

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Amit Mehta

Heather Vale: I'm Heather Vale, partner of Codrut Turcanu, for [ClickBank Affiliate Confessions](#)... today I'm speaking with Amit Mehta from Boston Massachusetts. Amit, first of all could you give us a brief background of yourself and your websites?

Amit Mehta: Sure, I am a scientist here and working for a big defense lab here in Massachusetts, and I got involved in affiliate marketing about in August. I had been involved in some other business opportunities before I moved to Boston, and I just got burned by couple of opportunities and I was looking for a way... an honest way of making money that I could develop a residual walk-away income where I'd have to put in work once and have an ongoing steady income, and I spent about six months researching different Internet opportunities because I knew the Internet was the way to go in terms of the growth, and the growth of e-commerce and everything. And I stumbled upon affiliate marketing, which I thought was a fantastic idea because you don't have the overhead, you don't have the inventory, no customer support, you just drive traffic to a website and you get a substantial commission per sale. And I also learned about Pay per Click marketing when I read the e-book [Google Cash](#) and [Google Profits](#), that this was a very effective way to get targeted traffic to a website. So I got started in August and had bit of a slow start, the first 15 campaigns were complete duds but they always say, be persistent and consistent, and I stayed consistent with it and I found... I learned a few things, I joined a few forums, I found a few mentors and some people that were willing to share their information and advice with me, and in the month of December I made about \$10,000 profit and January I made 6,000. December it was, because of Christmas season, did very well and that was basically after five months of getting started, and things were going well, my profits are suddenly going up as I add more and more campaigns, and it looks like I'll be doing this full time, because I still work at the defense lab right now but will be doing this full time within a couple of months, since I've already replaced my full time job income. So, and I really enjoy doing this and it's just opened up a whole new world to me really.

Heather: A lot of people who started only six months ago would consider themselves to be newbies. How did you learn so much so fast? Is it just because of the mentors?

Amit: I was hungry for the information. I spent over \$1000 just investing in e-books, in seminars, in learning and asking questions on

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forums, but I also at the same time took action. Because what a lot of people do is they'll spend \$1000 on e-books like I did but they'll get information constipation, because they'll read all the information but they won't take action. The key is really education plus action. You've got to be willing to learn how to be successful as well as take consistent action because that's where... when those two things come together, that's when you're going to find success.

Heather: So why did you chose [ClickBank](#) in particular?

Amit: Because that's probably... [ClickBank](#) campaigns were the first campaigns I actually had success with so just by chance I would say, and I knew a lot of people on forums that were having success with [ClickBank](#) and digital products. [ClickBank](#) does digital products exclusively which sell very well, and they have a very high-profit margin. The only caveat is you have to be careful what you promote on [ClickBank](#) because there is very little regulation and there are a lot of scams on [ClickBank](#) but there are also some very, very good products to promote on there. So you just have to, you know, keep your eye open for the good stuff and avoid the stuff that's going to get huge number of refunds because it's just a scam.

Heather: OK, how do you know before you start promoting a product whether it's a scam or not?

Amit: Oh, I'll try it out. If I don't get... if I find out through a third party or somebody I trust that, "Hey! These are good products," and, or if I know the merchant and I know his sites do reputable, or I'll test it out myself. Because naively when I first started in this business I was promoting a product that was a scam. I didn't know it, unknowingly. And when I actually made a website for it, I got lots of customer complaints. I just shut down the campaign because I couldn't promote stuff like that, and then I came to a rude awakening that not everything on [ClickBank](#) is kosher so to speak. So now I am very careful what I promote and make sure that I promote something that's actually a real product.

Heather: What are some of the key points that you'll look for when deciding which products to choose?

Amit: What sells the best, a quality product, something that's a real product that provides a real value and something that sells very well,

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and the way I figure that out is through market research. It's something... it's an unknown, it's a little known secret to succeeding to this business is... a lot of people would do something like [Google Cash](#) or put up ads through [Overture](#), [Google AdWords](#) and they are just shooting into thin air because they have no idea what they are doing, they haven't researched the market. Here's what I do, precisely, I'll go into a market, let's say it's the records market and let's say I am doing a particular niche like... well, I don't want to say specific niches, but if I am looking for... let's say I am doing cat training, right? Let's say I wanted to go into the cat training market. I'll look at relevant keyword for cat training, you know, "cat litter training", "cat training", "how to train a cat". I'll look up those keywords and I'll look to see how many affiliates are bidding on those keywords. The way to do that is you can go on [Google](#), you can type in "cat training" and you can look at the ads, and if you hold your mouse button down you can see the URLs and it's easy to identify how URLs that are for affiliates because they always... they look different, they have the SIDS or the ID they'll have like the affiliate ID or something on them, and if you've been in affiliate marketing more than a month you know what these affiliate IDs look like. So I look at how many competitors there are in the market, I look at the cost per click for the keyword, because if there is a high cost per click that generally means that people are making money in that market, otherwise they wouldn't be paying a dollar a click or 50 cent a click or what have you. And then I'll see whether those ads are running, you know, next week or the week after or whether people are... if people are consistently bidding on expensive keywords, chances are they are making money with these, especially if they are affiliates. A great example I can give you as a story, I was looking at a [Commission Junction](#) product, it's a very highly competitive Pay per Lead program, and I did a little research on some of the top keywords, and I found several affiliates... I also use a program called Google Niche which allows me to see how many affiliates are bidding for a given keyword, and what I found for the Pay per Lead program that all of the affiliates were using one merchant which happened to pay the highest commissions. They are all using landing pages and most of them are on the second page. Now with those two pieces of information I know exactly what to do to go into that market and start campaign and become profitable and successful with it. So using market research I basically increase my success rate from 1 in 15 to basically 8 out of 10 campaigns I start I am successful with.

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Heather: So, when you say an expensive price per click, what would be expensive?

Amit: Well, that depends on the market, like for mortgage if you are in the mortgage market then keywords typically go for 5 to 10 to 20 dollars a click, but for [ClickBank](#) typically what you can expect is if it's more than \$1 a click its pretty expensive, for the top position. And if the person in the top position is paying more than a dollar click chances are that keyword converts to sales very well.

Heather: So, what types of products and niches have you chosen to promote?

Amit: Primarily downloadable products, membership sites and software sell very well.

Heather: You mentioned also the records market?

Amit: Yes, yes, those are membership sites where people can look up information on other people, people search, directories to look up addresses and emails and stuff like that.

Heather: Can't they get that stuff free on the Internet?

Amit: Yes, a lot of it is free, but what these databases are... the databases give you a compilation of lots of resources at your fingertips, so there is a lot of added value there. So that's basically their selling point, which is why they sell very well.

Heather: And also online dating is a niche of yours?

Amit: Yes.

Heather: Why did you choose that one?

Amit: Because my wife and I found each other through online dating.

Heather: Cool. So you've got experience in it.

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Amit: Yes, yes, this is also very profitable niche, it's very, very competitive though, so if anyone is listening to this and they want to go into it, just make sure you know what you doing.

Heather: OK, so before we get into the real meat of your tactics and secrets, let's just give a list in a nutshell of your tactics that you'll be talking about today.

Amit: Sure, one of them I already talked about which is a big one, is market research. The second one is probably tricks to using [Google AdWords](#) and mastering Pay per Click, because the better you understand something like... the better you understand Pay per Click marketing... and how to do that effectively, that'll make a huge difference, and you can really separate yourself from the crowd. The third is just developing a stable long-term business, and you know what thought process you need in order to do that effectively and that's probably all you really need to know, in terms of the specific kind of marketing I am doing per se.

Heather: So out of the niches that you mentioned, which one makes the most money?

Amit: They all do, they are all very profitable.

Heather: It's an equal spread across the board?

Amit: I am not going to tell you the details of exactly how much money I am making in each niche, but it depends, you know. It is really... I mean somebody who has a lot of sites on online dating and is really involved in that market will make a huge amount of money in that market. Some of my niches are more developed, some of them I am still in the process of working on, so I really can't say how profitable the niche is. It's hard to really answer that question. But the downloadable products niche is extremely profitable and I know for a fact there are people who make \$50,000 a month in that niche.

Heather: OK, so let's go into the specific tactics then. We are talking about Pay per Click, you said you've got some tricks to use for [Google AdWords](#)?

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Amit: Yes, what they should know is that [Google AdWords](#), it's an advanced game. You really have to educate yourself in order to play this game. It's the most sophisticated Pay per Click engine out there, and what makes it different from other Pay per Click engines such as [Overture](#), is that you actually get rewarded for your click through rate. The higher the click through rate, the click through rate is how many clicks you got in your ad over the number of times it is displayed. So, if you get a hundred clicks for a thousand impressions of your ad, you have 10% click through rate. So, you get rewarded for having good click through rate and if your click through rate is 2% on your ad and somebody else's click through rate is 1%, if that person is paying 50 cents a click, you'll only pay 25 cents a click for the same position since you have twice the click through rate. So you can actually compete with big companies by writing a smarter ad. It's more involved then that, there's other things that go into it other than click through rate, but at this level I think it is much too involved to get people confused. I'll give a basic overview of [Google AdWords](#). Another advantage of [Google AdWords](#) is that it allows you to just split test your ads. Now, this is something that no other Pay per Click engine I know allows you to do. It allows you to test one ad against the other and it'll show them equally. So the idea is, if you go into a market, you want to start with two ads, you want to test them against each other, pick a winner after about, you know, 50 or 100 clicks, and then write a new ad to compete with that winner, and then keep testing one ad against each other and your click through rate will gradually go up, up and up over time as you split test two ads at the time, and that way you can get to a very high position with a very low cost per click, just by doing that, and that way you can really increase your profit margins and even compete in markets where, which most people would say are saturated.

Heather: So when someone clicks on that link, are you sending them directly to the merchant sites through your affiliate link, or are you taking them to your own landing page?

Amit: That's a great question. It depends, in some markets landing pages do better, in other markets taking them directly to the merchant does better, and to answer that question you have to do your market research. Research the market, see what most other people are doing, but if you see a lot of landing pages then you probably should go with the landing page. If you see no landing pages, then just go with direct to merchant. And the other thing, if you are going to do a landing page,

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what works very well is a review type of landing page, where you actually review different types of products and give your recommendation on each one, and maybe even give a rating system. That works very well, and also a good technique is to have a split tester program where you split test different landing pages. You can test the colors, you can test the headlines, whichever sells better... it's called whichever pre-sells better, is what it is called.

Heather: Breaking it down step by step, how exactly would someone go about building and using an effective landing page?

Amit: Buy a good template first, you can go to 4templates.com, you get a template for \$10. Buy a nice professional looking template and then review some, whatever niche you are in, I would go out and, you know, either get, either contact the merchant and get access to his sites, you can study the site and make an honest review of it, or actually buy memberships to maybe 10 [ClickBank](http://ClickBank.com) sites or whatever, or [Commission Junction](http://CommissionJunction.com), whatever you want to test out. And find the top three, write a simple review on them, a couple of bullet points. Get a screen capture of the landing page and just make your review site with, you know, have a little intro letter... I have tested these sites personally and here is what I recommend, boom-boom-boom. Have the three sites listed with the reviews right next to them and the screen shots, and if you do your research you will see a lot of this on the internet... and [Google](http://Google.com) for relevant niches, you'll see a lot of these review sites. So if people just surf around the Internet a little bit, surf around [Google](http://Google.com), they'll see a lot of these review sites, you get a feel how people are doing things. It's actually very easy once you get the hang of it.

Heather: What about using opt in lists or squeeze pages so you can collect the emails, follow up later?

Amit: That's a very effective strategy, it's something I am relatively new at, and the dating site, as I mentioned, is an opt-in list. But from what I understand you can really increase your conversions by opting in, having the visitor opt in to a list, develop a relationship, and then promote your product that way because most people will not buy the first time they go to your site. They might not be in a buying mood that day, but if you get them on an opt in list, lets say, 10 autoresponder messages, on day five they might be ready to buy. In fact after about, I think, five to seven messages, your conversions go up to like 80% or

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something, they go up very high. So your chances of that customer making a purchase really go up because you are in touch with them more often and you are developing a relationship and trust with them.

Heather: What's your sales conversion ratio?

Amit: It depends on the niche, but I usually get around 3% to 5% conversion.

Heather: What would you consider to be a good conversion rate?

Amit: The industry average is about 1%, but with the landing page you can really increase the conversions to... in some landing pages I get 6% to 10% conversions, in some of my markets anyway.

Heather: Now, when you are promoting something as an affiliate and there's hundreds or thousands of other affiliates promoting the same product, how do you make your offering stand out?

Amit: You know what, Heather, that's not something I really ever worry about because there is also hundreds and thousands of visitors out there, and they are all going to go to different sites, and if you write a good ad you'll get clicks. And what I am always focused on is how are my clicks converting, and how much am I paying per click, because the more I can optimize that the better my performance will be and... because if I am worried about all the competition out there then I am focusing on the wrong thing. I am excited about the competition because the competition means that people are making money. So I guess the way to stand out is to make a better landing page, write a better ad and do that by testing.

Heather: How exactly would you write a better ad?

Amit: Split test two ads at a time using [Google AdWords](#).

Heather: But what's the quality of a good ad? What should you be putting into it to make a good ad?

Amit: Always put the keyword in the headline and make your... well, I don't want to go into too much details about [Google AdWords](#), I might lose a lot of people, but the keyword you bid on, you want to put that in

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the headline of your ad because Google puts that in bold and so does [Overture](#), which is Yahoo Search Marketing now. And so I always put the keyword in the headline, that's the key I always use. I always have the compelling... always have a call to action in my ads, like you know, start your search now, or sign up now, or buy now or whatever. I always have the compelling question or a benefit in my ad. I like to use words like "instant", and I like to ask questions too in my ad that will draw the readers' attention, benefit oriented questions. So you always want to have a benefit in your ad, a call to action, and you want to put the keyword in the headline. That's basically what I do, it's really easy, and then you split test ads against each other using those three rules and that is the system I use very effectively.

Heather: Now, if you are bringing in, let say \$10,000 a month, how much would you be spending on Pay per Click advertising?

Amit: Typically 50%.

Heather: So, that knocks your profit down to five thousand?

Amit: Yeah, some months are better than others of course, but typically you can expect 50% because some markets will have lower ROI and some will have higher ROI. You might be getting 200% ROI in one market and 50% in another. It all depends on how saturated that market is, how competitive it is, how well that product sells and converts.

Heather: Is Pay per Click the only type of advertising that you do?

Amit: Currently yes, it's, the reason I like it is because it's fast. You can have your ads running within five minutes once you start off with [Google AdWords](#). It's really fast and there are other ways of making money in the internet, but this is just the one that I happen to be doing at this current time. It works very well.

Heather: Why do have more than one [ClickBank](#) account?

Amit: That's a great question, for tracking purposes. I want to see which of my campaigns, what the conversions are for each of my campaigns on Google. So then I can bid accordingly. If I am getting

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higher conversions for one campaign versus another, I'll bid it up and if I get less for one versus another the other I bid it down.

Heather: How do you prevent your [ClickBank](#) ID from being removed from the link or stolen?

Amit: For my landing pages, I'll hide my [ClickBank](#) ID, basically using a program like an affiliate cloner, or [Affiliate Link Cloaker](#). That's it. I just cloak my affiliate link. It costs about like, I think you can get it for 50 or 60 bucks, it's a great investment. And then once you cloak it no one can really steal it and with [ClickBank](#) it's really not a problem because they have very secure cookies. And for most markets, most people don't know what affiliate marketing is, unless you trying to sell information products about making money online. That's the only market you really have to be concerned about people stealing your affiliate link and getting commission themselves. For most markets 99% of people do not know what affiliate marketing is, and so it's really not an issue.

Heather: When you are picking a product, what's a good commission, what's a good price point?

Amit: Generally \$20 is a good commission, and most of the products I sell are usually between... are no more than \$50. \$20 is a good commission, however I do have, there is markets where I can get \$10-\$16 commission but I get higher conversions so that makes up for it. Good commission, you need a high commission for Pay per Click, otherwise you are going to lose money on your clicks.

Heather: Right... that's trial and error, making sure that you are not spending more money on your advertising than what you are bringing in obviously.

Amit: Right, right, if you do your market research then you shouldn't have a problem. Another thing is knowing what... different keywords have different conversions, so if you can get the merchant to put Google tracking code on their site it really... that will tell you what keywords are converting into sales, that can be invaluable. So, I have that activated in a lot of my campaigns. So even if you are breaking in, even in the beginning, you can get to the point where you are making a 100% ROI just by tracking which keywords are actually converting to sales. Tracking and testing is very important, as well as doing market

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research. It's really, you don't have to be a creative genius to do this. You just need to know the right... it's a scientific method of success really.

Heather: What specific tools do you use to track and keep track of all of that?

Amit: Specific tools? Well I have access to some very sophisticated software that I am using called Split Test Magic which allows me to split test various elements of my landing page and also tells me which keywords are getting clicks throughs onto my affiliate link. So I am accessing some very sophisticated software to allow me do my testing. But for most people you don't need that in the beginning certainly, it's not necessary for success, it's just something that I am using that really leverages my ability to go into a market quickly and profit. But the major testing device that most people should be concerned with is their Google keywords, the Google Track... Conversion Tracking which they should have their merchant put on the site, and split testing your ads with Google. I can't emphasize, it seems pretty simple but there is so many people who don't do that and don't take it seriously. It's extremely essential... testing your ads and having the conversion tracking in place. So if you know what one keyword is... if you know "blue widgets" is converting to sale versus "green widgets", right. "Green widgets" just might not get any sales, but "blue widgets" might just get a lot of sales, so then you know to turn off "green widgets" and you might save 50% on your PPC advertising costs, and that in turn allows you to bid higher on "blue widgets" and make even more sales.

Heather: OK, so let's talk about what you said about building a long-term business.

Amit: Right, there are different ways of building a Pay per Click business with [Google AdWords](#), and you can either do this in two ways... this is a more advanced topic by the way. You can either play this like day trading where you lose money one day, you make money the next day. Or you can build a business that makes a steady cash flow every single day, and if each of your campaigns is focused on creating a steady cash flow that you don't have to check up on everyday, you'll be able to focus more time in building new campaigns, and then expand your base and develop a long-term stable income. I'll talk about exactly how do that in a second.

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Heather: So, how exactly do you do that?

Amit: Great question. So, here's what you want to, you want to keep your ads at the bottom of the page or sometimes on the second page, you got to try to go for the highest profit margin you can, the highest ROI you can, I should say. So, if you keep your ads in the bottom of the page, or for high traffic keywords you might even want to keep them on the second page, you'll get less clicks, but the fact is that only 5% of your visitors account for 95% your profit. So, you'll get a lot less clicks when your ads are at the bottom of the page, but guess what, those people are the serious... those people are the serious visitors, they are a lot more likely to buy than if you are in position number one. In position number one you get the click happy people that are just going through and clicking on the first ad they see. But if you are on the bottom of the page or the second page, then you get the people that are seriously looking to purchase something. So, here's a problem, if you are only bidding on 100 keywords, you might get like 5 clicks a day if you are at the bottom of the page or on the second page, but if you are bidding on thousands of keyword niches, if you really spend time doing your keyword research and really tracking which keywords are converting, and bidding on, and have lots and lots of different campaigns and ad groups set up, then you might have 40 different ad groups. An ad group is basically, if you start a campaign in cat training, within that campaign in Google you can set up different ad groups. Let's say you can do "cat training", "kitten training", "cat litter", "how to train a cat", so you might have three ad groups, "cat training", "kitten training", "how to train a cat". You can build... you can break yourself into smaller groups. So, if you are in a particular market you want to try to think of all the keywords that you can that people are going to search for that may be relevant to your market. And the more keywords you can think up with, the larger base of clicks you are going to get. Now, at the same you also want to track which keywords are converting to sales. So over time you want to have a campaign where you are getting, where you are at a low position maybe at the bottom of the page or on the second page for a lot of keywords, where you are getting a lot of clicks because you are bidding on lots of lots of relevant keywords. So that way you have stable cash flow coming from that campaign and it won't be day trading, it'll be a real residual income. And then once you get that set up then you can set another campaign up the same way, and then repeat the process.

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Heather: When you first started out and your campaigns were duds, what was the biggest mistake you were making at that time?

Amit: I wasn't doing my market research; I was bidding on keywords that didn't get a lot of clicks. I wasn't searching whether a market was actually profitable or not. By the way, that's a great point. If you look at, if you go to the [Overture](#) keyword tool, the [Overture](#) search tool, if you have an account with [Overture](#), you can type in a keyword, it will tell you how much advertisers are spending on a given keyword per month. So, if you go there and you type in "under water basket weaving" and you find that advertisers are spending \$50 a month on the keyword "underwater basket weaving," it's probably not a niche worth going into. But if you type in something like "web hosting" and you find advertisers spending \$100,000 a month, I don't know if that's the actual number, I am just saying hypothetically... \$100,000 a month on that keyword, that's a great niche to go into. So, I wasn't doing my market research, I wasn't seeing what the profitable niches was, I wasn't checking whether there is other affiliates in the niches. In fact I was trying to find keywords that no one was bidding on. And you know what Heather, there is the reason no one bids on those keywords, because they don't convert to any sales.

Heather: OK, what final words of wisdom would you like to pass on to all the newbies who are just getting into [ClickBank](#) affiliate marketing?

Amit: It's a learning process, there is a huge learning curve to succeeding in this business, but just set high goals and stay persistent. Once you get past that learning curve you will be embarrassed by how easy it is.

Heather: So a lot to learn, but stick at it and it pays off.

Amit: Yes, yes, I am still learning, so...

Heather: Yeah, but it sounds like you have learned a lot in only six months, so that's excellent. Good for you. And thanks for sharing today.

Amit: Yeah, no problem.