

# Selecting Profitable Affiliate Products

Terry Gibbs  
Interviews  
Rosalind Gardner

Distributed by  
[www.IWantCollectibles.com](http://www.IWantCollectibles.com)

Copyright 2007 IWantCollectibles LLC  
All Rights Reserved. Not for resale.

By reading this material you are agreeing to make a donation to The American Cancer Society. This is not a free book and cannot be resold or distributed to others. However, you can tell others about this book by linking to the donation page.

To make your donation go to: <http://www.nalroo.com/fordad.php>

## Free Quiz Will Test Your eBay Knowledge

*eBay Sellers - Are common eBay selling mistakes costing you money?  
Check your eBay knowledge now. This short quiz will help you earn  
more money in your eBay auctions.*

<http://www.auction-revolution.com/>

## Selecting Profitable Affiliate Products

**Terry:** Today, I have a different type of interview for you. In the past, I've sent you interviews about adding to your eBay income with affiliate marketing. Over the next hour, Rosalind Gardner and I will discuss selecting products to promote as an affiliate.

Rosalind Gardner has created numerous autopilot business, selling as an affiliate for other people. In fact, Rosalind often makes more as an affiliate than the business owner she sells for.

In 2002, Rosalind generated over \$436,000 in commissions, selling other people's stuff online. And since then, she's earned much more than that. She sells everything from dating services to watches, to webmaster tools.

In fact, Rosalind is recognized around the world as a leading authority on affiliate marketing, and her best-selling e-book, [\*The Super-Affiliate Handbook: How I Made \\$436,797 Last Year, Selling Other People's Stuff Online\*](#) has helped thousands of people master affiliate marketing.

Are you there, Rosalind?

**Rosalind:** I am, Terry. How are you?

**Terry:** I'm doing good. So, can you tell us a little bit about how you got started? This all sounds so fascinating.

**Rosalind:** I'll give you a little bit of history, first. I started in 1998. And, at the time, I had been working as an air traffic controller. I was up to 20 years, at that point. They had changed their shift scheduling procedures, so I was finding that basically the new shift schedules were making me ill, to the point where I knew I was going to have to do something or I was going to have to find a way to quit my job.

Fortunately, right around the time, the internet started getting really big, and I spent a lot of time online. I had produced a little website. It was a gardening website. And on that site, I did seed exchanges with people for free. Like I listed which seeds I had and then which seeds I wanted.

The response that I got from people was absolutely enormous. It was like every single day, I was getting envelopes received in the mail and I was sending them out, and I had a delightful garden with different stuff that I'd never seen before.

It started to click when I realized that the reach that I had, just by using the internet and a 3-page website, that the opportunity to make money must exist.

So right around the time that my brain was working that way, I saw a banner ad and it said, “Webmasters make money.” So, okay, fine, I built a website, that must mean that I’m a webmaster.”

So, I clicked on that banner and it took me to what was the one and only dating service network affiliate program, which explained how affiliate programs work. And I’m sure we’ll get into that in more detail.

Anyway, what interested me about that was that it was a dating service. And at the same time as I was working way too much and too many hours and building websites and not feeling great, I was also hanging out in chat rooms. I won’t tell you why.

But the whole dating service concept struck me as a much better alternative for singles than chat rooms, especially for women who tend to get whisked away into private rooms and private messaged, and hearing stuff that you don’t want to hear, and all of that good stuff.

So, it was a product that I could certain support. And basically, what I did was I created what was a one-page website, at the time – now it’s much bigger than that – called Sage-Hearts.com. It’s still one of my biggest sites, or it has become one of my biggest sites. It’s still the market that I like to promote the most.

Basically, as soon as it was listed on Yahoo or in the Yahoo directory, which didn’t take very long back then, the very first day it was listed it made a sale. About 30 days later, I received a check for \$10.99.

From there, I knew that affiliate marketing worked. And the rest, as they say, is history.

**Terry:** That’s kind of cool, \$10.99 to hundreds of thousands. Huh?

**Rosalind:** Uh-huh.

**Terry:** So, you just slowly built your skills as you went along. It wasn’t like you went out and took classes on how to be a webmaster or how to do anything. You just started slow and built this empire.

**Rosalind:** Empire? Sure. Absolutely. Back in 1998, there really weren’t very many “gurus” on the web, telling people how to build a website, how to sell online. Like I had no experience in sales whatsoever. I had no business experience whatsoever. So it was learn as you go.

I learned how to build a website, basically by doing “view source” on other people’s websites, so I learned a little bit about HTML that way. And everything was trial and error. Even the writing portion of it, because I write product endorsements, initially it struck me that that was probably the way to go, was to write product reviews as an affiliate. So if I got more dating services online, which, of course, I did, that I could compare and contrast them and point people in the direction that they wanted to do.

But it was all step-by-step-by-step, and I still learn that way. I go and speak at conferences now. But while I’m there, I also listen to the other speakers and continue to learn about this industry, basically every day.

**Terry:** I started the same way, with the “view source” stuff. I don’t think many people start that way anymore.

**Rosalind:** Probably not. It’s so easy now to either buy a template or use an easy site builder of some sort. Just building a site has become so much easier.

**Terry:** What do you look for in products to promote? You said that the first thing was the dating site, because you had some knowledge about them. And you’ve gone on to other products. Is there a specific format that you go through?

**Rosalind:** Well, first of all, you have to choose a market in which you wish to work. I tend to do things a little bit differently than most internet marketing experts recommend. Most of them will tell you to find a huge market that has very little presence online. That’s almost impossible to do. Some of it still exists. Or they’ll tell you to find a small niche market with a very hungry people who want to spend money.

Well, people who want to spend money are always good. But I just go to for the big markets, like online dating is absolutely huge. There’s tons of competition. But my secrets, if you will, are the fact that I try to be unique in my approach and I also advertise. I’m just blown away by the number of people who go out and buy lottery tickets, hoping to make a million bucks, but they won’t advertise their site. They’d rather wait for the search engines to come around and try to find them. And when they do finally show up, they’re on page 60. So 6 months later, they have to go and tweak their site like crazy to bring it up to page 30, and still nobody’s finding them.

So what I do, when I finish a site, I advertise it that day and I start bringing traffic to it, and I find out how it works. If I get the conversions that I want, that’s great. If not, I can work on it that night and start the advertising campaign again, and bring more traffic to it.

I like really, really big markets. And then choosing a product for the website is another matter, entirely. Basically, I don't promote anything that I wouldn't buy or that I haven't looked. Fortunately for me, with the dating services, when I explained to the online dating services that I was interested in writing reviews on their product, they would let me in for free, to take a look around and see how it worked.

Now, it would be much harder to do that nowadays, because there's so many online dating affiliates. But it's easy enough to find out about a program and how it works, by doing your research.

You don't have to buy everything you sell, but it's a really good idea to have very, very in-depth knowledge of how that product works and whether or not it's successful for people.

**Terry:** I do a lot of pages on my websites, and the title is always "Review of blank." The search engines love those. And I'm doing organic results, not ads.

The search engines love those. And surprisingly, or not surprisingly, the people love them even more. I'll only review good products. Actually, last month I broke from that and reviewed a crap product, so that I could give my readers a view of what a crap product looked like.

You mentioned about asking people for the ability to review stuff. With what I do, I don't have a problem with that. I have pretty much anyone that I contact for the niches I'm most active in, is more than happy to say, "Yeah, here. Here's the passwords, come on in."

For somebody that's just starting out, they probably wouldn't have that presence.

You mentioned in your book about some of the Commission Junction advertisers require these really low Alexa numbers in order to promote the thing, which Alexa is a traffic ranking. When you're first starting out, you're not going to meet those. But as you build your business, you will, and you'll be able to do special deals with people and get people on the phone and all of that.

**Rosalind:** What you say there is really further support for the premise that you should always be working in a market that you're passionate about, because you're going to know about products inherently.

So, when you're starting out, let's say you're doing a gardening site. Well, obviously, as a gardener, I've used many, many different products, everything from gardening gloves to different fertilizers, to wheelbarrows. I've gone to the

stores and I've tested out different products. I've looked at them, I know which wheelbarrow is tipper than the others, and stuff like that, and what's more sturdy.

So, you can use your experience just to write product reviews. You don't have to necessarily buy or have access to the product. But you're absolutely right when you say that you really do need to have presence first.

It took having 5 or 10 pages on your site and then going to a merchant and saying, "May I have access to your e-book or to your software or to whatever, because I'd like to do a review? And please, take a look at my site. This is what I've done so far."

**Terry:** Most of the people that write to me, I do look at their sites, and the majority of them I just delete their email and never go on, because they're people that come up and they have like a Geocities website, and they want a copy of \$200 worth of my materials for free. It's like, "No, you don't have the skills to do anything." That's it.

Where as other people that come in, they buy a product, and they'll look at it and they'll start promoting it and then ask for other ones. And they'll build a relationship.

When I did the first joint venture with you, where I asked you to write an article for my profitable information book, I bought your book and then sent you an email saying how much I loved your book and asked you to participate in the other one. Do you remember that?

**Rosalind:** That's a while ago.

**Terry:** Like 3 years ago.

**Rosalind:** Yeah, exactly. Once again, you're absolutely right. You build credibility that way. And for the sake of spending \$47, you're going to be making a whole lot more in return. You're not going to write a long product endorsement and not make any money. You're not doing it for the sake of doing it, you're doing it because you hope to sell the product.

So, if you can't afford to put out \$20 or \$30 to actually review the product, then maybe you should think about investing in your business.

**Terry:** Yeah, and that was the deal when I look at people's websites, and it's really quick to look at someone's website and see that they don't know what they're doing. One of the things that just amazes me on these affiliates is these people, and I won't mention any names but some of them have large presence online, who promote all of this stuff, all of this expensive internet marketing

packages and everything else, and yet are always broke and they're always in the discussion boards, complaining about they can't make any money.

But yet, if you go to their website it's, "This is the best internet marketing package you can buy. You'll make millions with it, blah, blah, blah." And it's like do these people even read the stuff they promote?

Now, I bet most people never put that association between the behavior on the person's site and the behavior of the person in the other discussion boards together. But it's interesting.

So, when you're looking for a product to promote, is there a specific type of product that you like?

**Rosalind:** I like anything that people will spend money on. And that tends to be lower-priced products. I know there are some gurus who say you should only promote high-priced products. But to start with, I think a website should be based around products that are less than \$100, preferably less than \$50, things that people don't have to spend a week thinking about before they pull their credit card out of their wallet.

And I also like to promote products with recurring commissions. Of course, online dating services tends to fit both of those categories really, really well. Like most online dating services are around \$25 a month. I have struck deals with many of the program managers to have recurring commissions, which means that if the guy or girl doesn't find somebody they're looking for the first month, not only will I get 50% of that \$25 membership the first month, but I'll get it for every month that they remain a member.

So, what's nice about that is that I advertise once on Google or they find my site through the search engines, and I don't have to spend any additional money, and yet I continue to make money month after month after month, from that particular customer.

And, on average, when somebody buys a dating service membership, they remain a member for between 4 and 6 months.

Let's say that the commission is \$10 or \$15, times 5. That's between \$50 and \$75. That's not bad. And then you just repeat that thousands of times, and then you get to write a book.

**Terry:** There must be a lot of lonely people out there. What you just said really flies in the face of everything that I think of. Actually, that I don't think of because

I've learned differently. I've always used to look at products to promote and pick them based on how much I'd make.

A couple of years ago, I got an email from a woman who had written a fantastic book, and she sent me her book. She sent me the book, said, "If you want to promote my book, here's a copy of it." The flattering type letter that showed she'd be reading my website and all of that.

So, I read through her book and it was like, "Oh, this is great." And she says, "I'm selling it through ClickBank, so this is my ClickBank thing." And I'm like, "This is great," and I set up a link. I checked it, it landed on her web page. I kind of looked at her web page and said, "This sales letter sucks," so I put in my review, "Just ignore the web page, go ahead and buy the book," and threw that out.

I proceeded to start getting all of these sales. Well, I didn't realize the book was only \$8. She's paying I think a 40% affiliate thing. I was making like \$2.80 a book.

She actually sent me an email 2 weeks later, saying that I had generated more sales for her in 2 days than she'd done in the previous year.

**Rosalind:** Wow!

**Terry:** And at that time, I was like, "Man, I screwed up." Then, I started seeing something really interesting. All of these people that had gone and bought this book, that was like way over-delivered, came back and started buying other things.

**Rosalind:** That you were recommending?

**Terry:** Yeah, other things that I was recommending, my products. And I was like, "Oh, wow!" Because I realized, at that point – I have a large newsletter list – of all of these people, very few of them are actually buyers. Most of them are like fence-sitters or lurkers, we call them.

But by promoting this dirt-cheap book in such a strong fashion, I had pulled them all off the fence and they came back in. And I, as a result of that, did very well. Although, initially, I realized I wasn't making any money off of it. Since then, I started looking at not so much the money that I make per sale, but whether the product over-delivers, so that I can get people to buy other stuff. And also, I'm looking at the total sales. You have to do this with all of your advertising. Is that right?

**Rosalind:** Absolutely. Yeah. I always factor it by total sales. Overall customer value, I guess.

**Terry:** So, if you buy 100 clicks on a search engine, it costs you so many dollars and then you get so many sales, and you do basic math like that?

**Rosalind:** Well, I do very, very, very basic math. And once again, everything I do kind of flies in the face of things. My philosophy is work to live. I just got back from a month in Mexico, and a couple of months ago I spent a month in China.

I don't have time to investigate whether all the clicks that were sent from a 3-phrase keyword like "online dating service" actually translate into clicks for which program, Match.com or IwantYou, or blah, blah, blah. I'm just not going to figure it out to the Nth degree.

For me, it's in-and-out accounting. How much did I spend on advertising and how much did I make? And as long as I'm making at least \$2 for every dollar I spend, and in most cases I make a lot more than that, but as long as I'm at least doubling my money, I'm happy.

**Terry:** And then you look at it per website. So you're spending so much to drive people in to the website, and the website does that.

**Rosalind:** Yes, I do separate it out by category. Absolutely. I have separate advertising campaigns for the dating services. And I don't work in that many categories. I see a lot of value in having one or 2 huge sites that really are customer-focused or visitor-focused.

I try to create a relationship with the visitors that come to my site, by writing newsletters and everything else, as opposed to trying to put out 1,000 Ad Sense sites that just make money by spending other people's advertising dollars.

**Terry:** We talked about being passionate, and doing something that you're interested in. I call that being a resident. I'm actually a resident of the niche. I'm not a carpetbagger that's trying to go in there and harvest some cash. I'm a resident that I promote products that I think are helpful. I build relationships with people. I build relationships with my affiliates and with my clients.

So, I'm a resident and I'm active in the niche, which gives me an edge. And I see this as my websites grow and I get better at the search engine optimization and all the different things that go into the website. I see that it's better.

And I think that we have something in common, in that I do stuff and set it up, and it's kind of a set it up, check to make sure it's working, and then just forget it,

and then it sits there. And maybe I go back in later and look at it and say, “Yeah, I can change this, and let’s test something else. Maybe not.”

Is that how you’re running your business?

**Rosalind:** Absolutely. Although now, with blogging and the fact that the search engines so love that kind of fresh content, I find that I’m having to be more active with my sites, if I want to get more free traffic and kind of dollar-cost average against the advertising dollars that I put out.

It’s all worthwhile. Right? It all comes back. And it’s not like you spend hours and hours and hours every day. Like a couple of blog posts a week, and it makes such a huge, huge difference.

**Terry:** So, in your book you say, “The commission is not the most important factor in choosing an affiliate program to promote.” What is the most important factor?

**Rosalind:** Putting your visitors first, so that they will actually become customers, if you’re not looking at giving something to get something in return, if you’re looking to get something, like if you’re looking at how much commission I’m going to get. The story about selling the \$8 e-book was perfect. It’s the quality of the product. Is the customer service good? Is it everything you would want from a product? That’s what really needs to be looked at first.

**Terry:** So, what about reliability? How do you assess that on a company?

**Rosalind:** Well, it’s so easy to do a search on Google and type in something, whatever the product name is, and then next to that type in “customer complaints” or “customer service” or “customer issues” or something like that. And you’ll see what comes up.

Or, just type in “review of blah, blah.” One of your sites will probably come up. And that’s the way to assess the customer service if you don’t have direct experience with a particular product or a merchant.

**Terry:** And then you would find the people complaining and things like that.

**Rosalind:** Yeah, and there’s lots of that. And then, of course, take that all with a huge grain of salt, as well, because people who complain and do so in writing online, they tend to be complainers anyway.

**Terry:** I’ve done a couple of promotions for companies, where as soon as I promoted them I got a flood of emails from their past customers, of complaints.

**Rosalind:** Oh, wow.

**Terry:** That's only happened twice. In one case, it was actually the person had some health issues and, as a little one-person shop, got behind. So I worked with her on that, and like forwarded all of the stuff to her support.

The other people were just terrible, and no one had ever complained about them. To me, that's embarrassing. Because remember, I'm building the relationship with the person. I want them to come back and buy stuff again and again. It was like, "Okay, that's gone. I'm not going through this."

**Rosalind:** But we all make mistakes. I've done that once, that I can really think of. And the next time, I had a couple of complaints about a product that I promoted, and I looked into it, and they turned out to be valid. I had talked with the merchant about those complaints, like I forwarded them on.

So there's always ways to work things out. As long as people know that you're concerned about their concerns, even if they figure out if they're complaining for the sake of complaining.

But face it, everybody's going to promote a dud from time to time. I did one, based on a recommendation from a friend of mine. That company still owes me \$1,400. They never paid out their affiliate commissions from a certain point onward. They had been paying, and then all of a sudden it stopped.

And then on top of that, they also weren't fulfilling their promises to their customers. So that was a big booboo on my part.

**Terry:** So you pulled them immediately, because they weren't reliable, either on the customer end or on the affiliate end?

**Rosalind:** Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Definitely. And letters to the Better Business Bureau eventually, and stuff like that. But even so, it didn't really matter.

**Terry:** I promoted an eBay sniper program a couple of years ago, and it was a residual or recurring commission when I signed up. And then they didn't pay, and I complained. They changed it to you only get paid the first time. So immediately, I'm losing, and I was giving them like 50 sales a month at \$3 apiece. And I'm thinking over the course of the year, 50 sales a month, I'm going to get 600 people in there, I'm going to get \$3 a month for those 600 people, I'm going to be doing pretty good. Right?

And then they changed the deal, and then they changed it again, to you get a free month of service.

Of course, they never sent me any emails telling me they were making these changes. And every time that I wanted to get paid, I had to go log into their system and then bitch at them in order to get them to write me a check.

Then, they changed it to a month's free service for every referral, so now I have free snipe ability through like 2027, I think.

At that point, I said, "This is not worth it," and I'm actually promoting a snipe program that doesn't pay a referral fee because it's better and it's cheaper.

**Rosalind:** Well, and that goes back to the loss leader idea. It works. You're promoting something that's free, that works for your customers, and they trust us.

**Terry:** And for me, that was the whole deal of let's start looking at what these companies are doing, because that was the first time that I realized that somebody had screwed me out of my commissions. And I started looking at things. And now, I knew before, and this is something I want to discuss, I knew before that when I looked at a website there were things that people did on websites that would cause me not to promote them, like bleeding away the commissions or hijacking them.

Let's talk about some of those. What are the things that you look at, that say, "I'm not going to promote this?"

**Rosalind:** The most glaring one, for me, is when they have outside links to other programs. Like they have their own affiliate links to other products that they promote on their site. At that point, I just know I can't promote that because I'm paying to advertise and my customer goes to my site, they click on my link to that particular merchant, they take a look around, and then they see this other product. That merchant is getting free traffic from me, and I'm not making anything out of it. Like it's not even being cookied, if you will. So, I can't be bothered with them.

Merchants can do a whole bunch of things to bug me. But that would really be the biggest one. We talked about product quality and that sort of thing.

**Terry:** Sales ability. The ability to actually close the sale.

**Rosalind:** Well, I kind of assess that right from the beginning, when I take a look at their site. I take a look at their sales copy and I know about the service and stuff, and I've explained all of that to my visitors. So, I usually count on that.

Although, there are times where I find that I've sent an awful lot of traffic to this program and I've generated an awful lot of free trials, and only like half a percent or even less are actually turning into paid referrals.

So, at some point, I'll give it a couple of months or even longer. If I've got that linking competition with a similar service, I'll just drop that link and continue to promote the service that does better for me. So I'll end up probably doing twice as many sales, if not more, by just reducing the number of options for my customers.

**Terry:** And that all goes back into that paying attention. Let's not say testing, let's say paying attention to what's going on.

I had a webmaster that, through ClickBank, put Paypal and Pay Me Now... I don't think it was Pay Me Now, or whatever these other links are, so people could buy, and I only got paid if they bought on the ClickBank link. With that, it's like, "I don't want this."

There was another website, where you sent them in through a ClickBank link, and it processed the charge on their personal credit card or merchant account. It was like, "How am I getting credit for that?"

**Rosalind:** Nice. Yeah. I definitely look at that. As a matter of fact, I don't know whether I even mentioned that in my book. I'm going to make a note of that. I must have said something similar to that, but it's certainly a point that needs to be emphasized, especially with ClickBank products. And there are so many ClickBank affiliates, that you really do need to check those things out.

I have a separate page for it. Well, I did have a separate page for Paypal payments for my book, but now, because ClickBank takes Paypal, you don't have to do that anymore. So it's nice, you only have to have the one page to sell a particular product.

**Terry:** Yeah. With the ClickBank, I found a guy, one time, that you'd send them in and his ClickBank ID was ABCD, and then you get to the bottom of the page and you click on the link, and it went out through the payment link of the ClickBank ID of 1234. The first time I looked at it, I was like, "Well, the guy's ripping off my commissions." And then I went back and looked at it again, and it was back to ABCD.

This guy was going in at peak traffic periods, and swapping the link out so that he could rip off the commissions. And when I started looking, because I'm in a global environment and have customers in England and Australia, when I do this, I get a lot of sales in the middle of the night. And then there's specific time periods.

This one guy, I never got any sales from him in the middle of the night, which would be the British sales. That's why I got into looking at that. He's gone. I don't promote him anymore.

But all of those little things that people are trying to cheat, and you can see the evidence if you look at the website.

I always go through, when I set up a link, and then go in and, on ClickBank, you can look at the bottom of the payment screen and it will say, "Affiliate equals," and I make sure that it has mine in there.

**Rosalind:** Sure.

**Terry:** That's like a test. I see that that's like a requirement for the stuff, because people set them up wrong. Sometimes, they might have it as an error, but I want to get paid.

**Rosalind:** Yeah, getting paid is nice.

**Terry:** Yeah. I want to get paid and I don't want to have to complain about not getting paid, because that takes so much energy.

**Rosalind:** Exactly. I can't be bothered. I do, if I see that a friend of mine has made a mistake with something, then I'll certainly make the effort to get in touch with them and sort things out.

But if it's somebody I don't know and they've just whatever, requested a JV with me, and I don't really know their background that well, that's it, I just won't. Thanks, but no thanks.

Actually, my virtual assistant and I have a shortcut for that. It's TNBT. Thanks, but no thanks.

**Terry:** You actually respond. I just ignore them.

**Rosalind:** We respond to everything.

**Terry:** That's that customer service, again. Let's see, we talked about all of these multiple payment options, Ad Sense, bleeding away commissions, commission hijacking.

Here's another question for you. I looked at my top affiliates, and I sell e-books and other information products, mostly, and they all have something in common. They all have a few things in common. With the exception of one, they all have their own products. And with the same exception, they all have newsletters. And the one person is an important exception. The guy has a huge website, like

maybe 35,000 or 40,000 pages on there, a really good search engine, so he's bringing a lot of traffic through his website. He doesn't have a newsletter and he doesn't have a product.

So, this would tend to mean that having your own product is important, and this would also mean that a newsletter is important.

**Rosalind:** You know, Terry, it's great if you do, if you've got the energy to do your own product. It took me 6 months to write my book. Right? I sweat great drops of blood in doing so. Certainly worthwhile. It's seriously, basically doubled my income.

However, lots of people don't want to write a book, for whatever reason. So, that's the beauty of being an affiliate, is that you put a link on your website, you put a product review on your website, you spend a couple of hours, maybe, on doing a product review, and then you leave it up there and continue to earn commission from that, as long as it's there. There's no product to ship, there's no inventory to store, there's no customer service related to it. Being an affiliate really is a wonderful thing.

But, when it comes to newsletters, I am appalled – is a good word – at the number of affiliates who think that they don't really need to have a newsletter because they're affiliates. I think that they're probably cutting their income by about 90% if they don't have a newsletter.

I started my newsletter just about as soon as I started my site. It wasn't very long. And this was back in 1998. And I had no idea what I was doing, but I read about the service and it made sense to me that you'd want to put people on a list and continue to be able to contact them and let them know about other offers that were relevant to their initial search.

If they're coming to an online dating service site, then obviously your newsletter is going to be about online dating services and everything related. You can go pretty wide with that particular topic. Right?

So, yeah, I think a newsletter is absolutely essential. Like I do a lot of consultations with affiliate marketers, new and more advanced affiliate marketers. Until we get on the phone, I don't look at their site, and that's always the first thing I look for. Granted, the first thing you see is the initial ambiance, the look and feel of the site, whether or not it's welcoming color-wise and does it look good. What's the feeling you get?

But the first thing I look for is that sign-up box. And if it's not there, I know why they're not making money.

**Terry:** Uh-huh. You said 90% comes from a newsletter. I think my numbers are a little lower than that. But 70% would be a good number.

**Rosalind:** Well, any number, even if it's 50%, it's still so significant.

**Terry:** Right. And for me, I love the newsletters because I actually have this challenge going in my head right now, that I've been doing. I want to do a \$10,000 newsletter. So I want to send out a newsletter and make \$10,000.

Last month, which was February of 2006, I sent out one newsletter and did \$7,500.

So I know that there's a possibility that I can hit that \$10,000, and I've gotten really close a couple of times.

That's money that if I didn't have a newsletter, I wouldn't have that.

**Rosalind:** That's right. And how long did it take you to write that newsletter?

**Terry:** My average newsletter is about 7 pages long, a Word document, and takes me 2 hours to write.

**Rosalind:** And then the setup and stuff like that is probably another half an hour or so. So, even if it took you 3 hours, that's a lot of money. That's \$2,500 an hour.

**Terry:** That's the important thing, because it's about building relationships.

I think the reason that my best affiliates all have products is the circular model. They have affiliates driving people into their websites, and they have newsletters, just as I do. So, they have this constant stream of affiliates driving people in. They're selling their products in an ethical manner that results in commissions for their affiliates, and then they're selling the people that are coming into their website additional products as an affiliate themselves. So that's why they're so successful.

With what you're doing, you're using the pay-per-click advertising and the search engine optimization and these other strategies, in order to drive your traffic. So, that would be the difference.

**Rosalind:** And, don't forget, I do have my own products.

**Terry:** Oh, yeah, the book.

**Rosalind:** And I do have my newsletter signup in the middle of that product page. And I give them a compelling reason to sign up for it. And then, of course,

they get access to the NetProfitsToday.com site, once they receive the first issue of the newsletter. Now, that site has just been advertised for free, which gives them access to all of my other information about how to become an affiliate marketer.

**Terry:** And everything is all beneficial to the reader and builds the relationship.

**Rosalind:** You're right, it really is all about relationships. I just recently started a forum, and I didn't do that for a long time because I knew it was going to take a lot of work. I was right. It's added to my workload, but it's also fun. People are asking really good questions, and there's other people in there, besides me, who are answering questions. They get the benefit of they get to put their website links in the signature lines, so they get a benefit if they answer the question well, then people are interested. So they get to link out. They get traffic from that, as well.

It's all good and it's all kind of symbiotic, if you will.

**Terry:** So, is that forum about affiliate marketing?

**Rosalind:** It's about internet and affiliate marketing, yeah.

**Terry:** Where's that at?

**Rosalind:** NetProfitsToday.com/forum.

**Terry:** So the NetProfitsToday, what's that website? That's your internet marketing?

**Rosalind:** That's my affiliate marketing website. My newsletter is on there, my blog is on there, the forum is on there, I've got articles on there. It's a huge, huge, huge website.

**Terry:** I'll have to look at that. That must be new, huh?

**Rosalind:** It's a couple of years old.

**Terry:** It's been a couple of years since I've looked at your stuff. So, in your book, the Super-Affiliate Handbook, I really like that, the whole super-affiliate deal, you talk about checking vendors on – what is it – is his name Gardner? Allan Gardner?

**Rosalind:** Allan Gardyne.

**Terry:** Gardyne? On his website that's at Associate Programs?

**Rosalind:** Uh-huh.

**Terry:** And a couple of other sites. Can you tell us a little bit about how important that is, to check those things?

**Rosalind:** I'll say that it's about finding affiliate programs. The first place I always go to, to find affiliate programs, is Commission Junction or Link Share. Anyway, one of the big affiliate networks.

The fellow that you just mentioned, Alan Gardyne of AssociatePrograms.com, that's a directory.

I am, nowadays, much less likely to bother with directories. What I find is that directory owners do not keep up the information about the programs that they list. It really is just a directory, and the listing goes in there. And if the program gets cancelled, needless to say, the merchant doesn't go in there and advise all of the directories that the program no longer exists or that the commission rates have changed, and all of the other stuff that gets put in that listing, which are no longer valid or changes have been made to. It just doesn't get updated frequently enough.

I was in there, I'm going to say, probably about a year or so ago. Of the 7 programs that I checked, only 2 listings were correct.

Since then, I seriously don't bother with directories at all anymore.

So, I look at the big affiliate networks because, of course, the affiliate networks are in place to serve both merchants and affiliates. Right? And the merchants pay to participate within the network. The network, in most cases, handles affiliate payments or affiliate commission payment protesting. So, it's a benefit to everybody, that the affiliate network maintains all of their listings directly.

Obviously, they're not going to advertise a merchant that is no longer part of their network. So, you get good information from a network.

**Terry:** I actually sold a product years ago, before I did my own, on my own website, affiliate program, I sold it and used Clicks Galore, I think it is.

**Rosalind:** Oh, yes.

**Terry:** I got an email from them yesterday, saying that I had to do a test transaction because there's been no activity. I was like, "I haven't sold that in 2 years." Evidently, I'm still listed in there. I sent them an email telling them that I don't sell it anymore. I think they have money, because I put money in there so they could pay affiliates. So maybe I'll get that back.

What about tools? Are there specific tools that you look for, that a vendor would provide you?

**Rosalind:** A lot of merchants will give their affiliates merchant copy, like advertising copy. But super-affiliates don't use that. They write their own copy.

There's a number of reasons for that. If you're writing honest, unbiased reviews, then you're not going to use merchant copy. An honest, unbiased review. There is no such thing as the perfect product. Therefore, when you're writing a review, there should always be something that you're just not that crazy about, about this particular product.

Like I wrote a book review, actually in my newsletter this week. I talked about blogging. And it included 2 short reviews of blogging books that I read this week.

One of them had some stuff in there, some recommendations that I really wasn't crazy about, that I thought amounted to blog spam, comment spam, search engine spam. And I thought, "Okay, in general, for the price, it's not bad. You're getting some step-by-step information. It would be worth paying it for that alone. But if you're going to do that, then ignore this portion or risk following that one at your own peril and having your site de-listed by Google.

What I find is when you're really that honest about a review, you actually make more sales. Like I said, there is no such thing as a perfect product, and only the merchant is not going to tell you about the bad parts.

**Terry:** Yeah, I call that mentioning the elephant, from the phrase the elephant in the living room. You don't leave anything unsaid that might pop up later. You'd stand around and ignore the elephant while you're having a conversation. And everybody knows it's there. Right?

So in my interactions, and this is not just online but in public or personal interactions, it's like, "Hey, see that elephant? He's kind of cool!" It changes the whole deal.

I think some of the dating books call that negs: giving people a neg.

**Rosalind:** Oh, yeah.

**Terry:** You're probably really familiar with all of that.

**Rosalind:** I've never heard it put quite that way, but that's a really good point that you make, actually. It would be a good thing for me to mention. I don't think I've ever really put that out to the dating crowd, if you will, that it's important to maybe include one or 2 of those things in their profiles, if you will.

**Terry:** Yeah. I look at it and I don't do the online dating, but I look at it is when I'm out, I'm 43 years old, and when I'm going up to a 22-year-old woman and trying to pick up on her and get her phone number, I know that she's thinking I'm too old for her. So I need to say that right upfront and see how she responds.

**Rosalind:** We won't ask you why you're looking at 22-year-olds.

**Terry:** Yeah, it's a personal preference. Anyway, the whole thing is I put it upfront. It's the same thing with the sales process of there's something wrong here.

In the case of the 22-year-old girl, she can say, "Yeah, you're right, you are too old for me." And it's like, "Fine, I'm done. I don't have to put any more effort into it."

From a sales point of view, when I say to somebody, "This is pretty good, except the book's terrible to read, which is a common problem with PDF's, because people put all of those fancy borders and all of that other crap in there. It's difficult to read it, but the information's good," it's telling them right upfront.

**Rosalind:** I'm going back to the 22-year-old. I'm 46 and you're too old for me.

**Terry:** And that's it, right? Anyway, we're not going to go there. I try to be, within the eBay niche, I try to provide the best tools. I don't do a lot of banners and stuff, because most of my people are newsletter people, but I provide them with the articles that they can use.

Actually, that's something we need to talk about a little bit. You said that super-affiliates do not use the copy provided by the vendor. Right?

**Rosalind:** I always tell the merchant – or ask the merchant, I should say – whether or not I can morph their copy. And provided they say yes, that's what I'll do. I'll change certain things here and there. And I always add the I. "I like this. I don't like this. I think you blah, blah, blah," just to personalize it.

**Terry:** So, it's a process in the sales letter, "Oh, you need this, you need this, this is what this will do for you," and then you're putting in there, "I checked this out and this is what I liked about it and this is how it will help you," so it's all I, you, I, you?

**Rosalind:** Right.

**Terry:** Fantastic. But I still see a lot of this stuff. You see these huge promotions, where everybody sends out the same email over and over again. I

call it the bandwagon effect. It's like these mega-promotions. And when everybody jumps in and starts to promote something, I tend to run the other way.

**Rosalind:** I'm with you. I'm running in the same direction.

**Terry:** I find that, and the reason that I do that, is I don't want my readers to think that I'm just like everybody else.

**Rosalind:** That you're on the bandwagon. I actually tell my subscribers that I'm not on the bandwagon. Like I'll say, "You'll never accuse me of being an early adopter, because you might have seen this product promoted 4 months ago, quite heavily. I've been away on vacation for the last month, because I'm making so much money as an affiliate marketer, so you should maybe listen to me." I never say that. "And I've now had a chance to review it," and blah, blah, blah, I go on that way.

They actually have more faith in you when you're not on the product launch bandwagon. I don't like it, either.

**Terry:** Actually, I see it more on the discussion boards, with people complaining about it, than in my email box, because I tend to not subscribe to the people who send those newsletters out for very long.

**Rosalind:** Right.

**Terry:** Which maybe that's a telling lesson. Over the past I guess it's been 8 years that I've been doing this, I've subscribed to many, many, many newsletters, and unsubscribed to most of those. And that's one of the things that I look at is the pitching. I call it adding value.

By adding value, it's writing that review, it's telling me how it will work for me, not just copying and pasting. And that's probably the biggest mistake that I see affiliates do is they don't do any added value.

**Rosalind:** And that is the key. Like I call it my feature article. So, I will write about a topic related to the product that I intend to promote at the end. And I actually separate out the product.

Like in this week's newsletter, it's, "Are you blogging yet?" So I write I would say probably 750 words or so, maybe even 1,000, I don't know, of my experience with blogging and if they're not blogging yet here's all the things they should consider about blogging, why they should start a blog immediately. I show them where to get free tools and how to easily get started with one.

And then at the bottom it's, "If you want to learn more about blogging, you might be interested in 2 books I read this week. The first one is blah, blah, and the second one is blah, blah. And I just got both books."

So, they feel they have an option. It's not all about the product.

**Terry:** Yeah, I've done newsletters where I explain a bunch of stuff and give them actionable information. And then I go right in and say, "You can take this information and then start here and do it yourself, or this product, this book will help you get a little faster on that." Those tend to work better, and I find that because I'm a windy person, I actually send out my newsletters and I put, "This is a short one, only 5 pages."

And I do things like that, which I find are very important, because that's the credibility. And I know that a lot of people say, "How can you write a 7-page newsletter, and who would read that?"

But they do read it. I've actually buried things into my newsletter, down towards the bottom, in the middle of a paragraph, "Send me an email, I'll give you this report free," and stuff like that, and the people respond to those. So, I know that they're going through.

It's something now, after I think it's been 5½, 6 years I've been writing these newsletters, I've learned to do that. When I first started, to sit down and write a full page was an ordeal.

**Rosalind:** Oh, yeah. I wanted to ask you. What I've done recently is instead of putting the whole newsletter through the autoresponder service, now I write a short introductory version of the newsletter and then I point them at the page. So my Alexa ranking has gone up in that time, as has my traffic, as has my search engine results.

**Terry:** So you're pushing them onto the website, and that would be a good way to have them also bleed off into your other product promotion pages?

**Rosalind:** Correct.

**Terry:** And you're seeing that, too. Huh?

**Rosalind:** Oh, yeah. Absolutely. My sales went up.

**Terry:** What I do is I send out the long newsletter, and they always have summaries at the top. "This newsletter contains 4 items," or "This newsletter contains 2 items." And then I write the whole newsletter. And then 3 or 4 days later, I send out a follow-up newsletter saying that it's now online, with a link to it.

And then, I also put product promotions and other short notes in there, because I have a lot of affiliates that create their own products. I have a lot of people that create their own products and then they come to me and say, "Terry, I want you to promote my stuff." And I say, "My slate's full." And I am. Actually, right now, this is early March, and I'm projected out into September for what I'm doing.

So I tell them, "Look, my slate's full, but one of the ways you can get my attention is to generate some sales for my products."

Once they do that, I go in and I'll use that short note in order to make them happy or to fulfill my obligation to them. And that works so well for me.

I know that there are other people that do those summary newsletters, where there's like 5 or 6 short paragraphs and then each one has a link to a different article. For my affiliates, that doesn't work very well.

**Rosalind:** Sometimes, it's too much option, I think. I tried that, too. I think I've probably tried every method possible. And when you put too many links in the newsletter, they just read through the first short summary and look at the link and think, "I want to read through it." And by the time they've gotten to the bottom, they've forgotten about the first one, so the first one never gets any attention. And, of course, that harkens back to the psychological premise of recency, if you're interested.

**Terry:** I did something, actually I screwed this up and realized it, because I have 2 newsletters that go out to overlapping market, so they both get the same newsletter with little small changes in it. And when I did my notes, I was giving away a free report that a friend of mine did, and I was promoting something, and then I was reminding them of something that I promoted before, and then I was telling them there was an article on the website.

So I was doing 4 things, and the article on the website always goes at the top because that's the reason for sending the email itself.

To one list, I sent it out with the free report in the number 2 slot, and then the 2 promotions below it. On the other list, I sent it out with the free report at the bottom, and made them scroll past those. I don't know the effects, because they're both going through the same link, but I think that was an important change. Remember, there's a summary at the top that tells them they're going to get a free report.

So by changing that order, I think I increased my effectiveness, because I got them to go through each one of those things to get to the free report.

I think that all of that, and that doesn't take much time, it's just a little bit of thought, I think all of those things, from an affiliate point of view and from maximizing the revenue for sending out that newsletter, thinking about all of that stuff is so important.

**Rosalind:** As much as I don't like testing and tracking, it's about doing it and finding out what works best for your subscribers.

**Terry:** So Rosalind, tell us a little bit about how the listeners can get a hold of you and tell us a little more about how they can get your book.

**Rosalind:** Alright. To see the book, go to [SuperAffiliateHandbook.com](http://SuperAffiliateHandbook.com). For more information about affiliate marketing, you can sign up for my newsletter at SuperAffiliateHandbook.com, or you can go to [NetProfitsToday.com](http://NetProfitsToday.com). I've got basically hundreds of articles and newsletters, there's the blog and the forum that you can get into. It was only started a couple of months ago, so there's not a whole lot in there yet but, for being only a couple of months old, it's really quite active.

So that's how you get in touch with me. And if you want to take a look at an example affiliate site, visit Sage-Hearts.com. Terry, you might want to consider going there.

**Terry:** I have more fun doing face-to-face.

**Rosalind:** What's that?

**Terry:** I have more fun doing face-to-face.

**Rosalind:** Oh, I see.

**Terry:** I'm so ugly, that when I get out there and send them an email and send them a picture, they're like, "Oh, my god!"

**Rosalind:** Oh, yeah. Right.

**Terry:** But when I get out there in front and I talk, I can sweep them off their feet.

**Rosalind:** There you go. Whatever works, right?

**Terry:** Whatever works. All of it works. It's practice. I think practice is the most fun. That's why I'm 43 years old and single, because I like practicing.

So I want to thank you for coming on and doing this. This was a lot of fun. I think we covered some great stuff.

For those of you who are eBay sellers, interested in creating additional income streams, Rosalind's book is a great guide to starting affiliate sales. It's actually like 260 pages long and has just a wealth of detail. Everything from the tools that you'll need to how to select products, like we've been talking about today, how to promote products, all kinds of valuable information. It actually surprises me, every time I go in and look at how much is in there and how much I missed before.

So I would recommend that you get Rosalind's book, or at least go to her website and sign up for her newsletters and check out what's out there.

**Rosalind:** Thank you so much, Terry. It's been a pleasure.

[Link to Rosalind's Site](#)