

The Ethical Way To Make Money On “Forgotten” MySpace



MYSPACE'S UNIQUE NICHE

There is a lot of information on how to make money with social networks. Many of the techniques that you learn on one site can work for another site. Many of the “black hat” or unethical tricks that can lead to getting you banned also can work on other websites (and risk getting you banned as well). We will go over a number of different ways to make money on MySpace, the ethical way, but first we have to understand the unique niche that MySpace dominates and how to use that to our advantage when creating strategies that bring in income.

DEMOGRAPHICS IS KEY

MySpace has a younger set of demographics than other sites like Facebook or Twitter. There are more teenagers and young adults on MySpace than on other social networks. In fact, if we take a look at the actual data from quantcast.com for MySpace way back in August 2009, we get a very clear view of the actual demographics of this site.

About 60 million people visit MySpace every month. Almost 60% of them are female. Seventy-five percent of people who visit are between the ages of 13 and 34, with the majority being teens. More Hispanic people visit MySpace than other ethnicities, although African-Americans are well represented too. This young group of people are typically less affluent, have no college experience, and do not have kids. Understanding the demographics clues entrepreneurs into the target audience and helps them to select income-creating strategies that work with the demographic.

For instance, you would not be able to sell retirement affiliate offers successfully on MySpace. There aren't enough people who would be interested in that niche.

Similarly, you can add games and fun exercises through a cost-per-action affiliate program and generate tons of interest, even if you make no sales. Since you get paid for the action, it can be a way to make money on MySpace.

ATTRACT THAT AUDIENCE

Once you understand what motivates and interests your audience, your job – before you can make any money at all – is to attract a segment of that audience back to your profile. This is done by creating a profile that is of interest to other people on MySpace. You can add friends via a variety of ways. Some are a little unethical, like using programs that send out multiple friend requests. While it can build your list fast, it won't create the type of organic list that will help you make money. Building a friends list with people who are truly interested in you and your business offerings is a step in the right direction towards making sales on a consistent basis.

ADDING FRIENDS

Starting from scratch and relying on your own resources to build a contact list in MySpace can be a little intimidating, even if it's not hard. MySpace offers a way to find friends and to invite them to join you on MySpace with their friend finder tool. You can search for them by name, by email, or even import your entire email list into MySpace. However, there are other ways to add friends to your list, even when this option runs out.

MEETING FRIENDS ONLINE

One of the goals you will have when adding friends is to make sure you are attracting targeted traffic. You want people who have similar tastes and interests to the types of online offers that you think you will promote. Once you

have a list of possible items that you want to promote, the thing is to find people who might want to buy or to participate in your promotions. To do that, you have to have a good idea of what you will be doing to make money and of the type of person who would take part.

For instance, say that you are offering ring tones through an affiliate offer in exchange for taking part in an online survey. The young demographic is perfect for ring tones, but those who already download ring tones are an important part of your market. Now, you decide that the ring tones you are going to promote have a Hispanic element to them. You want to look up Hispanics online and promote ring tones that have a Spanish theme.

You simply go to MySpace and browse using their "Advanced" feature. There, you can find profiles with any one of these characteristics: gender, age range, relationship status, ethnicity, body type, height, smoker, drinker, sexual orientation, education, religion, income, and status of dependents. You can even find out whether they are looking for dates, networking, or just friends and relationships. The Advanced browser in MySpace makes it very easy to fine-tune the demographic to particular market segments that you can then target with specific offers that appeal to them.

GROUPS & FORUMS

Another way to attract people who have specific interests that you want to market to is to engage and participate in groups and forums. You will find that MySpace has a wide variety of places to network, and many of these groups can help you redefine your demographics of friends to keep them organic and useful. This is a far different approach than just adding friends through some software that blasts friend requests to anyone and everyone. Using that unethical approach will build a large list, but it carries the risk of getting you banned and being labeled as a spammer.

WORK ON YOUR PROFILE

Your profile should be interesting and entertaining. It should be as targeted to what you want to sell as to the image you want to present. It should be attractive, well laid out, and interesting. One of the biggest features that MySpace offers is a variety of ways to “pimp” your profile to create excitement and buzz about your online presence. It can serve to project an image of confidence and fun, or you can customize it to suit your personality. As long as it attracts the right target market, it's doing its job.

MYSACE LAYOUTS

Unlike Facebook, which has a very business-like interface, MySpace layouts are known for being garish and loud. They can include bright colors, your choice of music, and even animations. While this is in line with the demographic of young people who are still in high school, some people want to tone their layouts down to give them a more professional look. Depending on whom you intend to attract, you can make the choice to include any number of features on your profile to make it interesting and attractive to your market segment. Many people on MySpace appreciate innovative and different types of profiles that might not work well on other social networking sites. Give it a go and see if you can differentiate yourself enough to draw attention to your profile without having to do as much work to market yourself.

SHINE YOUR PERSONALITY

The more people can get to know you and trust you, the better it will be for converting those people to customers.

Make sure you create a profile that is genuine and that helps people to get to know you better. Sometimes, a life story is appropriate; other times, you can differentiate yourself by exposing some part of your character that suits you. It can be done by sharing hobbies of interest, like skateboarding, or it can be done via just the choice of colors and the look and feel of your profile.

TOO DIFFICULT? HIRE SOMEONE.

If you do take the time to really understand how to create interesting profiles and layouts, you will have started on your first potential for making money on MySpace. Many people find it just too difficult to create their own snazzy design, so they are willing to hire and pay someone else to do it for them. If you've taken the time to learn it by doing your own, odds are that you can get proficient enough to do it for others. In that case, the more innovative and attractive your profile is, the more it will sell your services for you.

SELLING SCRIPTS OR TEMPLATES

Here's a niche that can make you good money on MySpace, and it's perfectly legit. In fact, people will love you for it because it makes their lives easier and it helps them to promote themselves on social networks more effectively. If you have a penchant for graphic design, understand social networking, and have a little programming experience, you can take advantage of this niche to create a side income for yourself.

SELLING COOKIE-CUTTER TEMPLATES AND SCRIPTS

Even if you only hire others to create templates for you, you can offer them online as an info product to people looking to update their profiles. Some come with scripts;

others make you buy the script separately. A cookie-cutter script or template can be sold and used multiple times by many different people. For that reason, they are cheaper than getting a custom design, but the downside is that someone else will undoubtedly have the same design at some point. In that respect, you don't differentiate yourself as much as a custom design, but it can help you to start developing a profile that looks more put-together and fun.

The plus side of this way to make money with MySpace is that it doesn't require as much customer interaction as a consulting site. You can easily post your templates on a website, in links to forums, and in groups, and even give some away free to generate interest. People can download them automatically, pay for them online, and you can have a turnkey system that generates money even when you're sleeping.

CONSULTING TO CREATE PROFILES AND SCRIPTS

Another way to generate money by creating flashy profiles and scripts is to create a consulting company for it. This is for customers who want something completely different than anyone else and are willing to pay for it. You will need a team of designers and programmers to get this type of business up off the ground, and it generally takes more time and energy to resolve a customer's vision into a working profile. However, you can also charge them a higher rate, since it will be a one-of-a-kind profile; as long as you keep getting orders, you can make money by outsourcing the programming and just acting as a intermediary facilitator to manage the project.

The downside is that you don't get to keep the rights to the template or to the script. Once it's complete, all rights will probably go the customer unless you negotiate for them ahead of time. That's why this type of business is more costly for customers, but can be really profitable for

people who are willing to take the time to get this up and running.

INCOME FROM ADVERTISING

A classic model of income generation online is through advertising. The most popular way to advertise on websites in the past was using Google AdWords campaigns; however, it's not the only way to make money advertising online. On social networks, you can't advertise too publicly if it is against the terms of the service agreement, but it's still possible to use different features on MySpace to promote affiliate offers and your own sponsored products.

SPONSORED LINKS

Once you've generated a large friends list and traffic is coming back to your profile, you are in a good position to sell sponsored links. If you've taken care to create a genuine and organic list that is well targeted, there are numerous advertisers that will want to use that traffic to help them create exposure for their products and services. You can contact them directly, or they may even end up contacting you. You can get monthly income from just offering one sponsored link to an advertiser who is willing to pay for it.

AFFILIATE OFFERS

Affiliate offers give people who are on social networks the opportunity to make income by referring people to the ads. They can do this on MySpace by posting links, sending bulletins to their friends lists, and even posting within comments during their online activities. There are two types of affiliate network programs out there: pay-per-click (PPC) and cost-per-action (CPA). Here is a brief

description of each that you can join and use to create links to affiliate offers that pay you commissions.

- **PPC**

These are ads that provide a payout per click. They generally range from a few cents to a few dollars per click. It can be difficult to generate the right ads, but if you're familiar with keywords and Search Engine Optimization, it can be a viable strategy to create income.

- **CPA**

These types of ads require some action on the part of the person who clicks the link. It might be to fill out a survey, sign up for a newsletter, or add their email to a list. They offer more of a payout, generally \$5 to \$12 or more per action performed. These work well on MySpace.

- **PPC-to-CPA**

This is a combination of the two, where an AdWords campaign is paid for to promote a CPA offer. Then, both strategies can be used to generate income on social networks.

MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

MySpace offers a great venue for creative people. Musicians, artists, writers, and other types who are looking to hook into a commercial market where they can gain good exposure flock to MySpace. Music bands are particularly popular, as they cater to a younger demographic. While you can put any business on MySpace, people who are creative and have some personal flare do very well here. Once you have your profile on there, it's a simple thing to start marketing your business online.

CREATE YOUR OWN ELECTRONIC OFFERINGS

If you have a rock band, write books, or do photography, you can put a sample of your work online at MySpace. The flexibility that this platform gives you allows you to embed photographs, videos, and text writing within your profile. You can also broadcast your latest creation via bulletins to all of your friends to keep them up-to-date. If someone likes what you've posted, they're more likely to share it with their friends, thus providing you with more exposure too.

Creating your own unique content to sell is a clear and proven way to market a business on MySpace. This group of people like to see new, innovative, and creative individuals online and discover their work. You can put up samples of whatever you offer and then send the traffic you get offline to another area where they can buy something from you online, using PayPal, eBay, or any other Web platform where you can perform a commercial transaction. Selling music over the Internet is a good Internet model, as is any info product, because it can be automatically delivered to the buyer once the transaction is completed.

CREATE REAL PRODUCTS TO MARKET

If you don't want to stretch your brain too much thinking up original material, you can always opt to sell real products by creating them online and having them dropshipped to your customer. One way to do that is to create a CafePress.com storefront. Using this website, you can add sayings, logos, and images to a whole line of promotional products, ranging from mouse pads to coffee cups and T-shirts. You create the design, and they manufacture the product. You get a commission off each item sold, and you don't have to do any shipping. Try to avoid business models that require you to keep an

inventory and to ship things out. This will add significant costs and time expenditures that you can easily do without when you are first learning how MySpace works. At the point you want to market something, you can just add a link to the product page, and it will come up when someone clicks on your link.

MARKETING SOMEONE ELSE'S BUSINESS

Since MySpace does attract a lot of musicians, you can offer to help market their businesses using the same techniques you would use for your own. You can charge them consultation fees, or if you want to take commissions, sometimes that's doable too. If you want to partner with independent musicians, there is no better place than MySpace to get that done. It's easy to find out about new groups, new musicians, and to decide whether you want to create a business partnership or not.

WHY CREATIVES NEED YOU

People who devote their lives to their art tend to have less interest in the mechanics of a business than others. They may want to put up their offerings online, but either don't have the knowledge or the time to do it. The Internet and MySpace can be a steep learning curve for people who have never had experience with online marketing. For that reason, it's often better for them to find someone who can get the mechanics of the online marketing laid out for them and then teach them how to maintain and update their profile. The arrangement you have for payment can vary from one person to another and you can get lots of referrals through word-of-mouth.

GETTING MORE BUSINESS

If someone really likes the work you did for them, don't forget to ask them for a testimonial. They can write some nice things on your profile as comments and let everyone know what a great job you did. You can even ask them if they have other people on their friends list who might benefit from your services. Odds are that they do because artists tend to congregate and socialize in the same circles.

IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT MYSPACE

They may want their presence on MySpace, but Internet marketing spreads across the entire World Wide Web. For that reason, you can even add some additional marketing services to people who buy your talents to create profiles. You can help them expand their reach by offering to create press releases, utilize article marketing to point back to their profiles, and use any number of Internet marketing techniques to get their profile wider exposure. After all, it's not enough to attract people to their profiles; they also need to convert them, and that's another way you can help them to refine their business model so that it is profitable for them and for you.

CREATING VIRAL CAMPAIGNS

Part of gaining exposure online is to have a marketing strategy that can include viral campaigns. These campaigns can start in any area of the Internet. Viral campaigns are small trailers that excite the public enough to share your information online. In the case of a video, a viral video is one that is shared with many people, as it becomes more and more popular by the minute, leading it to instant Internet fame. If you've also happened to monetize the video or placed a link back to a product you're promoting, a viral campaign can help sell more of your products and services, thus contributing to your income.

SOCIAL NETWORKING ENABLES VIRAL CAMPAIGNS

Certain social networking sites enable viral campaigns to take off. There are many reasons for this, but one big reason is that they have the ability to share content very easily across a large audience. For instance, YouTube is a site where Internet marketers try to stage viral videos. The large audience base of YouTube and its popularity with people online make it a great way to gain exposure for your products or services. Very popular videos can show up on the front page and get massive exposure. The videos themselves can be commented on and rated. If it is rated highly, it can gain a great deal of exposure in a very short time. In addition, YouTubers who have a certain audience level might qualify as a Google Partner and be able to monetize the video with Google ads, from which they will receive some money. The extra URL link that is placed next to the video can send tons of traffic from a viral video straight to your MySpace profile, where they can sign up to be your friend too.

MYSPACE IS A SOCIAL NETWORK TOO

It's not unusual for Internet marketers to mine the audiences of several social networking sites at once. When you share things with one audience, sometimes you can share them with another too automatically. Look for widgets that allow you to broadcast the same links and updates to multiple sites at once. This will help reduce the amount of time that you spend updating statuses on different sites and keep all of your audiences in the loop.

If you have people interested in embedding a video into their sites, you can post it on YouTube and link it into MySpace. This way, they have exposure from both sites. You can even sell services to create videos for musicians online to help them get a wider exposure. It may require an initial investment in a video camera or recorder, but

you will have created a new way to profit from MySpace just by identifying musicians who want to pay for this service.

SIGN UP TO AFFILIATE NETWORKS

There are numerous affiliate networks out there. Some allow you to offer products for a commission based on a sale or a cost-per-action. Some will allow you to find free gifts to give to your MySpace buddies, and when they sign up for it, you'll get a commission. In this way, you can generate income even without creating your own product or without selling any product either. Try to take a look at the following affiliate networks and see if you can participate and can start adding links to your bulletins and comments.

SHAREASALE.COM

This site offers lower commissions than other types of networks. However, you can get more responses because many of the offers involve giving away something for free. Since the MySpace demographic is a low-income demographic, shareasale.com is a great site to start with to get people converted from friends to people who contribute to your bottom line.

COMMISSION JUNCTION

CJ.com is for more hard-core marketers. As a publisher, it costs you nothing to join, and it is the oldest affiliate network around. It has many different categories and offers, and building a link is fairly easy. What you make depends on the offer, but you can find anything you want here.

MULTIPLE AFFILIATE NETWORKS

It's a good idea to sign up to multiple affiliate networks to get an idea of the different types of programs. You might find that you make more money off referrals rather than off of sales or cost-per-actions. You want to see if you can recruit others to become members of sites that offer a sign-up bonus or a multiple-tiered program where you make money on their sales too. This is an effective way to grow your income while doing less work.

Some networks may have exclusive offers that aren't showing up on other networks. By joining multiple sites, you can get a good idea of what products and services, commissions, and sign-up bonuses you can reap by working with them. You might end up with two or three favorites, and then you can focus on those. At the beginning, however, you do want to try a few out and see which work better with your demographic. Since it costs you nothing to join to publish those offers, you have nothing to lose by trying. Some affiliate networks are more exclusive than others, so try to have a good online presence and try again to get in if you get rejected at first. Put on your best face, answer all of the questions, and be polite. Most of the time, that's all it takes to get accepted.

STAY ETHICAL, STAY ACTIVE

Some black hat strategies can be very effective for a period of time until they are exposed, and then you run the possibility of having your account terminated. Spamming people is a particularly grievous offense on social networking sites, and administrators don't want to see the type of behavior that is crass and commercial. Your friends don't want to see it either. Even if the administrator doesn't get around to banning you, odds are that your friends will drop you and they'll warn their

friends to drop you too. Word-of-mouth can really work for or against you on a social network, and the best way to stay active is to carry on a reputation of ethical dealings.

BE SOFT IN YOUR APPROACH

You can post links to different products and offerings, but you can't email them in mass mailings to people without offending others. That's why it's crucial to try to cultivate a way to get off of MySpace and to grab a real email address, along with permission to market to them once you have it. This might mean that instead of offering a product or service directly that you offer a short report for free at a site off of MySpace, where they use a double opt-in form to accept the report and to register for your mailings.

This gives you permission to begin to market to them and keeps you from being labeled as a spammer on MySpace. What you offer on MySpace is free; therefore, there is no pressure to buy or to even click a link. That free link though is the way that you hook someone into giving out his/her private email address off of MySpace, which does two things: it identifies him/her as a potential customer and it gives you permission to contact him/her outside of MySpace.

GUARD YOUR REPUTATION

Your reputation is the way that people know you on social networking sites. It gives them a sense of trust if others are willing to show that they trust you too. To maintain that image, be sure to associate with the type of people who put you in a favorable light. Try to always stay within the terms of agreement of your social networking site. Remove offensive comments that can damage your reputation. Be sociable, be open, and don't be too commercial with anyone.

It may take some time to build up the type of network that can bring in money on a consistent basis. It's a work-in-progress as your profile changes, some audience members become more active than others, and your business evolves. It is the best way to bring better marketing exposure to more of your business and will only continue to increase in viability year after year.

Some experts suggest that some social networking sites are getting so large that they may eventually replace search engines as the "go-to" place to find connections, information, products, and services. When that happens, you'll be glad that you had the foresight to join this movement while it was still young and growing. You will have built up the network to an extent that it will be ready to harvest, and you'll be able to capitalize on any new way to build income as things continue to grow.