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ClickBank

By James L. Paris

ClickBank (www.clickbank.com) is a network of affiliate opportunities; it's along the lines of a *Commission Junction*, about which we've spoken in the past. However, there are a couple of huge differences. One difference is that *all* of the products are made available via digital download. So, if you put an add for one of these products on your website, and someone buys it, that person will download the product in order to retrieve it for use. The downloadable product could be an ebook, some software, perhaps a video or audio file of some sort; regardless, it's all digital download. That's one of the things that makes it different.

The second thing that makes it different is the huge...and I mean huge...commission payouts associated with these products. Now, we all know that with a typical affiliate program, you'll make an affiliate sale and receive maybe 5 percent, 10 percent...15 percent if you're lucky...but that's not really very much money. If somebody buys, say, a \$20 book, maybe you make a dollar or two from that. That's not very exciting. Now, does that mean we dump programs like Amazon Associates? No. Again, as we proceed through all of the facets of this Internet coaching program, I will continue to emphasize the benefit of having multiple streams of income. The point is that we keep doing *all* of this stuff because we can make money *from* all of it, to one extent or another. Some opportunities will pay more than others, but the point is that each is indeed an opportunity, something we can exploit (in a good

way), so we make sure to take advantage of each, as appropriate.

As for ClickBank, you can join right away; it's free. Here's what to do first: join the affiliate network, and then start looking through the "Marketplace." The Marketplace is where you will find all of the different products offered. You get there by going to www.clickbank.com, finding the "Marketplace" link at the top of the home page, and clicking on it.

Before moving on, let me give you a warning about something. There is a lot of garbage in here (with all apologies to the good folks at ClickBank, but that is my opinion nevertheless). I mean, absolute garbage; so much so



that I would be ashamed of you, and you should be ashamed of me, if we were to sell those products on our websites. Some of it is quite good, of course, but a lot of it is not good at all. I'm going to recommend to you that before you put something up on your website, you buy the item yourself to check it out. When you participate in this program, you are, to some extent, putting your name and reputation on the line. You'll notice that I won't suggest you do this with Amazon or some of these others, but I get the sense that

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ClickBank does not do a lot of screening of the products that they allow for sale on its site. Buyer beware; don't just grab a bunch of products to sell with no vetting on your part, because you might well be sorry.

When you start the process of looking for appropriate products to sell on your site, you have to think in terms of what is a good fit. Obviously, there is a ton of stuff available through ClickBank, but you have to think carefully about the theme of your website. When I began this, I visited ClickBank wondering what they might have that would be a good fit for my flagship site, Christian Money.com. I ended up spending ten to twelve hours going through the ClickBank site to find just two products that I wanted to add to my site. The first one that I found and liked well enough to add is one called *Car Auction Inc.* (www.carauctioninc.com). The way it works is that a person joins the service and then can do a search, based on make and model, for cars that are available in his area at auctions; there are different membership level, to boot. This is a great example of a product that is a perfect fit for a consumer finance-oriented site like Christian Money.com. We'll talk a little later about how you can navigate the ClickBank site to find products that are best suited for you, but the first order of business is to be able to identify intrinsically those product areas in which you should be looking, based on the theme of your website.

I have another ad from ClickBank that I put up on my site just recently, as well. The ad is for a product called *My Porn Blocker*. Some of you might laugh at this, but I personally think this is a serious issue and believe that parents should put up a mechanism like this on their computers if their kids use



them. I think that this is just a fantastic program, and the website to which you're connected, once you become an affiliate to this, is great—the website just makes the sales for you. Well, in the first several hours after putting the product on my site, I made a sale of the product—\$16 to me in nearly no time. ClickBank could well prove to be a major game-changer for me; this will mean literally thousands and thousands of dollars to me each year in exchange for adding some ClickBank products to my site, so you can expect me to be doing a lot more of this going forward.

The feature of ClickBank that makes it so exciting is the commission rates. The commission rates through ClickBank products generally range between 60 and 80 percent. That's right; I said *60 to 80 percent*. Payouts like these have the potential to revolutionize affiliate marketing programs, and while few offer such payouts at the present time, it is likely that more and more will be “upping” their commission rates to stay competitive as more people gravitate toward ClickBank in an effort to make the time they spend on these activities yield a better return.

Here's how it works. I don't know how many products are on here...it's like 100,000 products or some insane figure like that. Anyway, when you are at the “Marketplace”

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page, you will see the “Find Products” search mechanism. This is where you begin. We have a member of our coaching program who has a website dedicated to travel in Australia, so I will use him as an example of how this all works. If one were to type in “Australian Travel” into the search mechanism and do a search, a bunch of different products will be returned based on keyword relevance (you can adjust the search results on a variety of bases, including popularity, initial dollars per sale, and a variety of other measurements that you may find helpful as you go through the process of picking products. For further assistance with the individual screening measures, you can jump to the “Help” section, the link for which is located at the top of the page). Putting in “Australian Travel,” a whole bunch of result were returned; no surprise there—they key is sifting through those results to find the best fit for my website (or, in this case, our student’s website). One of the best results, based on keyword relevance, is for something called *Travel Tips Australia*. When I click on the Travel Tips Australia link, it brings me directly to the sales page for this program. As it turns out, this guy is selling an ebook at his site. He is selling the ebook for \$19.97, and he’s paying you (the reseller) \$13.36 of that. That’s a 67 percent payout! The payouts vary, but they are all generally a lot higher than those to which you are used from other affiliate opportunities.

The first step in finding products on here is for you to go over to www.clickbank.com, get to the “Find Products” search mechanism, and look for products related to your website’s theme. You can even use the categories on the left-hand side of the “Marketplace” page to drill down your search process even more expeditiously. For

example, if I decide that I want to look for products having to do with the area of, say, fitness, I can start by going to the “Health & Fitness” category, click on that, and review the sub-categories that are available to review within “Health & Fitness,” sub-categories like “Nutrition” and “Strength Training.” If I click on one of these sub-categories, doing so will take me to the same kinds of opportunities that I was getting more manually by plugging words into the “Marketplace” search mechanism.

One of the neat things about this is how it pertains to that Internet coaching member or person who’s otherwise interested in Internet marketing, but claims to have no hobbies or interests that are “website worthy.” In other words, a person who wants to make money from having a website, yet doesn’t have an organic interest or theme around which to base it. A person like that can go into ClickBank and simply find products around which to build a site. For example, you could pick an interest from the pre-configured categories in the “Marketplace” section (even the most disinterested person has to be willing to do that), and find products from that category on which to base a website opportunity.

So what if you want to create your *own* product and have an army of literally tens of thousands of people around the world selling that product *for* you? You can do that; as a matter of fact, it’s a very easy thing to accomplish. All you need do is click on the “Sell Products” tab to learn more about it. Basically, the process to doing this is to first create some type of e-product, likely an ebook on some topic. If not already a ClickBank member, you would join and then interact with ClickBank on establishing both the retail price of the product as well as the

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commission to be paid to affiliates. From there, you would submit your ebook to ClickBank for its review. Assuming the product is “good to go,” you just pay the one-time \$49.95 activation fee, and you’re off and running. Now, you should know that ClickBank will hold back some money in order to cover chargebacks, but you are paid weekly, via direct deposit, into your bank account.

I was initially very excited about the idea of putting products on my website, but the more time that I spend looking at this opportunity, the more excited I have become about the idea of *creating* products. One of the things I thought about...depending on what it is you’re selling on your website...that pretty much anyone could do to increase revenue on behalf of a site from which they’re already selling something, is to create a related ebook and sell it for, say, \$20 or \$25. Not only would that ebook serve as a revenue generator in and of itself, but you would certainly want to put your website and contact info in the ebook so that anyone who comes across it and likes what they read will have your contact info right at his fingertips.

Before I end things here for now (we’ll talk plenty more about ClickBank in the future), let me give you what I think is another helpful resource. If you go to YouTube (www.youtube.com) and do a search for “Stael This Niche,” you will have returned to you some videos by a lady named Michelle MacPhearson. These videos are all about how to explore niches at ClickBank, and I think you’ll find them to be a great augmentation to your effort at learning more.

Best of luck getting started with this, and we’ll talk about ClickBank again very soon.

Press Releases

By Robert G. Yetman, Jr.

Overview

In the same way that we emphasize developing multiple streams of income within the context of your Internet marketing endeavors, it’s a good idea to be sure you are taking advantage of no less than a wide array of marketing and publicity tools as you seek to promote your website and/or blog. One of those that you would do well to consider, but which may not be something you think of because it might be a vehicle you believe is only for use by a famous personality or large company, is the *press release*.

A press release is a written communication designed to impart a piece of information to the media and customers, with a goal of heightening the interest, for some acute period of time, in the person or company issuing the press release. That interest may manifest itself in the form of media coverage, sales of your product or service, or just greater generic publicity. Historically, the principal point in issuing a press release was to cause journalists and other reporters to show up on the issuer’s doorstep to hear more about what he has to say about the subject outlined in the release. Politicians, for example, will issue a press release specifically to generate additional news coverage about them or their campaigns. Companies will do the same thing. Ideally, then, you want to see a media interview as the ultimate reward from issuing a press release, but even if you don’t receive such a call, that by no means should be construed that the issuance was wasted; in this day and age, with the advent of the Internet and the universal access to just about everything *on* the Internet, a well-written press release that’s distributed by a quality press release service (more about those later) can be a great help to you from a marketing standpoint, even if you aren’t ac-

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tually booked to appear on a news show or other media organ.

I do sometimes refer to press releases as “contrived news.” That probably sounds a lot worse than what I really mean when I say it. The best press releases, in my opinion, are those that use an event in current time as the basis for the release, and then you essentially “piggy-back” your relevancy to the event as the basis for issuing the release in the first place. For example, if your website or service is about fire prevention, you might write a release that focuses on some just-published statistic about the threat of household fires and use that information as the basis for why you issued the release in the first place. For example, the headline of the release might read, “Fire Prevention Expert Says That latest statistics on Kitchen Fires Reveals a Hidden National Emergency.” From there, the release would go on to identify who you are, say a little about the news item itself, and conclude with a short bio about you and also describe what you’re seeking to promote.

Anyway, we’ll talk a little more about that in a minute...but I wanted to illustrate more fully why I refer to releases as “contrived news;” the news item is real, but as the release issuer, you are perhaps giving it a little more notice for the purpose of drawing a connection from it to what you are promoting (we will discuss how to write a press release a little later on).

One of the questions that comes up about releases, in general, has to do with their usefulness in the era of social media and networking. It’s a fair question. After all, tools like Christian Chirp, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, and the rest of the ever-growing list

of “like” mechanisms are ubiquitous and *free*. Press releases, at least those distributed by the most effective services, cost money. That said, there is a uniqueness to the official press release that cannot really be duplicated by popular social media outlets (although you certainly can “marry” the two by putting a link to your press release on your various social media locations). A good press release service will have a reputation as a place that news organizations around the world will go to for information. What’s more, a good press release service has the ability to get your release into the “in” boxes of the right people at a huge number of media organizations. Additionally, a quality press release service, simply by virtue of the ability to maintain a high priority in the search engine world, will be able to give your release an elevated stature beyond what you might be able to do on your own, even if the release is never followed up by anyone in the media. Those are three pretty compelling features of press releases that can be difficult for most people to duplicate through social media. The other thing about social media, as well, that can be constricting for many, especially for people just starting out in their new businesses, is the low number of “friends,” “followers,” etc., that they have established in their various networks. For example, even if you have several hundred people in one of your social media networks, that’s still a very small number from a marketing standpoint, and few among us have even that many.

By the way, if you haven’t figured it out already, when we talk about writing press releases, we’re talking now about writing and distributing them via the Internet. That may seem silly to clarify, especially given that we’re all about the Internet here, but because

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press releases have a long history of being “hard copy” communications only, I didn’t want anyone to wonder if that protocol was still firmly in place. As it happens, the press release has moved nicely into the Internet age along with just about everything else.

One other thing to note about the value of issuing press releases when you’re still gaining traction in your business is that the very act of issuing them on a regular basis helps to establish you as an expert in your field. Because press releases have an air of greater sophistication about them (compared to more random sorts of posts or blog items), and suggest a higher level of expertise on the part of the person sending them out, simply, issuing a press release regularly can go a long way to helping enhance your credibility. Your goal in this case is to engender a level of interest on the part of news media people so that eventually you are contacted for an interview on a subject, or at least for a comment.

I want to make another important point about press releases before we go on to discussing how they should be specifically written and how to get them distributed. Although it is your goal to bring attention to yourself, company, product, and/or service, please do not make the mistake of simply writing the press release as though it is an advertisement. If you do that, you will find that you and your releases will quickly fall into disfavor with news editors, producers, and the other especially-important folks who look to news releases as possible sources of copy and interviews. All parties understand that press releases are being issued in large part to generate publicity for one reason or another, but that feature is supposed to be kept a little more *covert* than *overt*. Again, the press re-

lease needs to be designed in such a way so that you are principally getting out a worthwhile piece of information, even if it is just your statement on a news event, that is devoid of a sales pitch. Weaving the promotional part into the press release may take a little practice, or at least some solid review of other press releases to get a good feel for how it is done. More about that in just a bit.

Writing the Press Release

For those who’ve not done any type of journalistic writing previously, the style of a press release may be a little unique. If you’ve read or heard press releases before, you’ll notice that they are, in fact, written to sound like news pieces themselves (remember what I said about “contrived news”). It’s a style of writing with which you’ll want to become intrinsically familiar, if you’re unfamiliar with it presently. You don’t have to have an innate flair for this kind of writing, because it can certainly be developed, but you’re going to have to get in front of several press releases that others have written in order to get better acquainted with how they should look and sound.

That’s really the first step—getting good exposure to a variety of press releases. Probably the easiest way to do that is to simply visit the websites of some of the leading press release services available out there and read many of the releases they post (press release services will generally post the releases they distribute on their sites, in addition to distributing them in a targeted fashion). I will provide the web addresses of both some paid, as well as free, distribution services later on in this article, and you can refer to those to read up on available releases. For now, I will provide you with a recent release we constructed here to which

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you can look as a sample. Please read it carefully, and we'll discuss it more in a bit.

**Press Release
Sample**

Christian Financial Personality James Paris Praises Congress for Pressuring Lenders on the Matter of Mortgage Modifications

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Daytona Beach, FL - James L. Paris, the Founder and CEO of Christian Internet Income.com (www.christianinternetincome.com), a website dedicated to helping Christians realize greater financial freedom from creating their own Internet-based businesses, has high praise for the pressure applied recently by members of Congress on lenders that still appear to be something between "slow" and "unwilling" to make meaningful progress in the area of granting mortgage modifications to struggling homeowners.

On Thursday, June 24, members of the U.S. House of Representatives hammered away at the chief executives of home lending for the four biggest mortgage lenders in the country (JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Citigroup, and Wells Fargo), demanding answers as to why more isn't being done to modify loans for desperate homeowners. At one point, Rep. Dennis Kucinich of Ohio asked David Lowman of JPMorgan, "I just wonder how hard you are really trying?"

Says Paris, "This is what is needed; continued, constant pressure on the home lending community to do more than it has done to help earnest people through what is clearly a crisis of epic proportions. I am glad to see that Congress is keeping this issue on the front burner, and hopefully the ease with which modifications are approved, as well as the number that are approved, will increase."

Paris recently announced the release of his own proprietary do-it-yourself mortgage modification product. *The Do-It-Yourself Loan Modification System*, co-authored by Paris and financial writer Bob Yetman, represents a complete "lean and mean" manual for distressed homeowners seeking to step back far enough from the brink of foreclosure to actually regain the upper hand in their home ownership. The package is available online at www.mortgagemodificationssystem.com for only \$49.

In addition to overseeing Christian Internet Income.com, James Paris is also the Editor-in-Chief of Christian Money.com (www.christianmoney.com), the author of more than 20 books on personal finance, and makes numerous appearances each year on nationwide television and radio.

OK. Now, before I discuss this sample in particular, allow me to go over the broad structure of a press release. Generally a press release should be organized like this: A sharp, catchy headline; next, a dateline, which refers to the release date and the location from which the release was initiated (your location, in other words); a lead paragraph, wherein you get right into what the release is about; following that, you have the "body" of the release, which explains more fully what it's about, and then finish off with any additional information you deem necessary, as well as information about you, your

product or service, and then your contact information.

I personally don't always adhere to a super-strict following of the organization of a press release, but neither do I ever stray much from the universally-accepted format. It depends on what I want to say or how I think it might best be said. Sometimes I might make an understated product reference in the beginning, or I might allow the opening paragraph to become a little longer than press release protocol dictates it should be, but the point is that, generally, I keep all of the elements in

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the release, and in the general order in which they should appear.

Let's look more closely at the sample press release contained here, and see if we can break it down so that the structure makes more sense to you and perhaps you can start to get a feel for just how a release should be written.

Taking things from top to bottom, our press releases should have a sharp, or otherwise eye-catching headline. You'll notice that we have tried to do that in our sample. By making a bold statement that Jim Paris is praising Congress, it telegraphs a suggestion of importance on behalf of Jim Paris, and also makes a dramatic statement about a current event that occurred at the national level. Headlines like this are the sort that tend to catch the eyes of news personnel and others who might be looking for a story or comment.

Let's move on to our lead paragraph. Now, this lead paragraph is considered a bit lengthy in the world of press releases, but here we wanted to try to kill three birds with the same stone, if possible: expand a little more on the headline, establish Jim's credibility with an audience that may not know him, and also make a mild promotional effort while we're at it. Some press release people would take issue with the last two features in the lead paragraph, and sometimes it is not appropriate to include them, but we felt that it was important to come right out of the box and answer the question, "Who is this Jim Paris guy" for those who might have it as soon as they read the headline.

The next two paragraphs represent the body of the press release. For paragraph number

two, we made that read very much like a piece of news reporting, and a source of additional details on the event that prompted the release.

The paragraph that follows quotes Jim Paris. It's always a good idea for the issuer to be quoted (quote himself, really) in the release to help make the information come a bit more "alive" and add an even more personal touch to the information provided.

As for the last two paragraphs, we used those here to make mention of the product that ties in to the release, as well as provide some additional background on Jim.

Generally, press releases should be less than 400 words; keep them as brief as possible, while still making them valuable and getting across all that you need to; as I said before, if you have little experience with writing these, take the time to look at several different releases posted on the sites of distribution services. On that note, let's close with a list of some of the more noteworthy paid, as well as free, press release distribution services. I prefer paid releases, myself; I am of the mind that you get what you pay for, generally (paid releases can be anywhere from \$50 to \$400 per release, but they're usually in the \$50 to \$70 range). Anyway, for paid releases, you might look to PR Web (www.prweb.com), PRW (www.press-release-writing.com), PR Leap (www.prleap.com), and the one we like to use here at Christian Money.com, a service called Christian News Wire (www.christiannewswire.com). As for free press release services, you might consider PRLog (www.prlog.com), PR.com (www.pr.com), or perhaps PRFree (www.prfree.com).