is as evergreen as you can hope for.

6)Blackhat vs. whitehat?

The simple truth is that black hat promotional strategy is about short-term gain, not long-term growth and stability. We all know that Facebook, Google and others are doing more and more to combat more aggressive strategies and those who adjust to the "new normal" are the ones that will see success continue. Compliancy and transparency are not just buzzwords, it's the future of digital marketing whether you accept it or not.

Jumbleberry, Fred Jean-Bart, Affiliate Manager Team Lead

Website: Jumbleberry.com

1)Self-intro

Jumbleberry has been in the industry for over 10 years, where we've consistently been one of the market leaders in the Nutra and health/beauty verticals. Our expertise in online customer acquisition has led us to make a natural transition into ecomm, where we are partnering with established brands to help grow their CPA campaigns.

2)Are carrier-billing offers dead?

We've never really been big in the carrier-billing vertical, but we have definitely seen an uptick in network applications from affiliates who used to run mobile subscription offers.

3)Best verticals for mobile? Performance on 3G vs. Wifi?

Currently 80% of our traffic comes from mobile, so I can confidently say the majority of our nutra/ecomm offers are optimized for mobile conversions. In terms of traffic quality, we always suggest our affiliates to target 3G over wifi. Wifi typically generates lower quality traffic for our partners, so we try to avoid it as much as possible.

4)Rising and declining verticals?

With the market crash in bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, the crypto vertical has definitely seen a huge decline from some of its peaks in 2017/2018.

There's a lot of interest surrounding any offer that can be promoted compliant/WH on a traffic source. Our ecomm offers have exploded in the past 6 months and affiliates really want to run unique offers that haven't already been saturated in the market.

5)Stable and lucrative verticals?

Last year we had our biggest year on Straight Sale offers and this year, we're

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on pace to double our revenue numbers in that vertical. As trial cap decreases, affiliates are looking for offers with bigger caps that allow them to scale without any limitation or interruptions. Many of our Straight Sale offers are uncapped and are a more lucrative option for our affiliates.

6)Blackhat vs. whitehat?

I honestly believe that it all depends on the business goals and risk tolerance of the individual affiliate. If you're looking to run campaigns with high ROI, then I would definitely suggest black hat, but if you're tired of fighting against the compliance teams of your traffic sources, then white hat is a better solution. I know of some affiliates that aren't happy unless they're making 150%+ ROI and I have others that have built multi-million dollar business off of 25% margins. There's no right or wrong answer, but I can say confidently that many affiliates are looking to build long-term businesses and white hat provides the best solution for this goal.

Leadbit, Egor Bruskin, Founder

Website: Leadbit.com, DatsPush.com

1)Self-intro

We`ve been in business since 2005. Among other online marketing projects we became really successful with different verticals: Push network – DatsPush.com & CoD network - Leadbit.com.

2)Are carrier-billing offers dead?

Completely did, so we`ve stopped this direction. Mobile subscriptions still generate income but the vertical has become low-profit in absolute numbers, and at the same time has turned into a niche for black hat affiliates mostly.

3)Best verticals for mobile? Performance on 3G vs. Wifi?

All the mobile traffic is taken by push subscription so I think this is going to be a trend for this year as long as Google Chrome doesn't change their regulations/policies. Regarding 3G traffic, it is still expensive and is used by affiliates to promote mobile subscription offers mostly.

4)Rising and declining verticals?

Each vertical can provide an income. Some of them became massive as push notifications did for example, and that is why we divided this into a separate DatsPush project. Some verticals may be less appealing to general audiences, as has happened to mobile subscription offers or some niches in the CPI vertical.

5)Stable and lucrative verticals?

There is a main vertical which has long-term stability and covers the entire Tier 2 – the CoD vertical.

6)Blackhat vs. whitehat?

We prefer 2 strategies: The first is a strategy where we can't avoid cloaking and a constant creation of mass accounts. And the second strategy – where

we use both those methods. Anyway, the affiliate marketing is black hat always, with some little exceptions look-a-like gray hat. Very often we believe mistakenly that if Facebook accepts the creative, it means we're running white hat – but no, we aren't. Anyway both of these ways/strategies are successful, but you should constantly change your approach and tools in changing conditions. Increase volumes, expand and improve your team as the main force, and move your business up.

Magic Hygeia, Kay Chiu, PM Director & Operation Manager

Website: MagicHygeia.com

1)Self-intro

Magic Hygeia is a COD direct advertiser and affiliate network. We were established in August 2017, with a team of a couple of professional pioneers with 10+ years of experience in affiliate marketing and product development, beginning with Asian geos. We mainly do nutra, such as male enhancement, skin care, diet, weight loss and health & beauty, as well as a few daily necessities.

2)Are carrier-billing offers dead?

Affiliate marketing breeds and supports a variety of business models, such as CPI, CPL, CPE, trials as well as COD as a branch model of CPA. Every model is generated by users' needs and diversified states of markets, and has its individual booming period. However, none of them dies when its booming times have passed. It is the same case with COD. With our competitive AR reaching up to 85% ROI gain for affiliates, rich resources on Asian factories and deep cooperation relationships with suppliers, we do have confidence and enough primitive accumulation to boost another high in COD. Meanwhile, we dedicate ourselves to seizing every opportunity and resource to bring more profits and possibilities to our partners/affiliates.

3)Best verticals for mobile? Performance on 3G vs. Wifi?

[Not related to COD which is Magic Hygeia's main vertical.]

4)Rising and declining verticals?

-Push+COD/Sweepstakes/Casino/Nutra (Push or Native)

As we know, some big ad networks had tremendous push traffic in reserve in 2018 and are beginning to sell in 2019.

-Adult+COD/Dating

Adult offers are never too outmoded to be forgotten. For COD, we strongly suggest that affiliates choose high-potential geos in Asia, as well as advertisers who have steady and high approval rates. That is also the reason why we only devoted ourselves to a couple of SEA countries.

5)Stable and lucrative verticals?

Answered above.

6)Blackhat vs. whitehat?

As saturation of traffic and product conception division grows, the profit gap between black hat and white hat is getting narrower. For healthy competition and long-term development, we recommend white hat as a better choice currently.

Maxbounty, Brody Curtis, Senior Affiliate Manager

Website: Maxbounty.com

1)Self-intro

MaxBounty is celebrating 15 years as a CPA network (this exact month actually). Within that decade and a half, we've built a reputation of being trustworthy, accommodating, and knowledgeable while not being afraid to evolve to improve the network experience for both our affiliates and advertisers. The affiliate marketing industry changes often and quickly and we've always strived to play a role in shaping its identity.

The most popular verticals at our network right now are primarily: Market Research, Financial, Insurance, Travel, E-Comm, Biz Opp.

2)Are carrier-billing offers dead?

Although we have several mobile subscriptions offers in our network, they're not a staple of MaxBounty like some of our other verticals. However, the campaigns we do offer in that vertical have not seen any significant drop off in performance.

The idea that the demise of carrier billing offers is imminent may be a premature prediction or we're just not seeing anything on our end that supports that notion because it's on a small scale.

3)Best verticals for mobile? Performance on 3G vs. Wifi?

Our affiliates using mobile traffic find the most success with sweepstakes and market research campaigns.

It's important to keep in mind that these are also some of our highest converting verticals in our network across all traffic. Most of it is indeed mobile, but I think this is a testament that lucrative verticals and great campaigns tend to perform well on both mobile and desktop.

4)Rising and declining verticals?

One vertical that has seen a decline in performance is credit reporting. "On its way out" is perhaps an overstatement but government restrictions are surely impacting what can be offered and how it can be communicated. New laws quickly and unexpectedly affecting verticals, traffic, and/or promotional strategies is nothing new in this industry, however.

Mobile app installs that offer highly trackable KPI's will continue to become more popular. They give advertisers a lot of control over the type of traffic they receive and that's something we're likely to see an increased demand for over time.

5)Stable and lucrative verticals?

Financial and Market Research campaigns will always fill a valuable role for those respective industries. Companies will always want consumer data and banks will always want to make money.

While we don't see as many free trial offers, straight sale diet and health campaigns remain popular and likely always will. People's inherent desire to improve themselves will always exist, so there will always be a strong demand for those products which means affiliates will continue to make money by including them in their campaign promotions.

6)Blackhat vs. whitehat?

We value few things more than transparency between us and our affiliates and advertisers.

We encourage affiliates to try new promotional strategies but not at the cost of breaking our advertisers' term and conditions. It is expected that if the promotional strategies they want to use are not commonly accepted in the industry, that they have their ideas approved by the network and advertiser beforehand.

MaxBounty values relationships with advertisers and sending them traffic that meets their quality standards. Making sure advertisers are happy with their traffic ensures affiliates continue to have access to the best offers at the best payouts.

Monetizer.com and Advertizer.com, Vincent Shilberg, MD Germany

Website: **Monetizer.com**, **Advertizer.com**

1)Self-intro

We have two platforms, Monetizer.com is for Publishers and Advertizer.com is for Advertisers. Have been in business 5-6 years now and focus on mobile CPA and CPL offers.

2)Are carrier-billing offers dead?

I would not call it death, but more a steady decline everybody working in mobile subscriptions had to cope with. This made it for sure much harder to make money compared to the years before, but there is still a lot of money to be made.

3)Best verticals for mobile? Performance on 3G vs. Wifi?

Sweepstakes work great, both for 3G and for Wifi. For mobile content, since a lot of 1-click flows disappeared, I would say it really depends on the offer and the geo if 3G or Wifi works best.

4)Rising and declining verticals?

I would not want to make a prediction about a vertical going down so to say, since if someone is dedicated enough and puts his/her mind to it, any vertical can still bring great revenue. Compared to the last years I see more CPL offers, which could be easily explained by the decline of mobile subscriptions and therefore more people focusing on lead-gen.

5)Stable and lucrative verticals?

Sweepstakes/CPL is an evergreen and I don't see a reason this should change in the near future.

6)Blackhat vs. whitehat?

Definitely white hat. There is a lot of monitoring going on and the industry has seen a lot of abuse in the past with shady promotions, which in turn played a big part in the decline of mobile subscription.

Mundo Media, Mike Semira, VP Supply Sales

Website: **Mundomedia.com**

1)Self-intro

We were established in 2009. We have been successful in a number of verticals and traffic types – apps (CPI/CPE), lead-gen, dating, credit card submits (straight sales / trials), browser extensions, pay per aall, mobile content and a growing number of CPC offers.

2)Are carrier-billing offers dead?

There's been a steady decline in mobile subscription offers, but a few geos and carriers remain profitable for our partners.

3)Best verticals for mobile? Performance on 3G vs. Wifi?

'Performing the best' will have a direct correlation to your ability to target and your cost to acquire mobile traffic. I subscribe to the notion that successful publishers need to rely on themselves to bring something different to the table, so that secret sauce is going to help you find a positive return where others may fail.

4)Rising and declining verticals?

Apps are in no way on their way out, but they will continue to become increasingly difficult to promote given specific advertiser KPIs and evolving technology. It's already resulted in a changing landscape and has flushed out countless companies.

The first mover's advantage on push traffic has come and gone, so fine tuning that inventory (what I consider Pop Traffic 2.0) is the current step most people are tackling now.

Anything you can run on tier 1 search or premium native inventory can become rock solid, but you need to buy-in to the adjusted metrics and set your expectations accordingly.

6)Blackhat vs. whitehat?

It really depends on your business philosophy. Our role as a network partner is to identify your objectives and align our resources based on your needs. But being in the game since 2009 obviously speaks towards our longevity, so you can tell which way we lean.

Topoffers, Evgeny Fedorchenko, COO

Website: TopOffers.com

1)Self-intro

TopOffers is a premium CPA Network which proposes more than 1,500 exclusive offers from industry leaders in dating, gaming, crypto, and sweepstakes verticals. Coverage of more than 50 countries, based on PPL and extremely high traffic quality from best publishers combined with high EPC, allows us to maximize our partners' profit.

One of the biggest advantages of the company is our advanced in-house Smart Link platform – ProfitSocial, which allows us to use Smart Link technology for the maximum convenience of our partners. Our hard work has been noticed and recognized by our affiliates and partners, and TopOffers was named the Best CPA Network by 2 different selections: YNOT Awards and BusinessofApps in 2018. Our main mission is to ensure the constant profit growth of our partners and help them become Super Affiliates.

2)Are carrier-billing offers dead?

Yes, mobile subscription offers (Pin Submit, 1-click, and 2-click flow) are very likely going to disappear in the near future, because they are connected with a large number of dangerous fraud incidents and also due a lot of problems for users and complaints for carriers.

3)Best verticals for mobile? Performance on 3G vs. Wifi?

Marketing comes in many forms, but dating is one of the evergreen verticals. It keeps on converting year after year. Of course, it is harder to make money now compared to a couple of years ago, but that's not due to a lack of interest in dating, it's because of the increased competition.

It's necessary to understand that that Wi-Fi, 4G, LTE etc. traffic convert differently.   Affiliates should keep this difference in mind when they are buying traffic. Mobile traffic usually converts easier and better than Wi-Fi because of the 3G connection billing solutions. Wi-Fi, however, doesn't have the user billing data.

4)Rising and declining verticals?

Crypto offers will gain popularity - despite a downturn in the past year, crypto currency has shown a 56 per cent increase in its share of the digital money market. At the same time, capitalization saw a 5-fold decrease during 2018, yet the technology is developing and is increasingly being used as a means of payment and investment. Traditional mainstream and adult dating show stable growth. Binary options and Forex as well as utilities (mobile offers for mobile phones, photo editors etc.) show a decrease tendency.

5)Stable and lucrative verticals?

We think that business verticals such as dating, e-commerce, and gambling are evergreen and will by far remain the most lucrative in the near future. Let's take dating for example. It still converting.

E-commerce has increased its popularity lately as a really large vertical. This business model involves the selling of various goods. And there's actually an enormous variation in what can be sold via the Internet. So, this vertical is very attractive for affiliate promotion.

Gambling offers can boast pretty high commission rates for attracted paying customers, and some gambling advertisers also accept adult traffic. However, it's not a good option for newcomers to the affiliate industry because gambling offers usually require larger budgets for testing.

6)Blackhat vs. whitehat?

We would recommend a white hat promotion strategy. We want to enhance the user experience. Besides, white hat technologies allow fair competition and to lead with dignity. Black Hat can only be useful as a quick and short-term strategy since it involves many risks.

Yeahmobi, Katherine Su, Director of Aggregated Traffic

Website: Yeahmobi.com

1)Self-intro

Yeahmobi is aiming to providing the best solutions to both supply and demand sides. Our business model spans from CPI, CPR, CPE to CPS, consisting of the following verticals: Entertainment, utility, ecommerce, games, health, dating, etc. We were established in 2012.

2)Are carrier-billing offers dead?

Yes they are. We had already paused subscription offers. The one who made the prediction is correct.

3)Best verticals for mobile? Performance on 3G vs. Wifi?

We could see very good performance on games and ecommerce, and also short video apps like tiktok. For the moment we have not found much difference between 3G and wifi.

4)Rising and declining verticals?

We can see an obvious increase in loan products in SEA geos.

5)Stable and lucrative verticals?

Payday loan products.

6)Blackhat vs. whitehat?

White hat ones will go more stable and further, and is good to the advertising arena. Black hat can make money in a very short time, but will be more harmful to users.

Summary

When we finished compiling the "What's Working in Affiliate Marketing in 2018" report last year, we were blown away by the sheer amount of information that was collected. So writing a summary naturally felt like a necessary addition to making the report complete - and this year is no different. This year's report is actually even longer and more complex than last year's, so again we decided to end it with a summary.

Be warned though - those of you who decided to read just this part, are missing out on a lot of valuable details in the actual replies. As usual, those who are diligent will benefit the most.

The Game-Over Zone

Last year, the imminent deaths of 2 segments seemed inevitable. Carrier Billing offers and POP traffic. We specifically asked our respondents about carrier billing and the responses were quite clear – the vast majority of them confirmed the demise of the carrier billing vertical. However, there is a "BUT".

While some affiliate networks completely delisted these offers from their offerings, there are still some who managed to survive and continue to push decent volumes and profits.

According to them, there are 2 ways to earn $$$ in carrier billing these days.

First one would be to build relationships based on high levels of trust, which can grant you access to special flows that can still convert well. This is very sensitive territory though, as one misstep on behalf of the affiliate will ruin the party for all.

The other option is to focus on offers that actually provide value to the end user. Where such offers can be found remains partially unclear, but may suggest the future of the segment. Possible niches include the purchase of tickets, credits for games or streaming apps, and transportation, just to name a few.

The second segment that was predicted to die was POP traffic - which, as we all know, did not happen. The big G (a.k.a. Google) threatened to kill POPs for good with one of their recent Chrome updates. But as it turned out, POP

networks still found ways to bypass the blockers and continue to serve POPs in the millions/billions of impressions.

It's not business as usual for all the networks though, some damage was sustained and the overall volumes for POP traffic has gone down. As a result, POP networks report higher CPM prices and some affiliates have left the space for greener pastures – mainly PUSH traffic which has become hugely popular in recent months. (More on that later.)

An interesting statement has been made by some POP sellers, who claim that traffic quality has gone up due to the decrease of fraudulent traffic. On the other hand, some affiliates are complaining about decreasing quality. This discrepancy can be attributed to different views from buyers and sellers.

The Zone of Decliners

This year, there are significant differences in opinions on verticals that are on the decline. Many replies contradict one another.

Two examples are Nutra and Crypto. While some affiliates and networks report significant growth in both areas, others mentioned a steep decline. But some trends are still quite clear.

In case of Nutra, there was a clear shift from Trial offers to the Straight Sale model. This has to do with the recent "trial and rebill" regulations created by credit card companies. And when it comes to crypto, those who report good results also confirm another trend - the slow death of binary and forex offers. Networks that report a decline in crypto offers, tend to blame it on the market cap crash in the crypto world. So in case of a rebound, these offers should regain traction.

Another area with a more or less clear trend would be drop-shipping. After the rampant growth this area has seen in 2017 and 2018, it has started to decline this year. The market seems to be saturated with cheap products that take ages to deliver.   Ecommerce as a whole is still booming, but more focus is put on quality, usability and customer satisfaction.

Drop-shipping is not dead though, at least not yet. Those who manage to build their brand, and find unique products and keep their customers happy,

should still do well.   The importance of brand-building is stressed by quite a few experts.

The last vertical worth mentioning would be survival-style offers. These were still doing well last year - remember the tactical flashlight or various "survival kit" offers? According to our respondents, there is not much future for them anymore.

When it comes to traffic types, no candidates have been nominated for imminent extinction. But there are some that are declining and they're mostly the older ad formats. One would be the already-mentioned POP format, followed by standard display ads (banners), which are slowly losing ground to the newer and more user friendly Native ad formats.

Although it's not like these will be gone anytime soon, the decline has begun. This is partially caused by regulations (such as the Better Ads Initiative from Google). Another cause is changing user habits, for example the continuing shift from desktop to mobile formats.

Ever-increasing banner blindness, ever-improving ad-blockers and decreasing CTRs are also forcing those in the traffic business to look for other opportunities. So if you were planning to build your business around standard 300x250 desktop banners, it may be time to re-think this strategy.

The Zone of Returners

There is one VERY clear trend in not just the affiliate industry, but the online marketing space as a whole. Email list building is coming back on a massive scale. Ten years ago, many skilled marketers have sworn that email would be gone by now, replaced by more "modern" and innovative means of communicating with customers.

Even though there are many other communication channels available these days, email is still running strong and even gaining importance in many marketing strategies. This is especially prevalent in ecommerce, where communication with customers is of paramount importance. A properly-managed email list can dramatically increase customer LTV – which, with rising traffic costs, is becoming increasing crucial in achieving profits. Another segment that is coming back into the focus of affiliate marketers is SEO. Not that it ever died, but during the last few years many affiliates have

left SEO to focus on paid traffic channels.

Whereas recently, it's looking like many of the same affiliates are either returning to SEO, or are expanding their portfolio to include free traffic to complement paid traffic campaigns. There are several very good entries from SEO experts in this report, including advice on how to choose a niche and how to go about building links effectively these days. Definitely worth a read.

The Safe Harbor Zone

Some segments see growth, some see a decline, but many are remaining stable year after year. In 2019, there seems to be a lot of stability when it comes to the various verticals we can promote. Not many seem to be going down and if they are, it's often just a shift to a slightly different model.

Here are a few examples from one of the respondents: Gaming shifted from software downloads to client gaming and now to app/browser gaming. Sweepstakes used to work well with carrier billing, now they are mostly email or CC submits. Nutra used to kill it with trials, now it's a straight sale game. But in the end, it's still the same vertical, just a different approach.

The most frequently mentioned offer verticals labeled as stable would be (in no particular order): Nutra, Dating, Casino/Gambling/Betting, Sweepstakes, E-Commerce, Finance/Loans, Education/Courses, and Leadgen of all kinds. As for traffic types: Except for POPs and traditional banners, which are on slight decline, the rest seem to be either running stable or trending up. Let's take a look at the most important ones.

Facebook: Stable traffic volumes, but increasing prices and as always, stricter regulations. Random bans seem to be happening even with legit offers and whitehat marketing approaches. Still, it remains the key traffic source for many verticals, especially ecommerce. Whitehat offers are gaining lots of traction.

Native Ads: Both traditional native networks such as Outbrain, Taboola, Revcontent, MGID, as well as networks that have just added the native format to their inventory, are doing well with it, providing stable or growing volumes and still remaining relatively affiliate friendly. Regulations are becoming more stringent though.

Adult: Stable or growing traffic volumes, but the whole market has been rather stale for quite some time. Native formats are starting to gain importance too. The only relatively-new trend is growing interest in adult games and VR.

Google Search and GDN: Running strong, with bids higher than ever, but showing signs of slightly decreasing volumes as users are moving more and more to social media platforms.

DSPs (Demand Side Platforms): These used to run strong with standard banner inventory, and have recently shifted more towards native formats. From what we can see happening, these platforms are losing market share and some key players have disappeared. On the other hand, there are newcomers such as VoluumDSP, that seem to be gaining ground.

Next, let's move to segments that are showing signs of growth!

The Growth Zone

Affiliate marketing, or online marketing in general, always operates in cycles. When there are segments on decline, there are bound to be others that are rising. And it's the same situation in 2019.

So far the BIGGEST hit this year (and 2018 too) has been PUSH notifications, which has taken the affiliate industry by storm, like POPs once did. Pretty much everyone has at least experimented with this "resurrected" format and many have found success.

Several large Push traffic networks have emerged lately, and the good thing is that they're still running on very lenient rules, which is what every affiliate loves most. That is why PUSH is the most-recommended format for new affiliates in 2019.

A word of warning though: Some push list operators are literally pushing the limits by spamming users with dozens of messages a day. This is the main reason why most of the respondents in this survey are expecting some kind of regulation to be introduced, likely by Google via the Chrome browser, in the near future – may even be some time this year.

The sky is not falling though for push notifications, as it can be a useful tool when not abused. A positive change would be the implementation of some

kind of limit on the number of messages allowed per day/week/month, and/or easier push permissions management. For now, Push traffic is an excellent opportunity, so jump on while you can.

But push traffic is not the only traffic segment that is growing. More and more sources are gaining importance. Social media platforms such as SnapChat, Instagram, Reddit, LinkedIn, Twitter and now Pinterest - all of them are claiming pieces of the advertising pie.

Some of these platforms are in their infancy still, which means more forgiving rules than FB or Google, for example. These platforms offer a lot of opportunities for first-movers.

Another platform to watch is Amazon. They got into the ad-selling business quite recently as well and certainly have a ton of traffic. This is a gold mine for ecommerce affiliates and entrepreneurs.

SMS traffic has also been mentioned a couple of times in this report. This channel is no doubt an effective one, but it's not for everyone. A more complex setup is required to run this.

As for Offers or Verticals, 2019 is set to be the year of WhiteHat affiliates - at least that's what many respondents believe to be the case. Ecommerce is booming, people want to buy quality products and now we finally have a few affiliate networks that offer white hat ecom products.

Generally speaking, there is a large demand for WH products, as many affiliates are seeking to get access to the huge inventories on quality traffic sources such as FB and Google - but they need the right offers as not everyone likes to run an e-store themselves.

Another growing trend is Lead-Gen. There are so many ways to work with leadgen and let's face it, all businesses need leads, so this business is as evergreen as it gets.

There seems to be a newcomer on the market, driven by the popularity of movie streaming services like Netflix. We've seen Netflix-like offers in several affiliate networks and based on the info we got, these are growing as well.

A new vertical has emerged lately. Due to the legalization of marijuana in

some parts of the US and Canada, cannabis and CBD oil offers have been popping up left and right and the reported performance has been very good. So far the traffic's been limited, as not every network allows its promotion, but you can try promoting these types of offers on adult traffic for example.

Trends in 2019

We are slowly coming to the end of this summary, so let's wrap it up with some trends that we have spotted when reading the report.

Most favor WhiteHat over BlackHat.

Pretty much all respondents favor the whitehat approach.

Some highlighted the stability and longevity. For some, especially the networks, the trust between them and their partners is top priority. But the clearest trend is the need to provide value to the end customer. The general consensus is to focus more on making the customers happy and not just seeking ways to screw them over.

However, we have to face the truth! BlackHat can provide faster results and way higher ROI, so it will always remain attractive for many. It's getting way harder to go this route though. All the major platforms are getting better at detecting cloaking, so staying on top of the blackhat game is more resource-heavy than ever before.

Community-building and maximizing customer LTV is more important than ever.

Build lists, build your audience, understand the needs of your user base, learn how to solve their problems and provide valuable solutions. The key to success is to gain the trust of your customers and sell to them over and over. Repeat purchases are the name of the game. Aim for longevity, not just the initial sale.

Place emphasis on data analysis, intelligence, automation and retargeting.

The amount of tools we have available cannot be matched by anything we have experienced in the past. Spytools, automatic optimization tools, trackers, tracking pixels, AI, and more - never before were affiliates armed with such

powerful tools. Use them to your advantage – because if you don't, you'd be up against competitors that ARE.

Study your audience, follow their habits, analyze competition - it's never been easier to target exactly the people you want and offer them exactly what they want.

The importance of personal networking and having the right social contacts can't be overstated.

Even in the digital world, we are still humans who prefer to work with people we've met face to face. Attend the best affiliate conferences, such as Affiliate World Conferences.

Communicate with the people you work with, keep a friendly relationship with your affiliate managers, traffic source reps / account managers, and other business partners.

Be active on industry forums, such as the STM forum. Keep your mind open and accept advice from the more experienced affiliates. The right contacts and the right advice can literally take you to the next level. Doing so has become even more important than before, as competition can only continue to rise.

And That's a Wrap!

On behalf of STM and all the contributors, we would like to thank you for reading this report.

Many of the contributors are members of STMForum.com. To access more of their wisdom, which they've kindly shared on the forum, please join STM now (use coupon code **STMWW2019** for 20% off the 1st month).

Brought to you by **STMForum.com**, the #1 Premium Affiliate Marketing Community **JOIN NOW** and use coupon code STMWW2019 for 20% off the 1st month!

Next Step

Now that you have a good idea on "what's working", take advantage of this insight and capitalize on the best verticals and traffic right now - while they're still hot!

Easier said than done, you say? Don't worry, we got your back.
If you have questions on how to take advantage of the intel presented in this report, we at STMForum.com would be happy to help! The following are just some of what you will find on the forums:

- Over 40k threads consisting of close to 350k posts.

- A "Success Stories" section containing reports of major successes posted by forum members.

- A "Newbie Zone" section dedicated to helping complete newbies get up and running. Contains lots of guides, including a step-by-step 40-day beginner's tutorial that teaches everything from setting up tracking, to choosing offers, to preparing landing pages, to creating campaigns, to analyzing data, to tweaking campaigns to profitability.

- Other comprehensive guides and tutorials including the eCommerce Cookbook and the Facebook Scaling Mastery Tutorial.

- Forum sections with discussions on different traffic types including: Facebook, Mobile, Native, Adult, Search (Adwords/Bing), Email, etc.

- Discounts and coupons from various tools and services. (Please click here to see some of the discounts available.)

- "Follow-Along" sections where you can create a thread to document your campaigns to receive feedback from moderators and the rest of the community, and to ask any questions when you're stuck. This is the next best thing to having a coach or mentor, and as a member you'll get that at a small fraction of the price.

- Forum sections on various Technical & Creative Skills, including campaign tracking, programming, banner and landing page design, and copywriting.

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- A "Masterminds" section for members to form groups to work towards success together.

- Lots of case studies documenting how profitable campaigns are made.

You can preview some of our forum content here:
https://stmforum.com/preview/

Our forum moderators and members jointly possess expertise in many areas of affiliate marketing, and many traffic networks and affiliate networks have a presence on our forums as well.

You can read about members of our moderation team here:
https://stmforum.com/join/

In fact, most of the individuals and networks included in this report are members of STMForum.com! Check out our forum for more valuable content contributed by some of these members.

Click Here to Join the STM Forum Now! (Use coupon code **STMWW2019** for 20% off the 1st month.)

We'll see you on the inside!

Respectfully,
STMForum.com

Affiliate Marketing Acronyms

6WAMC - 6-Week Affiliate Mastery Course

ADX - Google DoubleClick Ad Exchange

Aff – Affiliate

AI - Artificial Intelligence

Algo - Algorithm

AM - Affiliate Marketing or Affiliate Manager

AOV - Average Order Value

APAC - Asian Pacific Countries

AR - Alternate Reality

Autosub - Auto Subscription

B2B - Business-to-Business

BH - Blackhat

Biz Dev - Business Development

Biz Op / Bizopp - Business Opportunities (e.g. Work From Home)

BOFU – Bottom of the Funnel

CA - Cambridge Analytica

CBD - Cannabidiol

CC - Credit Card

COD - Cash On Delivery

CPA - Cost Per Action

CPC - Cost Per Click

CPE - Cost Per Engagement

CPI - Cost Per Install

CPL - Cost Per Lead

CPM - Cost Per Mille (cost per thousand impressions)

CPR - Cost Per Result

CPS - Cost Per Sale

CR - Conversion Rate

CS - Customer Service

CTR - Click Through Rate

CTW – Click-to-Website

DCB - Direct Carrier Billing - offers that allow users to subscribe to by charging payments to their mobile phone bill

DIY - Do-It-Yourself

DSP - Demand-Side Platform - platform that allows an advertiser to buy traffic from ad exchanges

Ecom - Ecommerce (typically refers to physical goods being sold online)

ED - Erectile Dysfunction

EMD - Exact-Match Domain

EU - European Union

FB – Facebook

FTC - Federal Trade Commission

FX - Forex

GDN - Google Display Network

GDPR - General Data Protection Regulation

Geo - Country

HQ - High Quality

ICO - Initial Coin Offering

InApp - Anything within mobile apps (e.g. advertising banners)

IoT - Internet of Things

IVR - Interactive Voice Response

JV - Joint Venture

KOL - Key Opinion Leaders

KPI - Key Performance Indicator

LAA - Look-alike audience (on Facebook)

LATAM - Latin America

Leadgen - Lead Generation

LQ - Low Quality

LTV - Life-time Value

ME - Male Enhancement

MID - Merchant Identification Number - a unique code given to a business by payment processors before a merchants begin processing credit cards

Monetizer - Traffic monetization service, Monetizer.com

Nutra - Nutraceutical Products - such as diet pills and male enhancement pills

OG - Original Gangster - something that's been around for a long time

and is dominating the space

PBN - Private Blog Network

Pins - Pin Submit Offers

POD - Print-On-Demand

POF - Plenty of Fish

Pop - popunder and popup/popover traffic

PPE - Page Post Engagement (Facebook)

PPL - Pay Per Lead

PPV - Pay Per View (pop traffic, domain redirect traffic)

Push - Push Notification

ROAS - Return on Ad Spend

ROI - Return On Investment (=Profit/Cost)

RPM - Revenue Per Mille (revenue per thousand impressions)

RTB - Real-Time Bidding

SaaS - Software as a Service

SDK - Software Developer Kit

SEA - South-East Asia

SEO - Search Engine Optimization

SMM - Social media Marketing

SOI - Single Opt-In

STM - STMForum.com - #1 Affiliate Marketing Online Forum, founded in 2011

(use coupon code STMWW2019 for 20% off the 1st month)

Sweeps - Sweepstakes Offers

TA - Teaching Assistant

TOS - Terms of Service

TS - Traffic Source

UA - User Acquisition

VoD - Video On Demand

VPN - Virtual Private Network

VSL - Video Sales Letter

VR - Virtual Reality

WH - Whitehat