

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Eric Holmlund

Heather Vale: I'm Heather Vale, partner of Codrut Turcanu, for [ClickBank Affiliate Confessions](#)... today we're talking with Eric Holmlund from Fort Collins, Colorado. OK, so Eric, could you give us a brief background of yourself and your websites?

Eric Holmlund: Sure, I basically got into internet marketing back in 1999 after I got married, and I worked various sales jobs out in the real world, and internet kind of became a hobby for me. I did some [eBay](#) stuff for awhile, tried all kinds of get rich quick schemes, tried a bunch of stuff that didn't work, and finally found some success, I did pretty well on [eBay](#) for awhile, and started doing other types of marketing. I ended up starting up web hosting company and built and sold two web hosting companies, and then got kind of more into the affiliate side of marketing, now I do kind of a combination. I would say my business is constantly evolving but I do a lot of affiliate marketing and I've got some of my own products as well.

Heather: What made you decide to get started in affiliate marketing, and in particular with [ClickBank](#)?

Eric: Well, coincidentally with my web hosting business, I was kind of watching what some of my customers were doing, not in a matter of spying on them but just in regular communications, and kind of seeing what they're up to, and seeing some of these guys were making a ton of money you know, just with one web site or a few little web sites, whereas I was having to put in all this time and effort to support my customers, and do all these technical things, and meanwhile my customers were making money, seemed to be a lot easier way. So it really got me curious, kind of got the ball rolling, I guess.

Heather: So, how much do you make as a [ClickBank](#) affiliate?

Eric: Well, as far as like gross income, I'd probably bring in about a good 10 to 15 thousand a month of affiliate commissions and as far as profit, I'd say at least half that, so you know anywhere from 8 to 10 thousand a month probably, something like that.

Heather: How much do you think it would be possible to make, the upper limit?

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Eric: Oh, really the sky's the limit. I mean I've seen people that are making over a hundred thousand dollars a month, and you know an example would be like the [Rich Jerk](#), I don't know if you've seen that report out there, but you know he's a real guy that's out there that you know figured out stuff, some deep ways of making money with [ClickBank](#) and other affiliate programs, and there's guys out there that do that kind of thing, and they do it well and they make incredible money.

Heather: How much do you think the average newbie could expect to make?

Eric: Hmm, that's a good question, and it really depends on their level of, I guess education, of where they learned how to do their affiliate marketing. I think most new affiliates probably fail miserably. They don't make very much money at all, but anyone with a decent, I guess, a decent training course or someone who's going to learn from other successful affiliates, would probably be able to jump in and make anywhere from a couple hundred to a couple thousand dollars a week. I would think that would be reasonable.

Heather: How long did it take you to get to the point where you are now, bringing in thousands of dollars a month?

Eric: There was a bit of a learning curve actually, the first few months of doing a whole lot of the [ClickBank](#) affiliate marketing were a bit rough. I was doing mainly Pay per Click type of stuff, and there's definitely a learning curve there. It's not a real hard thing, but it's kind of a science and there's some trial and error involved and I didn't have, I guess the best information in front of me. I had some good information, but not the complete picture so I did a lot of trial and error on my own. And so, yeah for the first three months of doing it, I mean business was a little bit rocky, luckily I had some other stuff that I had going already that really helped me support my income until the [ClickBank](#) stuff really got rolling. I mean there was definitely some weeks when I took a loss, but I think with definitely with the proper knowledge, that could be avoided. I think the key there would be to start small and build gradually.

Heather: So what did you think when you saw your affiliate commissions start to skyrocket?

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Eric: Well, I mean obviously I saw that there was a big opportunity there, there was a couple of things that I thought when I saw that. The one thing that I thought was, how can I multiply this over and over again? It's a matter of leverage basically. You know, so many people look at their jobs, they see it in terms of how much can I get paid per hour? Or you know, if I can get more work done, then I can make money. But with this type of opportunity, it's a matter of you can make more money without having to do much more work, just by leveraging the system over and over again. So you know, for example with Pay per Click advertising, I can write one little ad and that ad can bring me an income for years, basically. It'll bring me a commission every time somebody purchases a product after clicking on that ad, and so if I could multiply that effort, get lots and lots and lots of ads out there, the income is just going to keep growing and growing and growing. And then the other side of it that I started thinking about when I saw those paychecks start coming in, is checking out the other side of it and becoming a [ClickBank](#) vendor as well, getting my own product out in the market, and that way I have income coming in from promoting other people's stuff as well from my own stuff.

Heather: What would you say to people who are already tired and frustrated with trying to make money with [ClickBank](#)?

Eric: Hmm... I would say they're probably spinning their wheels, maybe going the wrong direction. I would say that they probably should go back to square one and kind of start again and start small. I think a real key again, and I'm a firm believer in building a business debt free. And so, it's not something where you want to take your life savings and just invest it or necessarily pull out your credit card and go into debt to get it started. Some people will say you should, they will say pull out your credit card and do whatever it takes, but I think you should save up some money. Say you know, if you only have a hundred dollars to invest in your business, well take that hundred dollars and follow instructions from you know, someone who knows what they're doing, and invest in Pay per Click marketing or in other sources of targeted traffic, and say that hundred dollars turns into 200 dollars of commission. Once you get your pay check from [ClickBank](#) for 200 dollars, turn around and invest that again back into the business. And maybe you can turn that 200 dollars into 400 dollars. In that way

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you can grow it slowly without going into debt, losing all kinds of money on your credit cards and all that type of stuff.

Heather: OK, so before we get into the real meat of this interview, can you give us in a nutshell some of the tactics and secrets that you're planning to share with us today?

Eric: OK. Well, one of the big avenues that I use, I've already touched on is Pay per Click marketing, so I'll talk some more about that. Another one would be back end offers to my own list and list building. A lot of you have probably heard it said before, the money is in the list, and that's true, so we can talk about how you can use list building along with [ClickBank](#) marketing and... those are really the main ones, I think. There might be a couple of other strategies we might touch on as well.

Heather: OK. What are the products that you do promote through [ClickBank](#)?

Eric: I really do a variety of products, anywhere from making money to affiliate marketing. You know, even some of more well known ones like Rosalind Gardner's [Super Affiliate Handbook](#). You know, Chris Carpenter's [Google Cash](#). Those are sort of the how to be an affiliate marketer type of stuff and those have always been best sellers, probably always will be. And I do a lot of smaller niche stuff as well, like how to potty train your dog. You know, things that are endless problems for people I think tend to be big sellers. You know, how to potty train your kids or your dog and people are always going to have those questions, and they're always going to be going to the internet looking for those answers, and so it's kind of a recession-proof type of product. And then there's other ones that are more of a short term thing. Those are more the marketing based type of stuff. The internet's always evolving, those products won't last as long but you can make a lot of money off it short term.

Heather: Which one out of all of those products makes you the most money?

Eric: Hmm... that's a good question. I actually would have... I literally promote so many different things that I would have to pull out my reports and go over it and see which ones really make me the most

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money. But, I would say as a whole over the last year, the ones that have made me the very most money have been... I've got, I've got a couple that were like bulk e-mail related and those, I don't have the names of them off hand but bulk email... there's a lot of money in that business, and how to make money type of stuff. Probably that's the biggest income source, like how to make money taking pictures or how to make money... I'm trying to think of some of the specific ones. But really... I'd say that the how to make money are the big ones and then the real niche, small niche ones like how to potty train your dog, that actually was one of my big sellers over the last year. Um... and um, yeah just, I'd say really a variety of products is what you want to go for.

Heather: OK, let's take something like how to potty train your dog, because that's a unique one that not a lot of people I've heard are promoting.

Eric: OK.

Heather: How much specifically would that one product make you each month?

Eric: Uh, let's see, again I'd have to pull out my spread sheets to be exact, but say maybe like 500 dollars a month. Some days like I've spent maybe a thousand dollars, or say I spent 500 dollars on marketing, Pay per Click advertising for that particular product, and then it would bring in like 1000 dollars in commission. So that would be 500 dollars profit. I think that would be a fair estimate for a product like that.

Heather: How many sales would that be?

Eric: Well um... I actually do have a calculator right here, so let's say 1000 dollars in commission divided by, say the commission was like 19 dollars. That would be like 52 sales. That's just an estimate. I don't have all the, you know the exact numbers but I think that's a realistic possibility of what you can do with, you know any type of a real hot niche product.

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Heather: With the non-marketing niches like the pets and the hobbies which aren't meant to necessarily make the customer money, how are the promotional tactics different from the marketing products?

Eric: Sure, yeah with a niche product that's really trying to solve a problem, that's really what you want to focus on. And really when it comes to promoting [ClickBank](#) products, the biggest thing is to get people to the actual vendor's sites, you know you don't have to do a lot of selling itself, it's more you do some pre-selling and you just want to make sure they get to that site. So for example, if you're doing Pay per Click advertising and maybe you're sending them directly to that vendor's site. And those of you that haven't done it, you basically put your hoplink in the destination address, in [Google AdWords](#), then you put the vendor's website address in the display URL. And so when people click on your ad, they don't go to your website, they go directly to the vendor's website. And in something like that you basically just want to catch people's attention and drive the traffic. You know, there's not a whole lot of selling involved. Um, another strategy would be where you send them to your own site, and I think mini site is a good technique for that. We can talk more about that.

Heather: Yeah, let's talk about the mini sites now then.

Eric: OK. Basically a mini site is a small website. It's typically from like one to five pages and it's designed with the purpose of, typically with the purpose of driving traffic to another site. There's different purposes of mini sites. You can have a purpose of trying to get opt-in subscribers for your newsletter, or maybe you're doing kind of a showcase. You might have like four or five or maybe 10 different products that you're comparing or showcasing on that site. A good example would be, you know, with the potty training. Puppy potty training. I haven't done it personally, but what you could do would be to take all the different dog obedience or puppy potty trainings products off of [ClickBank](#), and compare them on one page. So you might have like your top five list, or your top ten list. And again, the purpose of the site is probably going to be to drive traffic to those vendors' sites. But you still want to look like a legitimate web site, otherwise there could be some problems with Google there. So a good way to do it would be the review type of a site. Put maybe like anywhere from one to five stars for each website, and you write a little personal review. And keeping it personal is a great way to pre-sell

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those visitors on the site that they're about to visit. In other words, if you could say something like, yeah I've got a dog and I tried this technique and it worked great. They're going to... first they're going to read that and they're going to say wow, this must be a really great product. It builds instant trust and when they go to that website, they've already got it in their mind that you know, what they're looking at is a valuable product and they're going to be more likely to buy it. Another good thing to do with your mini sites is to collect email addresses. Some people call them name squeeze pages. That's where you know you get a... put your name and email address, click submit before you can get to the real information, and that's a great way to do it too. There's a couple of ways to do it there too. You can actually have a name squeeze page that says... put your name and email address here and click submit to see the secret information about how to potty train your dog and when they click submit, they instantly get redirected to the vendor's website and they go from there. Another way would be they click submit and they land on your own personal review of the product. Either way there's some great reasons to do it that way, I mean to collect those visitors' names and email addresses is going to give you a better chance of making a sale to them because you can follow up with them. And you're also building a long term business instead of just being kind of a traffic redirector, you're actually collecting, you're actually building up your own list that you can market to over and over again.

Heather: OK, so there's a couple of good points there. Let's talk about the name squeeze page first. Now obviously that's going to be a great way to build your list. Are there other tactics that you use as well to build your list?

Eric: Yeah, a great way to do it is to give away a free report, to say instead of just having a name squeeze page that says, you know, put your name and address here, and you're going to get, go get to see this site, you can say, you know, instantly download a free report about how to potty train your dog. And what you can do is basically put together you know just a couple of page report yourself, so say you're promoting this how to potty train your puppy, and what you do is buy that product from the vendor, or ask them to give it to you for free so you can review it. And write up a little review about it, and maybe highlight a couple of key points, put them in your free report and you can do it in like Microsoft Word, or save it as like a PDF file

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and in that report you got your affiliate link, and that affiliate link goes to the vendor's website, or say somebody reads your report, clicks on the link, if it goes there, you're going to get commission for it. And that's a great way to you know at the same time build your list and drive those affiliate sales.

Heather: That's really interesting because I was going to ask you if you're doing review sites and that kind of thing, obviously you should get the product, and normally we would think that's a matter of buying the product, but vendors are willing to give them for free in exchange for these reviews?

Eric: Yeah, a lot of the times they will. If they're a smart vendor they'll give it to you for free because they know that affiliates are going to be the bread and butter of their business. That's what's going to drive their sales. So you know, if you can explain that you're a [ClickBank](#) affiliate, want to promote their product, a lot of them will give it for free. And the other thing I've found is, I mean, you really can get away with you know promoting a product without actually physically reviewing it. You know, you just may not be a situation where you want to go and, you know put your name on the review, and say hey you know I tried it, this is the best thing I ever tried. But you can still get a good idea just by reading the sales letter and if there's customers testimonials. You can definitely still promote a product even if you haven't personally seen it.

Heather: Are there any other tactics that you use for pre-selling besides the ones we've talked about?

Eric: Email. A lot of times I get a lot of email communications. You know, just with supporting my customers, people that ask me questions. I do a marketing tips blog and sometimes people ask me questions through that, and when I, when people ask me for different recommendations of resources, you know I just kind of do a soft sell in the email reply, and kind of recommend various products that they might find helpful and I'll put my affiliate link right there in the email. And just depending on who I'm sending it to, you know if it's someone that I know already knows about marketing, I might even put a little note there in parentheses that says, you know, this is my affiliate link. You know, please use it, if you buy this product. And if it's someone that's just totally ignorant about marketing and it's totally different

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type of a product they're looking at then, you know, just give them the link and tell them to go to it.

Heather: What about offering bonuses to your list if they buy the product through your affiliate link?

Eric: I've done that a few times. It definitely can be effective and I know some of those guys that are making a hundred thousand dollars a month of affiliate commissions, a lot of those guys are using those types of techniques. Now, one thing that you don't want to do is just get out of control and give away everything for free, because you don't have to. The thing that I've found is that whereas a lot of newbie marketers think that they need to promise the moon just to make a sale, that's not the case, I mean you can do a newsletter and promote products and if you do a good job at it, you don't have to give anything for free. But it definitely can help, and I typically try to reserve those types of bonuses for more of the high end products or the ones that have like a contest or something like that. Recently I was promoting a program and I wanted to make a lot of sales so I could get in the top ten for a particular contest, so I offered a, you know a bonus. Like some free private label articles and stuff, they could download it, and a good key to that is to try to automate it as much as possible. Set up your download page, you know and people send you a copy of the receipt, and send them right to that page. So yeah it definitely works, it can be a helpful tool.

Heather: If that's automated, how do you know that they're actually sending you the receipt?

Eric: Well, it depends on the system I'm using. I mean if it's like a real big product, like a 500 dollar product with like huge bonuses or something like that, then I'll probably verify them all manually. But you can set up an autoresponder with certain parameters in the subject line so it basically knows if it's a receipt, and sure somebody could scam the system but most people don't. Most people wouldn't try to do that, and if they do, I'm not really losing anything on the deal so... pretty much if it saves me time, I'll do it.

Heather: How would you set up that autoresponder with those parameters?

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Eric: Again there's a couple of ways to do it. I mean you could set up like a list. I use [AWeber](#) for all of my lists of... my actual lists and so I could set up like an autoresponder in [AWeber](#) where they have to sign up and verify their email address and then it automatically sends them a response with the download link. Or I could just go into my hosting control panel, I use C-Panel for all of my hosting accounts, and just go into the mail settings, set up an autoresponder and there's all kinds of different variables you could set up within that autoresponder so it has to have a certain text in the subject line or in the body of the email. So say you have a copy of what the receipt is supposed to look like. Well you can actually take a huge chunk of text you know that's going to be the same in every receipt and you know, put it in the variable of the auto responder so it's only going to respond if the person has that particular text in their message. And that way I think you're going to weed out most of the abusers, and again there's always some people who figure out how to beat your system but that's always going to be the case so I'd try not to worry about it too much.

Heather: You mentioned back end offers to your list. What kind of back end offers would you have?

Eric: Really just about anything that I think they would be interested in. And that's really the key... is to try and stay as targeted as possible to your list so, you know, if you have a list of marketers then obviously you're going to want to promote marketing related products, things that are going to help them make money and build their online businesses. You know, if you've got a list of people who want to lose weight, well you're probably going to want to promote all kinds of weight loss exercise related products to them. I've tried cross-promoting them on various lists, I've got like a list of people who are writers, who are interested in writing books, and I've tried promoting, you know marketing related offers to them and they just don't buy it. And likewise, I've tried promoting some other unrelated offers to my marketing list, and they very rarely buy it so a big key there is to try to keep it related to the topic that they're most interested in. And to keep it personal. I mean you want your list to trust you and it's important to send out some helpful newsletters, you know without a sales pitch in them once in awhile. Especially for the first few things that they receive from you, you want to build their trust without slamming some sort of an offer in their face. You really want to... definitely work at building a responsive list that trusts you, and you

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know if they trust you and you make a recommendation, they're probably going to buy it. So that's probably my advice on that.

Heather: So when you are sending out these offers again, we're going back to the product review and the personal recommendation?

Eric: Yup, and another thing I should mention, I don't know if you... mentioned this to your members yet or not, but a big thing I always do is use redirect links to my affiliate links, so in other words, if I'm promoting a [ClickBank](#) product, I typically won't put the hoplink right in my email... like I never do. And in fact if it's a website, I rarely put the hoplink right on my website either. I'll set up a redirect of some sort. Some people use the [Tiny URL](#) site, you know that's one that works. I personally don't use it. I just set up my own, and I use what's called a... it's a refresh... meta refresh, so it's a HTML page and its got the hoplink right there so when people go to a certain page, it automatically redirects to the hoplink without them ever actually ever seeing, or clicking on, the affiliate link. I think that's a real important point, I mean when it comes to [ClickBank](#) marketing especially, because people tend to really see that [ClickBank](#) name after awhile, it's in all hoplinks so they realize they're clicking on a, you know affiliate link, they're afraid someone's going to try to sell something to them. Other times you'll have other affiliates that will try to steal your commissions by hijacking the link. So doing a redirect I think, is really important.

Heather: So they might think they're going to something like EricHolmlund.com slash, whatever the product is, and when they click on that, they end up going to product hoplink blah blah blah?

Eric: Yeah, absolutely. That's a technique I picked up from some other marketers in the business. I've got like, you know my blog Ericstips.com, and I'll do Ericstips forward slash, you know, Eric recommends slash, and then whatever the product's name is, and so that way you know they see it as a recommendation from me, you know, and they're not looking at it just like a hoplink.

Heather: Are there any other ways to prevent people from stealing your [ClickBank](#) links?

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Eric: When it comes to [ClickBank](#), I mean there's the... it's really impossible to completely prevent other affiliates from trying to steal your commissions, but the biggest thing is setting that cookie. I mean if you hide the hoplink in a redirect like I do it, I think that helps a lot, and then the other thing you could do which is kind of an advanced technique that's not going to be applicable for most situations, but you can actually embed a [ClickBank](#) affiliate link into a payment link. In other words, if somebody clicks to buy something using this special payment link, you'll automatically get credit for it. There's really no way that someone can hijack it. That's something that you have to arrange with the vendor specifically, and you know when you get to the advanced level and you've got your own list, you're doing joint ventures and all that type of stuff, that's the type of thing you can do. You can talk to a vendor and tell him to set up your own page basically and when people go to that page, you know you'll get credit for it.

Heather: How big a list do you have to have before you start making those deals?

Eric: Uh, really not that big you know, you know I'd say maybe, uh 500 to a thousand people would be a pretty decent size to where people can start taking you seriously. I mean it's not all about the size of the list. I've done promotions actually within the last week to, you know I did one with a list of 400 thousand people that I had and I did a JV to get my message out to this guy, and that list was very un-responsive. I mean he had 400 thousand people but they obviously are not listening to him anymore. They're not really taking his recommendations seriously. On the other hand, I've done promotions with lists of under a thousand people. That was tremendous. I think my best ever was one of my own promotions that I did to my own list. And at the time I only had about 600 people on the list, and I ended up making over 200 sales of a 40 dollar product, just from that email to 600 people. I mean that's... I guess that basically goes to show why you want to build a quality list that trusts you and listens to what you have to say.

Heather: How big is your list now?

Eric: Right now, I'm really just in a phase of growing it. I've got several lists of... smaller lists, I think I've got about 11,000 members right now, something like that. I plan on growing that tremendously

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over this year, that's really my number one marketing strategy for 2006 is to build my list. It's something I've neglected in the past, I've focused more on the other avenues like Pay per Click and mini sites and really didn't take advantage of all the squeeze pages I could have had, I look at it really as a lost opportunity, I mean I've sent literally hundreds of thousands of visitors through my sites without ever collecting their email addresses. And that's something I really kind of want to get on top of this year and build my list. That's really where the money is. I've got... my list isn't that big yet and it's already making a lot of money for me so... I know that's going to work out.

Heather: With the name squeeze pages, how do you figure out whether it's worth it or not? Because if you're putting a name squeeze page, a lot of people will say, oh I don't want to enter my email to get this information. Whereas if you have just a site that's got your reviews and your links that they can get to freely, they might be more likely to click on your affiliate link. So how do you weigh the pros and cons there?

Eric: You really... you could do some testing there. I think most of the big, most of the big time, big name marketers would say, you know, if they're not willing to put their name and email address, you know, on your form, then you don't really want them anyway. That's not the kind of customer you want and that type of stuff, and they're willing to do that and they basically go for the name squeeze page all the time, and they'll do whatever they can do to increase those opt-in rates, but I'm a little bit different in that regard. I mean I think that there are definitely situations where you could do very good and effective and profitable affiliate marketing without collecting email addresses. The biggest thing to keep in mind there is that you're not so much building a business if you're not collecting their name and... all you're doing is basically being a traffic middleman. And you're going to make income and you could make a lot of money doing it, but say all of a sudden, you know the [ClickBank](#) opportunity goes away one day, you'll be left with nothing and that's why it's important you have that list of customers and they, suddenly [ClickBank](#) disappears one day, well you can turn around and sell those people something else if you've got that established business. But that's not to say that you shouldn't do some affiliate marketing, just sending people to the affiliate links. And I know some people that use [ClickBank](#) and some other affiliate networks and make over a hundred thousand dollars a month and

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they're not collecting email addresses. They're basically just sending people to affiliate links and they're using some advance methods of tracking to increase their ability to target Pay per Click traffic. And it's basically just a numbers game to them. They try to get the highest possible ROI for their investment on traffic and they also, they spend you know 50 thousand dollars a month on Pay per Click and turn that into 150 thousand dollars a month, that's a good investment. And in that case, I think you're making enough money, maybe you don't really need to worry about collecting email addresses.

Heather: When you do a squeeze page, do you have to tell the person that you will now be added to my list, or do you just assume that they know that?

Eric: Uh, that's a tough question. I think an important thing to do there is probably double opt-in, so a lot of times what I'll do is not, on the page itself, I won't say you're going to be added on to my list. But they're going to get an email that says you know, you have to click here to get more information. And of course that's going to screen a lot of people out. Not everyone's going to do the double opt-in and so not everyone that fills out the form on the page is going to end up on your list in the end. But it's really important today. I mean spam is just becoming such a huge problem, and even an innocent person accused of spam can have tremendous problems. I mean I've heard of big time marketers being basically shut down just because of a couple of false spam accusations. So it's important to have a good host for your list. Someone like [AWeber](#) and then to do the full double opt-in and obviously if they do the double opt-in, then they know they're on a list obviously.

Heather: Now, let's talk a bit about the Pay per Click advertising. It's a little complicated for newbies, so let's break that down step by step. How exactly do you go about choosing your keywords and purchasing the Pay per Click traffic?

Eric: Well again, the idea here I think for newbies is to start small. You don't have to go in there and start bidding a dollar for every key word, spending a hundred dollars a day. You can start [Google AdWords](#) for five dollars, and you know, five cents a click, you can start with that and as far as choosing... really the first thing to do would be to choose your product that you're going to promote. So

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basically go to [ClickBank](#), look at the market place and see what you're most interested in, and I think a good thing to start with is something that you'd have experience with or something that you can actually make a personal recommendation on. So you know if you're a dog expert, choose a dog related site. If you're a marketing expert then choose a marketing related product. And uh... so you're going to basically pick your product, get your hoplink, go to [AdWords](#) and develop your key word list. And I use a couple of tools for that. I use one called [Keywords Analyzer](#) and I use [Good Keywords](#) which is actually a free one. And that's one where you basically type in the key word, press a button and it'll give you like a hundred keywords that are related to the one key word. There's also some other free tools within Google itself, also within [Overture](#), which is also known as the officer of marketing and you can get their suggestions there. And I definitely would utilize all of those tools. In fact, building the keywords list is probably the most important part, the part that takes me the longest of setting up any Pay per Click campaign. So if I'm setting up, you know, a Pay per Click for a [ClickBank](#) product, I might take half an hour or even an hour in some cases just to build my keywords list. And it's an investment of time, but I think it pays off in the long run. I usually try to get three or four hundred keywords for any product, and I'll export those into an Excel spread sheet and basically break them down from there into smaller ad groups. And the way it's gotten with Pay per Click marketing is that the more targeted you can get with your ad groups the better. So in other words rather than clumping all those keywords together and putting one ad for the product, what you want to do is to divide those keywords into small groups of related keywords, and put those into separate ad groups with the key word in the headline of each ad. And it's basically been shown that if you have the key word in the headline, it's got a higher click through rate, the other thing that's going to be good is it has a better... it's better for Google basically, they've got these different things that they take into consideration and one of them is just the quality of the ads, and so they... when they look at quality they're looking at keywords in the headlines, is the ad related to what this key word is? So you want to keep it as targeted as possible and take a lot of time developing your key word list and setting up the ad groups. Once you've got your ad groups all separated out, the next most important thing is writing the ads itself and the important thing to keep in mind when you're writing a Pay per Click ad, is that you're not trying to sell a product. All you're trying to do is to get someone to click on it. In other words, you don't

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want to put... you don't need to put all the features and benefits in there, the price and all that type of stuff. Basically all you're trying to do is to get people to click on it. So it's a... you want something that can be attention getting. You want an attention getting headline with the key word in it. And then some sort of call to action, like you know, look here now. In other words, all you want to get them to do is just click on that ad. Because the better click through rate you have, the better position you're going to have with Google. It doesn't matter so much with some of the other Pay per Click engines like [Overture](#), but with Google especially, you want the highest possible click through rate. And as you develop a history of good click through rating in your [Google AdWords](#) account, that actually gets better over time so... since I've been doing it for awhile, I actually am at an advantage over some newbies who go in and start doing [Google AdWords](#) because my account has a history of having a pretty good click through rate. So you really want to work on that right off the bat, getting that click through rate. And then, I actually recommend when you're doing a new [ClickBank](#) ad, to start by sending them directly to the vendor's site, so instead of sending them to your own site, to a review page or to a name squeeze page, send them directly to the vendor's site, put your hop link into the destination URL and put the vendor's website address into the display URL, so that way when people click on it, they go directly to the vendor's site and that way you can find out whether a product is good or not. In other words you know, if you get a hundred clicks and nobody buys the product, you don't get any commission, then it's probably not worth your time to, you know, sit down and build a website to promote that product. I think it's a good test. You know, always before you take the time to build an entire website or write a review, you know, stick it on [AdWords](#) and see what happens. You know, if people are buying the product, well then that's probably worth spending some more time on and further optimizing, writing that review and building that squeeze page and all that stuff. But you know, if it's a dud, then you know, throw it away and pick another product basically.

Heather: So you're saying you want a high click through rate, but you're paying for those clicks, so how do you make sure that you're not spending more than you're making?

Eric: Right. Basically again start small, so you know, if you've got a limited budget, you know start with 5 cents a click and just do about

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20 clicks or 100 clicks. I think usually by the time you get 100 clicks on any ad, you should know if the product's going to sell or not. If I don't have at least a one percent conversion rate on any product, then I won't promote it. So figure out your budget, you know, if you can afford you know 5 cents a click for a hundred clicks... 5 dollars or, my math's fuzzy there. Basically it's a pretty minimal investment and you can find out whether the product is going to be a winner or not. You know if it's not, if it's a dud, well then maybe you just lost 5 dollars. You can pick another one. If you do that type of a test on every product, I guarantee you're going to hit some winners and you're going to make a lot more money off those good products than you lost off the tests. That's why it's important to start small. Where most people get burned is they go in there and instead of starting small, you know they'll see Google's recommended click price for a certain key word and they'll go and bid 25 cents or 50 cents or even a dollar for certain keywords, and they'll burn through 100 dollars in a day and didn't make any commission and you know, maybe they only got 25 clicks, who knows? They're spending all this money and that's where they just get burned. You got to really start small and test it as you go and if you're not making any sales, you know cut it off real quick, don't just keep on testing and testing forever. Just cut it off, go on to the next product. I mean there's over 10 thousand products on [ClickBank](#) that you can choose from. So you know, there's no use spending a lot of extra time and money on those ones that just aren't converting.

Heather: Are there any other paid advertising tactics that you use besides the Pay per Click?

Eric: Not too often. Occasionally I'll do something like a solo email ad, that's where say you don't have your own mail list, well you can actually pay someone else to send out an email for you, and basically you want to find someone who does that have list that trusts them and listens to them. Someone who's probably an experienced marketer who's got a big list, and you know, pay them to send an ad out to their list and I think that works just fine. Occasionally, you know banner advertising sometimes can work, but it's pretty rare. Most people don't do banner advertising right, and most sites aren't set up right for it. But I think Pay per Click is probably the main, more paid advertising that I use for affiliate marketing. There's other techniques. Some people use [eBay](#), for example. I think that... maybe not so much with [ClickBank](#) products, but it is possible. There's various ways of doing it

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really. Even on a [ClickBank](#) product you could, for example get a vendor's permission to sell their product on [eBay](#), and then instead of having that person check out, you know, through PayPal or through [eBay](#), just make sure they go to your affiliate link. Give them a redirect, so it doesn't look like a hoplink, and that's going to send them right through the [ClickBank](#) pay system. And they can pay that way. So there's lots of strategies there.

Heather: So, let's go back to picking the product. How do you go about deciding what [ClickBank](#) products you're going to choose to promote?

Eric: Well to start off with, and I think when I started off with it, it was just trying to pick a few products that really looked interesting to me. You know something that just basically peaked my interest in, and that I thought I would be able to have something to say about, and that's a good place to start and as you progress, I think you just kind of go from there and work your way out and try all sorts of different things. I'm at the point now where I promote all kinds of products that I would have really no interest personally in. Those aren't things that I promote on my own personal website and blog and stuff, but I do the Pay per Click advertising, but that's totally impersonal. It's not like I'm making a personal recommendation, I'm just promoting the product. I'm an advertiser basically. And so, I try to look for things that pay at least 50 percent commission most of the time. The occasional product might have a smaller commission like 30 or 40 percent that could still be worth it. But in general I look for 50 percent or higher. And I try to get a good mix of some of the bestsellers and some of the new products. So some people go on to [ClickBank Marketplace](#) and they'll see the bestsellers, you know the top ten list, and they'll you know they'll look at that gravity, the affiliate percentage and the pay out, that's all they look at. They think if it has such a high gravity, well that must be a great product to promote. Problem with that is that there are so many other affiliates out there promoting those very same products that it's going to be a lot more competitive, particularly in the case of like Pay per Click marketing. There's going to be a lot of other affiliates out there competing with you. So you don't want to avoid those products because they are good sellers. You want to pick up some of those, promote them. But you also want to go you know, way down the list, look at the ones that have been neglected or looked over by other affiliates. You know, look for something that catches

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your eye personally and see what you can do with it. And the other thing you can click on the links of new products. That's a great place because you're not going to have very much competition with other affiliates. You can find, you know, like a new product that's you know a good seller. You can take that for a long time and make a lot of money from it. That's kind of my strategy. I try to do kind of a mix of the new and the old and all kinds of different topics really.

Heather: What about going further down the list and picking a product that's not necessarily new but doesn't have a lot of affiliates promoting it?

Eric: Absolutely, yeah, that's definitely a great way to do it. I mean look for those ones that have been overlooked by the other affiliates and particularly with Pay per Click marketing, you're going to have a better shot with those ones. You don't have all the affiliates out there competing and promoting that product.

Heather: OK, so a 50 percent commission is good. What kind of price point are you looking at on the product?

Eric: Again, that really varies but I try to stay away from the ones that are real small. You know if it's like a ten dollar product, I won't even consider promoting that. I like to make at least over ten dollars per transaction. I know a lot of other marketers would say they'll go for even an higher amount, like Chris Carpenter is a pretty infamous Pay per Click marketer. I mean he doesn't do it unless he can make like at least 20 dollars. Some say they won't promote it unless they can make at least 30 dollars. Um, I'm not quite that stingy. I'll promote a product if I can make at least 10 dollars or more off of it typically. And so that would put it at... typically at least like a 20 dollar price point or higher.

Heather: How do you figure out if there's going to be a demand for that product?

Eric: Well there's a couple of ways. For one thing if it is a best seller on [ClickBank](#) or if there's a similar product in the same topic that's a bestseller on [ClickBank](#), that's a good key so you've got a bestselling e-book on [ClickBank](#), there's a best selling dog e-book on [ClickBank](#) and if you go down the list, you know maybe number 57 on the list,

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there's another dog e-book, you look at the site. It looks just as good if not better than the other, well I'd rather much promote the less popular product because it's just as good of a product but there's going to be a lot less competition. Other ways would be to hop on Google, do a search and if you see a lot of results coming in other than paid sponsor ad listings, you know that's probably a good, probably a good seller, it's probably a profitable product because other affiliates are willing to pay for those clicks. And beyond that, you just do a lot of testing and after awhile you kind of get a pretty good feel for it. I feel like most of the time, when I pick a new product I already know if it's going to be a good seller or not. That's not always the case, I mean I'm definitely wrong some of the times. Occasionally my campaign is a bomb, but with time and with experience you just kind of get a feel for it. You can see which ones are going to be good sellers. Definitely look for ones that have a good sales page and look like something that you would want to buy personally, that would really convince you... is the ad copy good? Are the pictures good? Price point appropriate? Just look at all those things and see if it's something that's going to sell well. And if you think it will then give it a try and test it out.

Heather: How do you figure out if that's actually a good product? Because a lot of the things that they're selling on [ClickBank](#), you know it's hard to tell without buying that product whether it's a scam or whether it's a good product...

Eric: Right, yeah I've had that criticism before even, as well. You know as an affiliate marketer, that's something that you'll run up into sometimes. People will say, oh you're just promoting all these get rich quick schemes, and you're just as bad as the rest of them. Well uh, there's a couple of ways you can do that. First of all obviously the best way would be to first review the product and if you can get your hands on it, whether that be by buying it or by getting a free copy of it. That's probably a great way to do it and I'm not, I'm definitely not suggesting that newbies go out there and buy everything that they want to promote just so that they can review it. I think they'd end up broke if they did that, end up paying 50 dollars every time just so you can read an e-book. But definitely I think if you ask nice enough and you're persuasive, I think a lot of people will give you a free copy of it, or maybe you could get a free sample of it at the very least. And just review the work, see if it's decent. And if it's not then just skip it or basically make your judgment on that. That's another good thing you

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can do with review sites is say you've got some related products and some of them are better than others, well you ought to make that known. You know it makes your good products a lot more convincing, if you've got some negative reviews to extend with them, so definitely a good approach to take there.

Heather: OK, now let's say this [ClickBank](#) affiliate newbie does go in there and they pick the most popular products to promote, they're up against hundreds, thousands of other affiliates who are promoting the same product, so what are some of the ways they can stand out among the crowd?

Eric: Well in a situation like that I mean, there's different strategies that you could do, one that's really become popular and I think effective over the last year is anti-marketing. Popularized by the [Rich Jerk](#) and others, and basically it's just kind of a shock bar. You just try and get that shock value in your ads, you know say, don't buy this product, and you know, click here to learn why, and then you go click on it, you see this person's personal review that says, whatever, they've got some sort of a unique way of saying it basically to justify their advertisement, but in the end they say, yeah go ahead and buy the product and send you the affiliate link anyway. But anti-marketing I think is really a hot thing to do. I haven't done a ton of it myself but I've done a little and it definitely can increase your click through rate. If you want something that's going to be shocking obviously you can't be obscene or vulgar or anything like that on Google. But you want to catch people's attention. Say warning, don't buy this product until you read my review. And that's going to catch people's attention, and if they see a warning about a product that they're considering buying, well of course they're going to want to read that review before they buy it. And if they go to your page to read that review, well then they're going to click your link and you're going to get credit for it.

Heather: And what about when everybody starts doing that?

Eric: Well, then it's going to change once again. I think that's where it's really advantageous to be a skilled copywriter in this business. I think really just about anyone can do it. I mean anyone can do affiliate marketing and Pay per Click marketing, but those that have some skills, I think are going to be better at it. That's one of the reasons I've got a new program I put together, it's called the [Writing Cash System](#)

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and basically it's geared towards writers. In other words, writers who are trying to make money as a writer. You know, I think those types of people are perfect for this kind of business opportunity because they are people who already know how to write, you know they're not just, typically not just high school drop outs trying to scrape together a few dollars. These are educated people that know how to write, they just don't have any internet experience. They don't know what to do to generate money with their skill. And in this new program I put together, basically it's just kind of like a dummy's guide to Pay per Click marketing, and sort of takes that writer's approach. Because I think really someone that has some copywriting skills is going to do better in the long run than someone who doesn't. Creativity I think is another good way of putting it. You don't have to be an expert copywriter, you don't have to have, you know a master's or a bachelor's degree in English or something like that, but you want to have definitely some creativity.

Heather: What's the biggest mistake you made when you were getting started as a [ClickBank](#) affiliate?

Eric: Hmm, I'd have to think back about that for awhile. Probably not tracking my results closely enough, and that's still probably the biggest mistake I make to this very day. People tend to avoid doing a lot of tracking because it takes time, it takes some effort and it's just not fun. I'm more of the creative person, I like writing the ads, I like promoting and selling things to people and building web sites and putting it together with all the different pictures and colors and that type of stuff. But I'm not so much into constantly crunching the numbers and tracking my results. But that's really the key to it all. I mean when it comes down to something where you're paying for your advertising like Pay per Click, if you're doing any kind of paid advertising, you have to track those results or you're going to end up losing money. And really to the point of tracking every single day. Especially if you're a newbie marketer and just getting into this business, something to do every single day, get an Excel spread sheet or if you don't know how to use Excel, write it down on a piece of paper and you know just use a pencil and keep track of it daily. But basically you want to, what you want to do is look at your expenses every day for every campaign. So for each product that you're promoting you want to look at how much you spend each day and how much commission you bring in each day. Because if you're not tracking

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those numbers, I mean it's real easy for your spending to get away from you, and a month goes by and you realize, oh, I just lost 500 dollars on this particular product, whereas if you'd been tracking it daily, you would have caught it right away. And there are some different tracking tools you can use. Some affiliate programs have a built in... [ClickBank](#) doesn't really have a built in tracker as of yet. There are some third party tracking programs you can use along with [ClickBank](#) that does kind of require the cooperation of the vendor to put a link, uh some code on their site as well. But your ability to track is crucial. I know that most of the guys that are making killer money, you know those guys that I mentioned are making a hundred thousand dollars a month, I mean they're tracking the results, they know exactly where every dollar is going and how much they're bringing in. It's all about ROI, return on investment. So I guess that's my biggest piece of advice in that regard, is track your results.

Heather: Do you have a favorite tool for doing that?

Eric: I'm kind of old fashioned in that regard. I basically just use Excel spreadsheets and I've kind of got all my own systems laid out, and I plug in the numbers daily and it kind of becomes a habit after you do it for a while. You can just about log in to your [Google AdWords](#) account with your eyes closed in your sleep and you'll pull those numbers and plug them into your spreadsheet you know to the point where it just takes me five minutes a day. I go in and I go into each of my [Google AdWords](#), [Yahoo Marketing](#) and see how much I'm spending on the campaigns and plug in those numbers, and then go to [ClickBank](#) and plug in those numbers from my commissions, and then on a monthly basis I usually do a more detailed analysis. I'll look at each individual product and see how they're performing. I've got so many products now, it's just, it's almost impossible for me to track every product every day. But I make sure that I at least analyze them monthly. For newbies, I mean you definitely want to track every product every day. There's a couple of them out there, I think it's called Ad Watcher, I'd have to pull it up here and see the names, there are basically two third party programs out there that do [ClickBank](#) tracking. And the way it works basically, the vendor puts a piece of code on their thank you page and then you use this... their program to create a redirect for your hoplink so instead of sending directly to the hoplink, it sends it to this new link that they basically create for you and every time someone clicks on that link, it tracks it for you, you can log it onto

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your account, look at your statistics and stuff like that. And those types of things are real helpful, I haven't gotten into that because I already set up so many campaigns over the last couple of years before I even learned about that, but for newbies definitely I'd recommend it. Any type of tracking tool you can get is definitely probably going to be worth your money.

Heather: Now if you're tracking every day and you're seeing what you're spending and what you're bringing in in commissions, what happens then a month down the road when the customer returns the product?

Eric: I keep all that in the equation, so like right on my spreadsheet I've got you know ClickBank Sales and then right underneath that it says ClickBank Refunds. And for the purpose in my tracking, I lump together refunds, charge backs and bounces all together as one number, so each day basically looking at your expenses and your revenues. On the revenue sides are your commissions and then you've got your expenses which is your... all your advertising costs and then refunds... all tracking that. You want to keep tracking that all of that and I keep track of it, you know it's kind of on a real time basis, so in other words if say someone from last month suddenly refunds it today, well that's going to hit my bottom line today. I have a cash method of accounting it, I don't go back to last month and put that refund on that particular day. But it all averages out over the long run. You know once you've gotten the groove of it, you can really look at things on more of a monthly basis instead of a daily. You know. You look at the daily to make sure you're not losing money and none of your campaigns are getting out of control, but in terms of the overall picture of your business, you can really look at it on a monthly basis because on some days, you know you might have good products, good campaigns but end up losing money on it... you know, you might have a product that's a bestseller, making you money almost everyday. I mean you could have a couple of bad days in a row. Well, you don't necessarily want to pull that product off the... you know out of your ads, drop it, because it's had a good history. And you really want to look at the average over at least a month, I would say.

Heather: So if you see you've got a product that's continually getting returns right off the jump then it's probably a product you don't want to continue to promote?

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Eric: Yeah right, probably not. I mean again, it's... plug those numbers into your spreadsheet or whatever you're using to do your tracking and if the refunds are impacting your bottom line to the point that your return on investment isn't good enough then yeah, I would drop it. I try to shoot for, I mean I personally try to double my money when I'm doing paid advertising so if I spend 10 dollars, I want to make 20. But realistically I think 50 percent ROI is a good goal. I know a lot of the big time Pay per Click marketers that I've talked to typically do about 65 to 70 percent ROI. And so if you could spend, you know ten dollars to bring in 15 dollars of commission, you know that's pretty good.

Heather: What are the big mistakes that you see other people making?

Eric: Again, probably the most common thing is not tracking your results or not starting small enough. They go in there and they bid too much right off the bat, they don't track the results and they don't know what's going on. Sometimes they, they just don't know the rules of Google and they'll put improper grammar, punctuation and misspellings and all that type of stuff. Well that's just going to get your ad kicked out of Google eventually and you have to go back and write it again which is a waste of time. You might as well do it right the first time. But beyond that, I think really the biggest mistakes are just wasting your time and money by not tracking results, not starting small and doing tests.

Heather: OK, so when someone's finished listening to or reading this interview, what's the first thing that you recommend they do?

Eric: First thing I mean would be to sign up for [ClickBank](#) if you're not already signed up, and get comfortable with what [ClickBank](#) is, take a look at the [Marketplace](#) and log into your [ClickBank](#) account, make sure you know how to look at your commissions and all that type of stuff, and basically get comfortable with that system. Look at what other [ClickBank](#) products are available and kind of see how it all works, observe for a little bit and make sure you understand [ClickBank](#) and how it works and why it works. And then the next step would be to pick a product and start advertising it.

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Heather: What do you think is the next big trend in [ClickBank](#) affiliate marketing?

Eric: Hmm... I'm not, not really a prophet so I can't say for sure but... it's really hard to say, I think that there's going to be a decline in some of the real hyped-up, how to make money type of stuff, and I know that for a fact because [ClickBank](#) has basically stopped accepting new products into their [Marketplace](#) that are real hyped up get rich quick type of stuff, it has to be something with more legitimacy these days in order for it to pass their security team. So I think there's going to be a bit of a trend away from that real get rich quick style, which is going to be very good for [ClickBank](#). I think it's going to help their reputation, and I think it's going to be good definitely for the affiliates as well, it's going to help their reputation, and I think hopefully people will trend more towards, you know those targeted niches and really delivering helpful products to people who need them.

Heather: Any final words of wisdom to pass on to everyone?

Eric: Oh, let me think here, what kind of wisdom here could I possibly pass on? See, we've covered Pay per Click, we've covered the list stuff... Write a report. That's another good one where we talked about writing a report for building your list, but create your own product. You can be a vendor and an affiliate. That's the other thing that I mentioned that I do personally. I've got some e-books that I've sold on [ClickBank](#). If you can get your own product out there, you can actually use that product to sell other products. You can do that simply through links within that book. So say you've got a PDF file and within that e-book you recommend some other related products and every time someone clicks on one of those links in your e-book, you're going to get an affiliate commission when people buy those products so again, it's actually a method of advertising and you're kind of bringing in money from two sides. You're bringing in money from the sales product itself, and from the affiliate sales that result from the product. So it's definitely something to look into.

Heather: OK, there's been a wealth of information, thank you so much, Eric.

Eric: Hey, you're welcome Heather. Anytime.