

## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

**Heather Vale:** I'm Heather Vale, partner of Codrut Turcanu, for [ClickBank Affiliate Confessions](#)... Today I'm speaking with Michael Cheney from Aberdeen, Scotland, author of the [Website Marketing Bible](#). First of all Michael, could you give us a brief background of yourself and your websites?

**Michael Cheney:** Sure. I mean, my history with the Internet really stems back to around 1995 when I first got involved, I guess, online. At that point I was... like most people I have come across, started out developing sites, primarily just as a hobby really, just building sites. And then, as time went on, I started to realize that the web was gaining momentum; more and more people are actually doing business on it. And at that time I realized that there's a big opportunity there from commercial point of view. I had done a lot of website building for other people and other businesses. I then moved off into sort of, search engine optimization and helping other people climbing up the search engines and get high rankings, that type of thing. And then I sort of... a moment of realization came when I thought well, why I am doing this for other people when I could be doing it for my own site, and my own products. That's really when I started to launch my own sites and get traffic through to them; produce my own products and obviously what we are going to be talking about today, which is selling other peoples' products through my sites and through my lists.

**Heather:** Why did you decide to get into the affiliate marketing?

**Michael:** Really, just from doing a lot of research; I mean, I am an avid reader anyway. I am a big believer in constantly learning and even when you're at the top of your game, to spend a lot of time and invest a lot of money in learning the latest techniques. And whenever I've done any kind of research, from the year dot on the Internet, affiliate marketing seems to be the way forward. A lot of people were saying, this is a great entry point into the Internet world, if you like. And I think that holds true; it's a great way to keep up, once you understand the principles of affiliate marketing and it's far less of a jump to then go off and produce your own products rather than doing it the other way around. So, the main reason I got into affiliate marketing was, just from recommendations from pretty much everyone else on the web, but also the fact that it's fairly quick to get it established; you can obviously choose your product, tip off and

## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

promote that product and you don't have any of the worries or concerns about the support side of it afterwards as well.

**Heather:** And why did you choose [ClickBank](#) for some of that affiliate marketing in particular?

**Michael:** No great complex decision I can process on my part, it was really just a critical mass thing, and a lot of people pointing back to [ClickBank](#), and almost as if you know, if you are doing affiliate marketing, [ClickBank](#) is the route to go. And so really as soon as I got in there and trying to get familiar with the [ClickBank](#) technology and how it all works then... and that really became a preferred method. Obviously there are a lot of other routes out there now, but initially it was purely done on sort of, recommendation really and people say, go to the [Marketplace](#), it's easy to find products.

**Heather:** How much do you make now, just as a [ClickBank](#) affiliate?

**Michael:** Just as a [ClickBank](#) affiliate... I mean, I have got my own product, obviously the [Website Marketing Bible](#), and that goes through [ClickBank](#), but excluding that I make around \$10,000 a month, \$7,000 to \$10,000, a month just depends on how much sales I make obviously. And I would say about 80% to 85% of that is clear profit; and I don't do a massive amount of advertising to sell affiliate products. So most of that is profit.

**Heather:** How much do you think it's possible to make as a [ClickBank](#) affiliate?

**Michael:** I mean, you could easily multiply that by 10 or 100 or more; it really just depends... I mean, I am not a full time... the [ClickBank](#) affiliate side is a third of business at most, so it's not where the most of my efforts are actually focused; and it's a nice side business and obviously I do devote time to it and... but I am not working on a full time basis, which if it were, then obviously I could generate a lot more revenue. So, the sky really is the limit in terms of what you can generate. I mean I'm only pushing for promoting handful of products, less than ten products really to generate that amount of revenue. So, if I put the time in, then obviously I could grow my portfolio of products and my revenue would grow along with that as well.

## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

**Heather:** What are some of those ten products that you promote?

**Michael:** That's a good question, which I'll probably side-step to be honest. I mean, I pick markets that are fairly well developed; and so I know there is a definite need there. It's a whole mix; I mean obviously I'm from an Internet marketing background, so I am promoting Internet marketing products, affiliate products. I have also got some of the walls ones there and to do with like stocks and shares, and some golf related products, some food and drink related products. So it's basically... it's quite a mix and... but generally speaking, it's Internet marketing stuff I am promoting as a rule.

**Heather:** When you first started out, how long did it take you to get to where you are now, making thousands of dollars a month?

**Michael:** In the [ClickBank](#) side of things, I have not actually been involved in that for that long. Obviously I have been involved in Internet for ages, but the [ClickBank](#) side, I would probably say, doing it seriously and giving it full attention probably I have only been doing it for about a year and maybe two years at most, and actually learning the ins and outs and devoting time to understanding it and promoting it. So, yeah, I would say, two years at the very most, and for one of the most successful products I am doing it's actually less than a year and that contributes... I would say 70% of that figure comes from this one product I promote.

**Heather:** So, before we go into the details of your various tactics; in a nutshell, what are the tactics that you use?

**Michael:** Well, I have got a whole series of things I use. I mean, just to rattle up a few... and obviously we can go through these in detail, but it obviously comes down to finding the right products and giving value when you are promoting the products, and also building relationships with the vendors. A lot of people just think, well, find a product or stick up the review or whatever it is, and that's it, we'll make sales, but the key part that I found is actually spent... as in the conventional business sense, which is building relationships with the actual vendors themselves. And leverage is another important factor and also learning, which I have mentioned already, is this idea of continuing your education, and on the Internet generally.

## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

**Heather:** OK, so starting off with picking the right products. What are you looking for when you are doing that?

**Michael:** Well really, it's a combination of things. Initially, I find you have got to have something that appeals to you personally. You got to have something that you have got a passion for. And you see some people that get into affiliate marketing and they suddenly start promoting mortgage products or finance products or whatever, because they think that they are going to have the biggest mark-up, but they've actually got no interest or no passion for that market themselves. So, it's quite a basic thing to say, but you have got to really pick something that you have got an interest in, or you are passionate for, because at the end of the day you are trying to sell this product. And if you don't understand it intimately, and you haven't got a passion for it, it's going to come across when you are actually trying to sell or review this product. So don't... we can all talk about market and picking the right niche market and the product with the best commission rate and all the stuff, but to me if you rewind and go all the way to the beginning, you have got to pick something that you understand and you have a passion for, otherwise you are not going to be able to sell it, and ultimately that's what you are doing, you are selling somebody else's product. So, that to me is a most important thing. After you've found that passion or you found the product you got passion for and understanding for, then it's a clear case of checking out the various products that are there in that market, going to the site, seeing if the site appeals to you. Again, it needs to be quite personal, it's OK saying, "Well let's go and see what the market thinks, or let me run a serve still people think about". If the product doesn't appeal to you, you are going to have a great difficulty selling it. Other things I have done in the past, I put a survey out to my list. I have got a list that gets these opt-in videos, and as a kind of a break from these videos, I sent out a survey and said, what type of products or what information would you be interested in? Hundreds of people come back and that itself gives me a footprint for the type of products I should be looking for; I then go off and then base a decision on that feedback. So, it's different things that you can do, but as I say, my point of view is you've got to have something you understand, you have got passion for, and it actually appeals to you personally, you're going to find it fairly easy to sell then.

## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

**Heather:** What's a good commission level and a good price point that sells?

**Michael:** That's a good question, I wouldn't... I have rarely promoted anything less than 50%. 50% now seems to be the kind of the base level, and I know people are moving up from that, and on a temporary basis it's much more. In a promotion from my friend [Neil Shearing](#) recently, he offered 70% for I think the first seven days, a 70% commission. And that sort of commission, it tracks people in, it really raises eyebrows and makes you think, well actually in my inbox, I have got 20 people offering me a joint venture and 19 are offering me 50% and this one guy is going to offer me 70%. So, it can swing the ball in your favor, obviously if you are a vendor offering that amount of commission. As far as the price point goes, that's... and that is difficult because it depends on the products itself. The type of products I am offering and go for... some are sort of \$20 up to 40... I think the highest one is \$97 from a [ClickBank](#) point of view at least; so there is a fair range there; and again if you're just starting off, then the smaller and... the smaller priced items may be worth looking at just because, from an emotional point of view, when you get that first sale, it gives you a massive boost, there's nothing like getting that first sale coming through, and you realize then the potential. So if you start off and you are promoting a \$197 product, you are going to have to send quite a lot people through that page, to actually buy just because of the cost of it. And it's really just one part in the whole equation; it's very difficult just to say, carte blanche, choose a product of this price.

**Heather:** How do you build relationships with the vendors?

**Michael:** OK. As I mentioned before, it's relationship building; what I found is that obviously you have got to make some sales... one sale at least, to actually start this process off. But once you have made a sale, or two sales or whatever for a vendor, it's quite easy for you then to contact them, because you have made an invisible connection there. You can contact and say, "I just sold a couple of your products." That I mean at least, is going to get you through all the noise in their inbox so, that they actually stand up and listen. So what you need to do then is, start building relationships by doing things such as asking questions; ask them, what are other affiliates doing to promote your products? What else works? And, I have gone through your sales page but are there any other benefits that you maybe not mentioning on

## **ClickBank Affiliate Confessions**

### **Interview with Michael Cheney**

that? Do you have a follow up process, what's your support like? Just try and quiz them a little bit on other things that you can... and other angles that you can sell that product on. The other thing, when you actually go down this process and you start to get more information from them, you start to build a relationship with them and make more sales, you can actually then start to make suggestions which I have done in the past, which really sounds a bit cheeky, but you work on their behalf, and it's in your joint interest that things are improved. And I have done this with one of my key vendors, and I said, look, I'm trying this particular technique, why don't you try it and see what happens, because we both make more sales. And what happens is, as you go through this process and start making one or two sales and you open the dialogue and then you go back and forth, what happens is you actually become members of the same team it's not just... you're not just selling his products, you're not selling this person's products; you are actually working together because you realize that it's in everyone's interest to get this thing right. So, to give you an example, because I'm kind of talking about specifics here, but to give you an example, what I did is, I contacted this guy and said, "Look, your sales letter is quite good, but to be honest, there is a couple of things that I would maybe remove, there is a couple of things that I would add." One of them was an opt-in box for this particular state. He had a great sales page and it was selling well, obviously it was selling well for me and for him, but he didn't have an opt-in box where people could get further information. So, if they weren't directly ready to buy, they were disappearing, which was bad for him and bad for me. So he included an opt-in box and a free course to back up this product, and it's generated more sales for both of us, because obviously people are signing up if they're not ready to buy, and he's sending them further follow ups, sending them back to his site with my affiliate link on their cookies, and I am getting more sales and he is getting more sales. So these type of things can help to build a relationship with the vendor, and it's important, if you are making a lot of sales, you have to get use that and get in touch with the vendor. Don't just think that they will be happy with what you are doing, and that you should be happy with what you are doing; contact them and say, "Look, what can I do to get more from this? What else can we be doing?" And another example is, I went to one affiliate and put him... from probably say, I was able to see I was his top affiliate. So I said, "Look, I am your top affiliate, I am generating a lot more sales than everyone else, I want more money back, I am trying sending you a mass amount of sales. It's just

## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

a simple question.” He came down, said yeah, no problems. So he is now giving me 10% more because I am sending you a high volume of sales, so it’s only if you start to build a relationship like that, that you can actually ask these sorts of questions.

**Heather:** When a vendor is using an opt-in list on their page, how do you know if the emails going through that opt-in list are going to be connected to your hoplink, or if they just end up in his system and he gets the sales?

**Michael:** Well, my understanding of this... and I’m not a technical person, but they get cookie’d when they land on his site, so unless they get referred back to his site from another [ClickBank](#) affiliate also promoting that product, then they land on your site and they still going to have your cookie in their system and you are still going to get credited for that sale. And with this particular vendor, we’ve developed such a relationship that he created a specific download page for the product for me... just for me, that includes certain things I have asked to include on the page. So I guess some of it does actually come down to trust but again, at the end of the day, the technology is there that if people revisit, then I should still get credited for that sale.

**Heather:** What are the various ways that you promote your websites and get the traffic to them?

**Michael:** Well, how long have you got? I mean it’s... there’s a massive amount of things I do, I mean search engine optimization is one, and building a lot of content and submitting articles to article sites, and obviously doing interviews like this, getting people through, and as I’ve said already, I offer these free videos on my site, the [WebsiteMarketingBible.com](#). On that site you sign up for the free videos, and that’s a great incentive for people to join the list. You know, I give away all this information in seven videos, and on the understanding that ultimately I am going to be offering discount products or recommendations or whatever. These things can be viral, I’ve had people say, “Look, I have gone through your video course,” which as I say is totally free, “and I really, really enjoyed it. I have sent it to all my colleagues,” because it’s... I am a firm believer in givers gain, the more you can give, the more you gain in the long run. Now when you start out, it’s very difficult to stick to your guns on that principle, because you are cautious of what’s coming through the



## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

business. When you get more established, it's quite easy to say now, I am going to give all this away and build up a level of trust and relationship with people that come to the site. So that... I mean that's some of the ways I use to get traffic. I don't really do that much, as I say in advertising, not for my own site. I do a little bit of advertising for the affiliate site.

**Heather:** So what are the paid advertising venues that you use for your affiliate sites?

**Michael:** I use [Google AdWords](#) and also the [Overture](#) network as well. I find [Overture](#) to be honestly a bit clunky. I don't really like it, but it does get me a few more sales. I much prefer the [Google AdWords](#) site.

**Heather:** Anything else besides Pay per Click that you spend money on to advertise?

**Michael:** No, I am not actually Scottish but I adopt this Scottish mentality of being very thrifty with my money so I don't really spend that much at all; I do the occasional Ezine ad if I am looking to get a big spike on traffic or whatever, and because I have been going so long, I know all the different free routes and the methods to get traffic for free. So unless I am desperate for something out of need, it's rare that I'll actually stomp up the cash and buy advertising anywhere.

**Heather:** OK, so if you are promoting a specific [ClickBank](#) product, how do you decide if you are going to use search engine optimization or if you are going to go for the Pay per Clicks, or some other way of getting traffic to that site?

**Michael:** I have got products I do both routes for... some products I do just on an optimization basis, and others I do purely Pay per Click. I think it depends on what your state is, what sites you have, what content you have got and what sort of traffic you're getting at the moment. I'm not a great believer, to be honest, in this [Google Cash](#) method or whatever it's called where you send people directly from [Google](#) to an affiliate site, and I would much rather send them on a kind of, stepping stone, so they're landing on your site or something that you have created, and then the hopping off on to the affiliate site; because that's the only way you can actually add value. People are



## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

making big money obviously sending people direct from Pay per Click through to affiliates; but they could make a lot more if they actually add value to the proposition, because every man and his dog is just saying, "here's a review, go and buy this," or "here's a list of products," and you just click on it, and you go through and order. But what I am talking about is actually giving more value. For example, now this is one of the ideas that I thought about, "will I actually give this away?" And now, because I have said that givers gain, I am going to actually give it away, even though my partner advised me not to; but what I do is, actually give bonus products. I either give discounts on some of my own products or I give some of my own products away for free, or I give additional bespoke videos that I have created. So what that means is, rather than just sending somebody directly from Pay per Click through to the affiliate, what I will do is, I'll send them to a bespoke page that I've developed that will add value to the proposition. So I am like everyone else, I am not just saying, "come and buy this products, it's great," I am saying, "if you buy this product, I am going to give you cash back, I am going to give you free videos, all the rights to this collection; I am going to give you free access to my own products, and I am going to give you an audio seminar about this thing as well"... for example. So that adds value to the proposition; so you are not just like most other affiliates; you are actually going the extra mile, and that gives people reason to buy from you rather than anyone else. So, these are the types of things I'm doing to actually generate more sales and step away from the straight... you know, ad straight through to the affiliate site.

**Heather:** How exactly would you administer that, after they've bought the product and they want to get the bonus from you?

**Michael:** This is where it comes back to relationships; that's what I am saying, that the guy who's built and the guys I do this for have built in on their backend system, a way of capturing the email addresses of people that buy, which automatically inserts people into an autoresponder I've created, so they get an email instantly with bonuses. You can... there is a work around obviously that you can do, a non-automated work around where you get the email address from people that buy the product through [ClickBank](#), and obviously you could then email them and say, "here's your bonus," or you could, when you promote it you could say, "to claim your bonuses, email me at..." whatever. You then verify that that's actually one of the buyers

## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

on your [ClickBank](#) account. So there is a messy way of doing it, but ideally you need to liaise with the vendor and say, look set this up. What I found is, most of them are very happy to do this because they know that if you're going to offer more bonuses and more great stuff or whatever it is on top, they are going to get more sales, so they'll be willing to spend half an hour, an hour or whatever just creating a mechanism to capture these details at their site.

**Heather:** When you are putting good content on your sites in order to attract traffic from the search engine, what kind of content are you putting there?

**Michael:** Anything and everything really; and content is the key at the end of the day. And so anything that I can think of to add content to the site I'll do. So yeah, I've obviously got product reviews, I have got videos and I've got audio files, and I have got short biographies on some of the leading... in my case, internet marketing guys, and articles done up, I've said that, written by myself, articles written by the people, and you know a directory of related links, and I've obviously got a blog as well. And so, yeah anything can help... but it is all tightly themed. I don't, for example, have content that's not related to, in my case, internet marketing... it is all related, but it's just coming at it from different sides. Some people want... some people land on the site and will want to see a list of products; so they will have a problem, and they are looking for solutions. So, they might be looking for something that will solve their affiliate marketing needs or whatever. So they will go into the product reviews. Somebody else may be wanting to know, give me all the products by [Rosalind Gardner](#) or whatever, so they would then go into the experts' profile page and they can access it that route. So it's just a case of giving people different options to getting through to the sale.

**Heather:** So once you have added all that content, you have got references to big gurus that people are searching for... but how do you make sure when they search for that guru, they're ending up on your page, what's the key to that?

**Michael:** Well, that's what we're all... I've been spending 10 years working at that; it's not something that I can answer in a few sentences, I mean, it's, how do you get top of the search engines? You could spend every day of the next year answering that question, or

## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

trying to find out answer to that question but in a nutshell, you need to be the most relevant. The search engines put people on the first page that they think are most relevant for that query. So, if you are not first or if you are not coming up in the rankings, it's because you are not relevant; so, you need to become more relevant. Now, the way that you do that include getting more content on the site including... let's just take the [Rosalind Gardner](#) example; if you are not coming up for [Rosalind Gardner](#), then maybe you are not using that phrase on that page at all, or often enough, maybe you haven't linked to that page using that phrase, maybe other people aren't linking to that page, and maybe you're just not seen by the search engines as an authority resource on that particular subject. You need to do everything you can to make sure that you do become a resource, or an authority respected resource, on the theme that you would like to be ranked highly for... that's basically, that's it in a nutshell, but also there is a lot of work involved in how you actually attain that status.

**Heather:** Yeah, because how do you know how many times you have to put "[Rosalind Gardner](#)" on the page so that the search engines recognize it as valuable content, but not just a page full of "[Rosalind Gardner](#)" for the sake of attracting traffic?

**Michael:** That's right, I mean obviously the keyword density thing is... that's a tiny part of search engine optimization, but... and you could spend hours just today just looking into keyword density, and how many times a word should appear on the page, and I think to the site and I think it's just [KeywordDensity.com](#) where you can go and you put in your web address... page address, sorry. You put in a phrase that you are trying to optimize for and it gives you a weighting of how... what's the keyword density like for that word on that page. But for me, I just spend an hour doing that, or, I could spend an hour and bang out ten articles of whatever, and I would rather go that route than spend too much on the nitty-gritty. There's so many things that you can think of and worry about when you are trying to make it on the internet; it's very easy to go off down the wrong channel trying to become an expert on keyword density when really, time is probably best spent on launching a new product or researching a new affiliate product or getting more content on your site.

**Heather:** How do you go about getting other big sites to link to you?

## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

**Michael:** That's... I mean it involves thinking slightly differently to everybody else, I mean we all know that you probably get about ten link requests a day into your inbox, and most of them get deleted. You need to think slightly differently and offer them something different. You should always, as a rule, when you are doing linking, you should always link to a site first, actually visit a site, understand what it is that they're looking... what they're selling and what they are looking for from the visitor. And maybe go the extra mile, say, "I've linked to you from a home page, or I have got an Ezine that I am going to go run a feature on your site, and would you like to link back to me, or would you please link back to me?" rather than just... this is a standing link request email, blah, blah, blah... and those are fast on the way out and have been for a number of months. So you've got to think differently to everyone else to actually get the big guys to link back.

**Heather:** And then what's the process of submitting your site to the search engines?

**Michael:** Well, it's... I mean it's been years since I have done that because, it's a myth that you need to resubmit over and over to search engines, but if you got a new site, a brand new site, then normally you just to go to the search engine, scroll somewhere near the bottom and there will be a link somewhere along the way that says, "Submit Here," or "Add URL." And the nature of them means that if you get linked from another site somewhere, the chances are that the search engine spiders, as they call them, the software that spiders all through the web... the chances are you will get picked up like that anyway, but you can still manually submit to these search engines as well.

**Heather:** What about using one of these search engine submitters, that says it submits your site to thousands and thousands of search engines?

**Michael:** The software can be useful, I mean like everyone else has good versions and bad versions but... and it can save you time, and the only thing is that you know the search engines, when they first started out, search engines wanted as many sites on there as possible because if you're a search engine and you don't have any sites on your index, you're not really worth using, but now as they have become

## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

established it's gone the other way around, and they are able to put some checks in place so they stop being bombarded by people trying to submit over and over and over. So, if you use this... some of the software tools, then it can happen that you actually... you will get submitted, but in some cases the search engines have specific guidelines, and it's often by it's action do it manually rather than use the software.

**Heather:** How has the process of search engine optimization changed over the past ten years since you started out?

**Michael:** It's just got more difficult really because obviously there are more people that are trying to do the same thing, and it's become, I guess, you know, it's just changing ever more quickly with each passing day and week in terms of what you actually need to do, which is why in the long run, if ten years ago you'd have just said no, forget the search engines, I am just going to build a quality site, it's got unique content on it and it's a great resource that I know people love and will come back to, the search engine optimization will take care of itself. And I've gradually come to realize that you need to focus on your own site. There's no point devoting your entire life to wondering where you are in the rankings and fiddling about with the algorithm and making little tweaks here and there, you'd be far better to get more content on your site, get more people linking to the site, getting a new product out there, sending out another mail shot to your mailing list, or whatever. So it has changed radically, I mean it was very easy to just kind of very quickly get a decent ranking in the search engines a number of years ago, but now it's becoming increasingly more difficult as competition is increased. So I would recommend that, yeah you need to have the basic grasp so that you build a site as search engine friendly. You may be need to do a bit of optimization work in terms of choosing the right phrases, getting people to link to you, but percentage-wise you are willing to spend the most amount of time on your site and getting that site full of great quality content.

**Heather:** So, once the visitor is on your site, what's your sales conversion ratio like?

**Michael:** On my own site it's around 1 or 2%, which, I'm about the industry average, but that is just from people that land directly on the site and buy there and then. Obviously with my opt-in list and with the

## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

free videos, that converts and very well and they go through the program, they get the seven free videos and at the end I say, look there's no more free videos, that's it, unless you want to obviously pay for access to my knowledge, and further videos, and the [Website Marketing Bible](#), then you are going to have to stump up. So that converts very well on that side.

**Heather:** And then once they are into your opt-in list, do you also market products to them... not just your own products, but affiliate products as well?

**Michael:** Yeah I do that's part of it, that's part of it. I mean I always do a mix, and I rarely to be honest, rarely do a straight "buy this product" type of promotion. I usually include either a video or a lesson of some kind so people can come on, read the email and watch video and say, OK you are this is how we climb the search engines, or this is how we do whatever. And then at the end I'll say, look, if you want to earn more, or if you want a tool that going to help you this, go and buy this product. So, it's rare that I would actually just do a flat outright sales email. I do do them occasionally, but normally there is some sort of lesson and free information for people to get from each of the mailouts that's I do.

**Heather:** So you actually create a video that's related to the content of the product that you are promoting as an affiliate?

**Michael:** Correct, yeah.

**Heather:** Wow. How big is your opt-in list now?

**Michael:** It's around 21 to 22,000.

**Heather:** What kind of conversion ratio do you get when you send out a message to them like that... come watch this video and check out this product?

**Michael:** Obviously it depends on the products. I mean the target people that are coming on the list, pretty much all have a website, some just starting out and don't have a website yet. But to give you an example, I mentioned [Neil Shearing](#) who is a Brit, and he did a promotion recently for one of his courses, and I was his top affiliate

## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

using this technique. So, I mean it does work. I do get a lot click throughs, and obviously to the videos because people know that it's not just going to be a sale, there are going to be and lessons and knowledge that they can use to actually improve their own websites. What I am finding though is it probably is going to be in my interest to flip the balance slightly more towards myself rather than the visitors, because I am giving a lot of stuff away and people said, why aren't you charging for this? If you get an email, or a few emails from people saying, why aren't you charging for this, then it should really set off alarm bells, which it has done for me. And so I am going to obviously still continue to give away the free advice. But I think I maybe went too far in terms of what I was actually giving away.

**Heather:** How do you prevent your [ClickBank](#) ID from being stolen?

**Michael:** I use simple redirects, and so I send people... I never use a direct [ClickBank](#) link, that's what I am trying to say. So at the end of the video, or if I am doing a straight email, then I would just set up a link from one of my own domains with a subfolder. And then in that sub folder I just create a PHP redirect that includes the [ClickBank](#) link within it. And obviously that forwards them instantly off to the site. I won't use a site actually still holds on to the affiliate ID in the address bar that I have redirected. I have actually, going back to this relationships thing, there was a product I really liked and I wanted to promote it, but it for some reason still showed my [ClickBank](#) ID after the redirect. And so I contacted the person said, "look I want to promote this, but I am not going to do it unless you sort this out because, if people going to strip it." So, sure enough the problem was resolved and I did the promotion. So that's how I try and combat it. I don't lose sleep over it, I mean it's one of those things to me, it's a bit like refunds. It's going to happen and I just think, well, I am going to make more sales. So, I will focus most of my time on making more sales so that these things are merely a ripple roll than something that's actually going to affect my business in any way.

**Heather:** What was the biggest mistake you made you got started in [ClickBank](#) affiliate promotion?

**Michael:** Probably a couple of things; one is choosing the wrong product. I had some success and I thought, well, I'm going to apply this principle to something that I really know that much about. A



## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

product that I didn't know anything about, I am going back to what I said right at the outset, I didn't have passion for it, I didn't have really a great understanding and it came across in the way that I was trying to promote it, so that it totally fell flat. And so that was one, and the other one I guess is, just generally expecting things to happen too quickly. I think it's easy to fall into the trap of seeing the success of others, and seeing how easy it is to get set up, and just to think, all I need is a bit of traffic and I'll start making a ton of affiliate sales. So that was generally probably another mistake, just having not too high expectations, but having expectations that... of success too early, I think would be the other one.

**Heather:** What kinds of the mistakes do you see other people make?

**Michael:** I have seen people use the direct, for example, I've seen people use the direct [ClickBank](#) link in their emails or in their PDFs or whatever. Now I know some people are actually consciously doing this now, and they make a statement saying, "look, this PDF has got affiliate links in it, hover over them and you'll see my [ClickBank](#) affiliate link. I recommend these products so why shouldn't I get paid for them?" that's fine. But you do also see people not using any form of redirect and it just screams affiliate link. Most people now know the chances are if you recommending something that you are going to be an affiliate, but there's no need, I don't think, to sort of come out and openly sort of show that. And other mistakes I have seen, I guess these kind of all encompassing sites that try and sell anything and everything, and you still come across those. And the best bit of advice that I can offer, really, is to find something you're interested in and stick to that, stick to a type theme for all your affiliate products. And rather than just trying to go across the whole game of industries. Obviously I said at the beginning, I am selling, you know, recipes, stock trading, golf and internet marketing stuff, but I've got sites for each of those niches. It's not like I am trying to run the whole thing on one site.

**Heather:** Are those sites anonymous or they branded as Michael Cheney sites?

**Michael:** They are not branded as my sites, I mean I don't kind of hide them, but they are not part of Michael Cheney the brand as such, they're not connected to the Internet marketing stuff. They're more,

## ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

### Interview with Michael Cheney

they're just sort of separate entities, but if you come across them it's not like, you know, I've not got a moniker or anything like that.

**Heather:** So, once people are done listening to this interview what's the first thing you suggest they do in their quest to become a top [ClickBank](#) affiliate?

**Michael:** Take action. People, you see so many people that read all this information, listen to all this stuff and think yeah, this is great, I'm really pumped up. I like what's being said, and now I am gone to make a cup of coffee or whatever, but you have got to take action. That's the two things to me that are my driving force, and that is discipline and action. You need to be disciplined if you want to make it. Anybody can make it in this [ClickBank](#) affiliate game, you can do it, but you have got to be disciplined and you have got to take consistent action. So my advice would be once you've finished listening to this, take action on the notes that you've made, actually go and do one of these things. And obviously I would say this, but go to [WebsiteMarketingBible.com](#) and sign up for my free videos.

**Heather:** OK, thank you so much, Michael, for sharing your expertise with us today.

**Michael:** No problem.