

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

Heather Vale: I'm Heather Vale, partner of Codrut Turcanu, for [ClickBank Affiliate Confessions](#)... Today I'm speaking with Terry Gibbs from Arizona. First of all Terry, could we start with a brief background of yourself and your various websites?

Terry Gibbs: Yeah, I teach people how to run profitable home based antiques and collectibles businesses. I got started by running my own business, buying and selling toy trains, and then I started teaching people how to buy and sell toy trains, moved into the general antiques market, and then when [eBay](#) came along I added [eBay](#) to the mix, because basically [eBay](#) is the elephant in the room. And I do this mainly with my [iWantCollectibles](#) website, which has articles and reviews of other products and things like that. My revenue stream comes from the sales of my products, some coaching and from promoting my peers, and those are the other people that write about similar topics. I consider them peers, not competitors, and in many cases we work together to benefit everyone.

Heather: OK, so what particular products do you promote from the [ClickBank Marketplace](#)?

Terry: Almost all of my products are on the [ClickBank Marketplace](#). In addition to my products, I promote products about [eBay](#) and about antiques and collectibles, so for example I promote Elaine Krieg Smith's [How to Sell Collectible Books on eBay](#) package, I promote Gary Hendrickson's [How to Sell Books on Half.com](#), I promote Jim Cockrum's, [The Silent Sales Machine](#), which is also about [eBay](#), how to build a back end with your [eBay](#) business. And I promote basically products that provide a value to my readers and my students, not based on the money that comes in from them. I look more towards providing a value to my people.

Heather: When you are picking those products, how do you know if they provide a value to your readers?

Terry: When I first got started, I used to go out and buy the products. At this point, I get at least two a month, sometimes it's four or five people a month, sending me e-mails saying, "Hey, I got a new product that matches your list, and here you can get a download". So they give me the products, but in any case I start by looking at the product itself, either as a buyer or looking at the free copy, and I read through

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

it, and I am looking for actionable information that my readers can benefit from. So when I go through all of that, through the product, if it explains things, even if it's a similar topic and similar information than what I teach but if it explains in a different manner, so it might be more accessible to my readers, then that would be OK. If it's something that's radically new or different or answers questions that I get from my readers, then I am surely going to promote it. But the biggest thing is I'm looking not so much to find items to sell or promote. I'm attempting to screen out the stuff that's garbage, because so much of it is garbage, and my reputation is such a big part of my sales ability.

Heather: When you're saying that lot of it is garbage; in your particular niche is a lot of it garbage, or just in general?

Terry: Well, I can't really comment on the other niches too much, because for example, Internet marketing, it wouldn't be right for me to say that somebody's product is garbage as an advanced reader, if they were targeting a new reader, and I don't have a good idea of what a new reader is looking for. Whereas with the [eBay](#) and antiques and collectibles stuff, for example on my website there is a review of an [eBay](#) book, and the book answers questions by telling people to go to [eBay](#) and search the help menus. Now that's not an answer. You know, the answer, at least in my books, and the books that I promote, a question is answered based on experience, and here is how I've done it, and this is how I've learned to do this, and these are the results that I've found. Not, if you're having problems go to [eBay](#) and check the help menu out. So that's an example of garbage, is there is no information, it's just, I call these people carpet baggers. [eBay](#) is such a desirable topic that it attracts people who are after money, just like the carpet baggers after the Civil War went down and tried to make money, doing whatever they could do selling medicines and other crap, that's what these people are doing. They are coming in, they are throwing something together and they're trying to pull out some money real quick, because there's a big market. They're not residents, which means they don't understand the marketplace, they are not active, some of them aren't even [eBay](#) sellers, they are just people who think, "hey, there is a lot of people buying [eBay](#) information, so I need to sell some." And with those kind of people, I ignore them. Sometimes I completely ignore them, and then after a while they will

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

become residents and start to prove themselves, and at that time I might go back and work with them.

Heather: When it comes to picking quality products and building your reputation, how important is it to be working in a niche that you like and a niche that you're knowledgeable about?

Terry: That comes back to being a resident, all right? For what I do, because I collect trains and I buy and sell them at [eBay](#) and in other venues, it's something that I am active in on a pretty much daily basis, so it provides the motivation to stay involved. Whereas I have done products in other areas, and it's just too much work keeping up on everything.

Heather: When you're evaluating the product, do you also take a look at the sales page and evaluate how well you think it's going to convert?

Terry: Yes I do, although I don't refuse to promote a product just because they have a poor sales letter. Years ago I was sent a book or a e-book by a person, and I read the e-book and it was fantastic, and I went in and I did with a quick check to make sure that my link was correct through [ClickBank](#) and glanced over the sales letter, which was absolutely terrible. And so what I did was, I told my readers in the newsletter that this book is fantastic, you need this book, and the sales letter's terrible, so just go ahead, scroll to the bottom and click on the purchase link. And that person sent me an e-mail about a week later saying I had generated more sales in the 24 or 48 hours from when I sent out my newsletter, than she had received in the whole year and a half prior. So the quality of the sales letter isn't important, if you are doing a lot of review. For my stuff, I provide my affiliates with a short little quiz teaser, it's like three lines long, it says, "[eBay](#) sellers, are you losing money in your [eBay](#) auctions? Take this short quiz and find out now," or "take this free quiz and find out now." And with something like that, the sales copy has to be great, because you're not building up an interest, right? But if I am writing a 3 or 4, or most of my newsletters run 7 to 10 pages long, a long review and providing enough interest in building up a desire, the sales letter doesn't matter.

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

Heather: Now a lot of people, when they get involved with selling on [eBay](#), or selling their own products, they wouldn't even think to incorporate affiliate sales into the mix as well. What was it that originally prompted you to start selling products as an affiliate?

Terry: I had been... and this goes back to 1998, '99 maybe. I had been at that time watching Bill Myers had a board about creating information products, which I was just getting into, and a number of other discussion boards like Tony Blake's, and I kept seeing mentions of affiliates, making money as an affiliate. I played with [Amazon](#) and never really made any money with it, still haven't, because there's no profit in [Amazon](#), but anyway, I had grown to the point with my [eBay](#) business where I couldn't host my own [eBay](#) images on the little space that my web provider, my Internet provider, gave me. So I had to buy a domain and set up a website. When I did that I got all these other tools that were added to it. One of them was [ListServ](#), which is like early version of an email list management solution. So I started that, and I had a few hundred people on that, and one day I saw that, I think it was [toys.com](#) or one of those big dot com companies, was selling [Lionel](#) trains below wholesale. And I wrote up a short thing just to let everybody on the list know, that they could get these items for below wholesale, I mean like, if wholesale is \$400, the dot com was selling them for 260 or something like that. And then because I have seen these posts about affiliate sales, I thought, well, I should check to see if they have an affiliate program. And they did, and I created a link. I sent that out to my list and proceeded to forget all about it. I got a few people send me emails saying, thanks for the information, but didn't pay any other attention to it, and about 90 days later I got a check in the mail for \$800.

Heather: Oh, wow!

Terry: And at that point I was like, man, I can make money doing this. So I started watching the big dot coms for more instances of that, which stopped when all went bankrupt, but I also started looking for other things that I could promote as an affiliate, and that's how I got started.

Heather: What is it that you like about the [ClickBank](#) products in particular?

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

Terry: I like two things about [ClickBank](#). One, it's so easy. I don't have to deal with anything, I don't have to deal with the refunds, I don't have to worry about the people sending me a check or screwing me, which I have had programs that I have promoted in the past where I never got paid or the people changed the program in order to cheat me out of my commissions. With [ClickBank](#), sure some of the people might use their own affiliate link to buy the product, but I get paid. And the second thing, I like about [ClickBank](#) is I get paid a check, or actually a bunch of checks, every two weeks. And it allows me to have some stability in my life.

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

Terry: It ranges depending on whether I am doing a big promotion and one of my peers has a new product out. In the months where one of my peers that I work with closely releases a new product, I can make \$5000-7000 promoting their product. In the months that are normal, where there is nothing new and exciting coming out, it runs maybe 1000 and sometimes as much as 2000, all depending on the traffic that's coming into my website.

Heather: How much do you think a newbie could make if they are just starting out in the [ClickBank](#) affiliate game?

Terry: It would all depend on their traffic, or I like to use the word "reach". Because for me I have tens of thousands of newsletter subscribers, so I have reach, and the ability to reach out and get a lot of people interested, and drive them wherever I want to send them. Whereas, somebody that's new doesn't have that. So without that, I don't know, I know from my experience I have never done well promoting my products with Pay per Click, and other than the Pay per Click, I don't see how somebody that's new could drive traffic, or could get the traffic. So it's going to be a process of building that reach, and as you build the reach your income grows, and that's what happened with me. So while the \$800 check was like a big check, that was really an aberration, I don't think that's normal.

Heather: So, how long did it take for you to be making a regular income of at least 1000 a month, sometimes several thousand a month?

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

Terry: As an affiliate?

Heather: Yeah.

Terry: About 5 months, and the big thing there was, that when I really started... or actually it wasn't about 5 months, it was years of me playing around with the toys.com and that stuff. But when I got serious and said this is what I am going to do, it took me about 5 months, and the reason that I was able to do that, I created a number of products that had other affiliates and people sending traffic to me to buy those products, and I was able to then take those leads and turn them around and pitch them as an affiliate sales. So that was the true basis of it. If I was working as an affiliate only, without my own products, it probably would have taken longer.

Heather: So you are promoting affiliate products through your opt-in list, and also on your website. What proportion of sales come through the list, and what proportion comes through the site?

Terry: Immediately through the site is a small but regular proportion of the sales, and I would say, if I generate 100 affiliate sales a month, maybe 30 come from the website, and the rest come from my promotions in the newsletter. However, my newsletter is set up so that the first 5 or 6 emails that go out promote my products, and build my credibility and once I have got to that point, it starts sending out emails, promoting affiliate products. So those who are kind of mixed in, and difficult to figure out whether those sales were direct from the website, or they're on the email but in either case those would be counted in the 30%, those initial ones which... One of the things that I found so effective is when I send a newsletter out to my list, and it's effective, I immediately add it to my introductory series, and that means that all the new people that are coming in, after a week or ten days, they start getting those pitches that I know work, and those generate a lot of sales, and I would say a good portion of my sales come from that. And it's something, I actually have quite a few peers that I work with to do the same thing, and we send each other traffic back and forth like that.

Heather: Yeah, most of the people that I have interviewed, when they talk about sending out sales letters to their newsletter, they are

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

talking about doing a broadcast, not actually having it as part of the autoresponder series, so you have actually gone a step further with that process.

Terry: Yeah, I do the broadcast mailing, so for example, I will write a newsletter promoting [Jim Cockrum](#)'s product, that newsletter sold well. So, immediately I take that newsletter and change it a little bit so it's evergreen, and then put it into my newsletters series. So, everybody gets it. And that's something that very few people do. And in my experience, once I put it into the autoresponder it's like free money, and I don't understand why a lot of people don't do that, and... or actually I do understand why a lot of people don't do that, it's because they are afraid they are going to lose their newsletter subscribers. My opinion is I would rather have somebody that's a buyer, and if somebody is going to leave because I am pitching them too much, then they can leave, because they really are not worth anything. I am not... and I see, the more people brag about the size of their lists, especially when the lists start getting above 40-50,000 subscribers, the less effective their lists are. And that's something that I always try to avoid that, I rarely mention how many subscribers I have across my different newsletters. It's a metric of how many dollars can I get out of sending a newsletter, it's not how many subscribers I have. Once I made that change, it became different. Today I am looking to get the \$10,000 newsletter. I want to send out one email and get \$10,000. I have come close to that on a couple of occasions, which selling a \$30 or \$40 product through [ClickBank](#), is a lot of sales to get that high. I have come close to that, but it sets me up as a goal that I can look at. Rather than saying I want a 100,000 subscribers, what does that mean, it doesn't have any meaning, right? And I can't go to the grocery store and at the checkout line say, "I've got 100,000 subscribers take a few and thank you".

Heather: So, the people that are on your opt in list, how often are they getting a message from the autoresponder series, and how often are you sending them a new broadcast as well?

Terry: I usually send... it would average about every 10 days, but I always send out on Tuesday or Wednesday nights, and then follow up, so, and I might skip a week. But usually the newsletters go out on Tuesday nights, and then on Fridays I follow up with, "if you missed this week's newsletter it's now online, and here's a few short notes".

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

And those short notes are almost always condensed affiliate promotions. So, that works. I have people that read the Friday night issue who already read the article on Wednesday, and then they will say, "Oh! I want to check this out," and they will go buy something as an affiliate. And I also have people that miss the Wednesday issue that then go to the website and read and respond, and then also get the sales on Tuesday. And I can see by sending my newsletter out on Tuesday nights, I can see whether it's working real quick, in a real short timeframe because my UK and English buyers, they start responding immediately. So, it gives me an idea of whether it's working or not.

Heather: How long did it take you to build a list of that size?

Terry: It's taken years, and it's been a learning process in order to get the people in. For the [eBay](#) oriented stuff, those lists grow faster because there's more people promoting it and there is more constant and regular promotion. For the antiques and collectibles list, that grows very slowly because it's mostly a result the people going to search engines, searching for something and seeing one of my pages in the results, and then coming to the website. So it's little bit different on the two different big lists that I have. And there is some overlap between them, but the lists where there are affiliates promoting and they are promoting it pretty much regularly; those lists grow very quickly. Now, the other ones, the search-based lists, where I am trying to drive traffic through the search engine, they grow slow, maybe 20 to a 100 subscribers a week.

Heather: What kind of incentive do you offer to get people to actually sign up for the newsletter?

Terry: I offer an email course on the [iWantCollectibles](#) site. That teaches people how to buy and sell antiques and collectibles, which actually the course is nothing more than an explanation of how to do something, about 80% content and then about 20% pitching at the bottom, and that builds my credibility and also gets those sales. On [The Auction Revolution](#), which is my best selling product that teaches people how to sell and build an [eBay](#) business, that one has a quiz that's kind of a... it's not a forced page because they can get around it, but there is actually a quiz that asks questions, and there is a form where they can put their answers in, and then they give me their email

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

address and their name. They hit enter and I mail them the answers, and it redirects them to the sales letter. That works fantastic. For 100 people that come into the site, about 60 of them subscribe to the newsletter and 10-12 end up buying the product.

Heather: Wow!

Terry: Which, the people who subscribe are three times more likely to buy than the people who don't. Because I have the follow up messages that keep promoting the product, teaching and promoting, which is the model I use. Teach, promote.

Heather: OK. So... getting the actual traffic to your website, you have said that you don't use Pay per Click. Have you tried it before with bad results, or you just don't like it?

Terry: I have tried it quite a few times and what happens it's either I spend a lot of money and get no results, which is more usual or I don't spend enough money, and this was [Overture](#), and they start charging me extra in order to get to their minimum monthly spend. And for what I do, I find that it is more effective to concentrate on building an affiliate network, to concentrate on writing content for my website that will end up getting good search engine results, so this is optimizing my content and writing it. And then the third thing that I do is, a lot of free publicity, and I am constantly out there doing interviews with journalists, and I just started doing a radio show every Saturday night. So, what happens is, I am concentrating on the things that work for me and don't require a lot of oversight. For example, I just did an interview today for Women's Day magazine. Now, if they publish it people will surely come into my website. If they don't, I spent 20 minutes on the phone, it's done. I don't have to go back and see how much it's costing me, I don't have to go back and track it. And it's something that I find easy to do because I'm practiced at it. So I'm concentrating on the things that I like to do and the things that allow me to not spend my time doing the oversight. The biggest problem with the Pay per Click is that you have to watch it, to see how it's working, and then people come in and outbid you, and your costs go up, because it's fluctuating. with the model that I use, once I spend the time, I don't have to maintain or watch anything, other than to just keep adding to it.

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

Heather: OK, now a couple of the things -- having the affiliates promote for you and getting free publicity through doing interviews -- of course that's easier when you've got your own products to kind of leverage that, because you are going to get affiliate sales through the back end as well, but kind of your selling feature to the journalists and to the affiliates is, "Hey, promote my products." How do you think someone starting out as an affiliate might be able to make use of some of those techniques, without yet having their own product?

Terry: I do really well with the... by giving away free reports, and that's kind of a viral thing, and I actually provide that on [The Auction Revolution](#), there is a couple of them that can be branded, and I started out doing that years ago, giving away free reports on my [eBay](#) auctions, and now it's systemized so other people can do that. As far as the publicity, the free reports for me as the author of the free reports work. For you per se to do an interview about, you found this neat free report, it wouldn't work. You'd have to find your own angle. For a lot of the publicity things that I've done, weren't so much that I had products, but that I had contrary ideas than what the normal people were doing. So, for example when [eBay](#) raised their fees last year, there were people running around with petitions and complaining, there were articles in all of the different magazines and newspapers about these groups complaining that [eBay](#) fee increase is going to hurt them. Well, I sent out a press release saying, [eBay's](#) sellers rejoice over increased fees, right? And so all of a sudden I am contrary, everyone else is saying this sucks, and is going to kill us, and I am standing up saying no, this is wonderful and this drove all of these reporters to me looking for that contrary statement. Now, if I didn't have a product but just had a web site, I could have put a single page article on my web site saying why this was a good thing, which it was actually a good thing, and then drive the traffic into that, and then change it off, into the affiliate and all that. So, it would have worked as an affiliate only. For the article that I was doing or spoke about earlier with Women's Day, they are actually looking for women who have turned their hobbies into businesses. They are not looking for people like me that teach people how to run home based antiques and collectibles businesses. They are looking for somebody like you who might have a hobby of crocheting something, and then you sell what you make. So, it's a little different, and yet I am able to capture that journalist's attention by saying, "Look, I did this and it destroyed my hobby". No one else is doing it. So, even though I am a male, I am not

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

somebody that she wants, I am attractive, and that's something and it's taken me almost a decade of doing press releases and working with journalists to learn how to do this in an effective manner, with the whole idea of being contrary and giving them a story, works. And you have to have a web site to do it.

Heather: So, I suppose even if someone had a niche affiliate site and they are promoting products within that niche, they can set themselves up as an expert in that niche and be the go-to person for the journalists, even if they don't have a product.

Terry: Right, and it's a matter of being attractive to the journalist, being able to give him a couple of quick sentences that fit their needs, and help them with their job. And if you do that, the journalist will mention you. This is one of the things that many people don't understand is that journalists who are working on stories need to be quoting people. So if you have something to say, that's quotable, they will come to you, and you can build relationships with them and they will come to you over and over again. I think the biggest thing there is for somebody who is just starting out, do the newsletter, start building the websites. So, send out the newsletter, then put the article on the website and start building out some content so that you have credibility and somewhere to point the journalists. Both so that the journalist can look at you and say, "Yeah, this person knows what he is talking about," and so when the journalist mentions you, they can give contact information, your website. And it will work, it's something that I do. I know a lot of other people tend to focus on traffic, and to me, I'd rather do what I enjoy and have free time, than try to learn all these traffic things and have to pay attention to all of that.

Heather: So, tell me about your radio show that you just started?

Terry: That's Dennis Lively, a couple of weeks ago put a post on the [Warrior Forum](#) asking for recommendations of someone to interview about [eBay](#) on a radio show that he just started. And when I checked my email, I had like a dozen emails from people saying, "You got to talk to this Dennis guy." And then I called Dennis on the phone, and so now we are doing this, but it's kind of flattering that I've become well known enough that I am the top choice of all of these people. But anyway, every week at 10:15 Eastern Time, I do a 2 to 5 minute segment about [eBay](#) on the [NetBizRadio](#) show that Dennis does. And

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

it's only been going on for a couple of weeks, so I haven't really seen any big effects as a result of it, but it does provide me with more credibility. It's bragging rights.

Heather: OK. So, you also mentioned that you optimize the content on your website to drive traffic through SEO. How exactly are you optimizing that content so that the search engines find you near the top of the list?

Terry: I use a simple formula, and that is the keywords go in the title, the keywords go in the URL, the keywords go in the headline on the page, and then the keywords appear frequently within the copy itself. And by doing that, that does a good job of telling the search engines that this is a page about, for example, [eBay](#) sniping, so that page would be like "[eBay](#) Snipe Review". Review is a killer word when you are doing affiliate sales, because people search for reviews. So, that page would be called ebay-sniper-review.shtml and then the title is "Review of [eBay](#) Sniping Programs" and that's the title and the headline. And then I talk about [eBay](#) sniping programs, and use the word [eBay](#) Sniping in there, and [eBay](#) Snipe and Sniper, frequently enough so that a search engine can tell, but not so much that somebody reading it finds it hard to read. And I just go right through, and all the links to that page will say, like "[eBay](#) Sniper Review" so it allows the search engine to know what's going. I also do in a RSS feed that goes out and immediately causes there to be hundreds of links back to that page, because the RSS feed has the link to that page and the short summary of what will be found on that page, and a lot of people use those on their websites. So, it gives me the ability to put something out and have it go immediately up into the higher reaches on the pages, or on the search engine, depending on what it is. I am not going out and trying to get the word [eBay](#). Somebody searches for the word [eBay](#) on [Google](#); they're not going to see one of my sites. But if they search for a two-word phrase with the word [eBay](#) in it, they're usually going to find my site in the top ten. If they search for a three-word phrase, they are almost always on my site. So, I'm not optimizing for the most competitive keywords, but I am building lots of pages for the lesser competitive terms, the ones that might only give these fifty or hundred people a month coming in from, but over the course of -- and I don't know how many pages are on there, maybe a hundred -- that adds up.

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

Heather: OK. So how do you know that you are using the keywords on the page in the actual content often enough that the search engines are going to like it, but not too much?

Terry: Read it out loud.

Heather: OK.

Terry: So if it makes sense then it's OK, and I find, I actually don't do this enough. Because a lot of times I get hurried. But when I read what I have written out loud, I can understand, oh, well, this sentence doesn't flow right, I shouldn't use this here. So it's really beneficial, and one thing I didn't mention here, when I write an article, I write an article based on questions that people have. And then I go to [Overture](#) and I look at both the bids on those terms, and I look at the number of searches done for those terms, and I understand that those [Overture](#) searches aren't really relevant. But it does give me a good idea of what words are best. So for example if somebody goes and searches for "[eBay](#) fraud", right? So for example writing an article about [eBay](#) fraud, I can go to [Overture](#) and search for "[eBay](#) fraud", find out how many times that's used, and then if I do a search for the word [eBay](#) I look for other words like "scam" and "rip-off" and things like that, synonyms, and see that "scam" is actually used more often than "fraud" when people are talking about being ripped off on [eBay](#), so I would go through and change the page, so instead of saying, "how to avoid [eBay](#) fraud," it's called "how to avoid [eBay](#) scam". Because that makes it more attractive. I'd still use the word "fraud" in the page, but the page is designed for the most valuable key term that I can expect to get.

Heather: Can you explain exactly how you're using the RSS feeds because I think a lot of people know the term RSS feed from blogs and stuff, but they don't know how that could bring them traffic?

Terry: All right. What I do is on my news.iwantcollectibles.com sub domain, I write my newsletter and then I put the newsletter online, and that's the Thursday night I put it online, and send out the note on Friday saying that it is now online. I have an RSS feed, which is actually an XML, actually a format that you use, and I write that manually and it has the link, the link title, the description which is the summary of the article, and then the date in it, and I add that to the

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

RSS feed that I wrote earlier, save it and move it up online and then just like with bloggers I do the pinging for all the different RSS sites, and then newsreader sites pick up on that, the sites like [Yahoo](#). This is actually killer in terms of getting pages indexed fast, is to go [Yahoo](#) and set up an account on, I think it's called [My Yahoo](#), and then add your feed to it, so your [My Yahoo](#) page has your RSS feeds shown in it, and that tells [Yahoo](#) that they should be indexing that page. And then people who are trying to build a dynamic website that changes because it helps their search engine ranking, which I don't think it does, but they're building these sites that have the RSS feeds in it, they'll grab that feed and start using it. Now, from my point of view looking for the traffic, I don't think having my feed on these other people's sites, unless they are actually involved or residents, helps me, and actually I rarely see measurable amounts of traffic coming from all these other sites. What I do know is having it out there helps my search engine ranking because the search engines see them as backlinks, which are important, and that's the true benefit of the RSS feed. For the people that I am involved with, my peers that are also running information based sites, and that's one of the big failures of the vendors, is that they don't build websites, they build a single page sales letter and then a single download page and maybe an affiliate page, but they don't have a website with fifty or hundred pages of information that's growing and is attractive to the search engines. But anyway the few peers that I have that have those websites, and some of my affiliates, they have my feed on their site and it gives an affiliate link rather than having the straight link, it has an affiliate link, and I think that's a little bit different though. So the RSS feed, it helps me spread links out across the web really fast, and it helps me for the people that are using newsreaders instead of subscribing to the newsletter, it helps me get in front of them. And originally I had the idea that this would get my stuff into the news category on [Google](#) that's why I put news.iwantcollectibles, but that hasn't happened.

Heather: Oh, well.

Terry: Yeah, well I designed it to do one thing and it ended up doing something else very well.

Heather: So when you writing your actual reviews, are you giving your personal opinion, what you like and don't like about the product, or is it just kind of, "here's the product, go buy it"?

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

Terry: When I write my reviews, I base it on either my results with the product, or and I find this works better, on the results of my students. So for example with the [Half.com](#) book by Gary Hendrickson, that book, and I sell couple of dozen of them a month, without doing any promotions, it's just a review on the website, and a single article in the series. With that, that was the guy that I know locally had called me and was asking for advice, he buys and sells books. And I told him, "I just read this book that this guy sent me, you should read it." And he read it, and then about a week or two later I talked to him on the phone again, and he told me about his results, and so I wrote that up as a story and told the people that if they sell books, they should check it out Gary's e-book, and that worked very well. I never do the little lazy thing that I see so often, which is you quote somebody's sales letter, and copy and paste from the sales letter and all that, I never do that. It's always, "this is what you will earn, this is the effect I had on them, this is why I like it," and I find that that builds credibility. As a matter of fact I have probably thousands of people, and I won't call them affiliates because they don't generate sales, but we'll call them lazy people, that come into my website, grab chunks of my sales letters, in some cases grab the entire sales letter, paste it on their website, and instead of having an order link they replace the order link with their affiliate link, they don't generate any sales. They are not... and I think there are two reasons for that: 1) It confuses people when they come, when they read something, if there is anybody reading it at all. When they read something to click on it and then end up on the same page again on a different site, that's confusing. And then 2) there's is no real reason for somebody to read it, whereas with mine, I send a vendor traffic after making a recommendation, the person gets in, they have interest, now they read the sales letter, which confirms their interest, it's called the believability mountain. We take the person, we start at the base of it, we give them enough information to capture their Attention, and then we build their Interest and their Desire, that whole AIDA thing. But visualize it as a mountain. You have got to push them up that mountain so when they get to top and their Desire gets them ready to take Action, they believe that the product will help them. They believe that the product is right for them, and by doing an analysis and a recommendation, or a "this is what happened when I used it, and these are my results, and these should happen for you", it helps to build that and it becomes the natural flow of dropping somebody off.

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

So visualize the page on my website as a bus stop and it says, "climb in, this bus goes to base of this mountain". Well, I am getting in the bus and they are singing songs and all that and driving them over to the base of the mountain and dropping them all off. The person's sales letter helps them climb that mountain, and the energy that I have given them on a bus helps them climb that mountain. Did that make any sense?

Heather: Yeah totally. So are you putting just your [ClickBank](#), hoplink or do you redirect it or mask it somehow?

Terry: I redirect them through another page on one of my other sites, usually some of the old ones have never been done, but I always redirect them, and I redirect them or at least all the new ones, go through a script that counts people. So it counts how many times that link has been used, and that's just a little PHP script that I had somebody write for me for, I think it was 300 bucks. But that helps me see how many people click on the link. I never link directly to the person's site through the [ClickBank](#) link on the website, and when I am looking at products, I try not to promote products that leaves a hop= on the tail end of the inbound links. When I see a product that I want to promote that has that, you know what I am talking about? It's like...

Heather: Yeah...

Terry: Site.com...

Heather: Yeah, so your...

Terry: Hop equals blah, blah, blah, affiliate? When I see those, I send the vendor an email saying, "look, I would like to promote your product but I don't like that," because it's like a sign that says, I am an affiliate and I have actually a tool that shows them how to do it and remove it, and I give that to anybody that I work with.

Heather: So we have talked about all the things that you have been doing right. Are there any big mistakes that you have made when you first started out as an affiliate?

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

Terry: Yeah, one of them is the focusing on the number of subscribers rather than the number of dollars that I was making, and that caused me not to push as hard, it caused me not to mail as frequently, right? And that definitely cost me money. Another thing that hurt me was restricting myself too narrowly, all right? And that is, granted, I teach people how to run the antiques businesses, and how to do [eBay](#), but a lot of my people are also interested in how to write their own e-book, or how to do other things, and especially niches, which seems to be a big one, that they all like all of a sudden, and those products will sell. And I never promoted those, and if I did promote them, it was always in just a little short note, like one of my friends Becky Hegel sells a lot of stuff in those... about niches, and creating products and things, and so with her I'd have a little note in the bottom that says, my friend Becky has just put off this report on how to select a niche, and I'd get sales. But I don't send out a full page or seven-page review of it. It's more of just, "here you go," and I don't know whether I am making a mistake doing that or not. I know that I am making a little money and I am helping Becky out. I think that I might lose real subscribers if I deviated too far from the core topics.

Heather: Right.

Terry: So, I am kind of hesitant to do that, and yet when I do do it, it does work, and I think that when I first started out, refusing to do it at all cost me money. Now I put them in the little short notes... you know, "the newsletter's on the website, you can get it here, while I've got your attention, here is three things for you to think about," bang, bang, bang, and I will put them in those, and they do generate sales. Another mistake that I did was not starting the newsletter early enough. I did the Toy Train Newsletter, and then when I started with the antiques and collectible stuff, it was a couple of months before I started doing the newsletter, and then it was literally three years before I started putting the back issues of the newsletter online. And that was a big mistake because that's so valuable, and it builds so much credibility. Another mistake that I made I was not focusing. I talked to you earlier about the residents vs. carpet baggers. After I had been running [iWantCollectibles](#) for awhile, I started doing other stuff, I started writing books about how to write an e-book, and I started writing books about auto responders and building newsletters, and all different kinds of stuff and I wasn't able to devote my time to anything because I had so many different things that I was doing. So,

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

once I started focusing and realized that I am a resident, and this is what I am doing, my income really grew. Because I was able to devote all the time to it. And then the last one that I will mention is, not paying enough attention to my readers. I went through a period where I didn't read or respond to emails almost at all from people that were my readers, and even the buyers. It was just, "give me your money and thank you," and I got into doing that because I was literally overwhelmed. Like people asking questions before they bought, and I started not answering any of those, and they just grew at the point writing the answer of any emails or read them, and then later I started reading the emails looking for commonalities, as I started reading the emails I noticed common themes, I started seeing that one of the most common questions people ask is, "where do I find products to sell on [eBay](#)?" And so that gives me an idea of, I should tell these people where to find products to sell on [eBay](#). So, and actually that's killer, because there are my way of buying antiques and collectibles and then reselling them, and then there is the [Janiece Smith](#) way of buying liquidation items, and the [Tim Knox](#) way of buying drop shipper items, and the [Robbin Tungett](#) way of garage sale shopping and the James Jones way of doing public domain items, and I guess you get the idea, those are all affiliate products, sold through [ClickBank](#), but you really get the idea right there that just by, hey, here is a question that people have, I got all these different products to answer this question. And, with the exception of Robin's garage sale book, none of them are competitors for mine, they are all just different ways of finding products to sell on [eBay](#). One of the things that I learned as a... it was a mistake, but it was actually beneficial, I always selected products based on how much I'd get paid, and I found a product one day and I was, you know, this is great, I looked at the sales letter and it wasn't all that good, and just made sure my link worked then I sent traffic to it, without ever finding out how much it was and how much I got paid in commission. And it was like \$8 for this e-book, and I got like 25%, maybe \$2, and I was like, "this sucks," because I got all these emails, this was back when [ClickBank](#) sent the affiliate an email, saying, "you've just generated a sale". And I got all these emails and I made all these sale, it was like hundreds of them, and I was like, "oh, good, I am rich!" And when I went in and looked at the [ClickBank](#), I was like, "huh?" Because there weren't, there was hundreds of sales, but no money. And an interesting thing happened, I felt pretty stupid at that point I was like, "I am not going to do that again, next time I have to pay more attention," but an interesting thing happened and

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

that was, the people who have bought that book, or e-book, came back and bought other items. They started buying my products, they started buying my, the products that I promoted as affiliate, and I later realized that the reason for this was that product at that low price, under \$10 they are not even going to think about it. "Here's 10 bucks, let me have it". The product, or the book, vastly over delivered on its promise. It was wonderfully written, it was very helpful to the reader, and it was cheap. So, they took the leap or they took the leap and they got a lot of out of it. So, all of a sudden it increased my credibility with my readers, and now I try to do that every six to eight weeks. I will try to pump something that's cheap, because it helps me convert all the freebie seekers in my list into buyers.

Heather: What do you mean when you talk about the circular model of affiliate promotion?

Terry: The circular model; this is something that evolved over time and it really started out as a result of Janiece Smith and I, Janiece wrote a book called [How a Soggy Sandwich Eating Dental Hygienist Made \\$33,000 on eBay Last Month](#) or something like that, I think the number's 11,000, and it's about her system of buying liquidation merchandise from companies like Victoria's Secret and things like that. And Janiece started promoting my products, and I started promoting Janiece's product, and it was in a haphazard manner. She'd promote mine, I'd promote hers, and we'd get these huge bumps of sales, all right? And so later as I was learning more about putting these articles into the newsletter series, I started seeing that when Janiece drove people into my website, they would sign up for my newsletter, a lot of them would buy my stuff, and then 10 to 15 days later those same people would use my affiliate link to go back and buy Janiece's products. Plus buying other people's products. And the same thing happens with Janiece. When I send traffic over to Janiece out of my newsletter, from a newsletter issue, when I am doing a mass mailing, not an introductory sequence, but a mass mailing. When I send traffic over to Janiece, they go in, some of them immediately buy, a lot of them sign up for her newsletter, I guess they are buying other products that she is promoting, and then eight to ten days later whole bunch of them come back and buy my stuff through her link. And that's the circular model, and I actually do this now with about four different people, and it works really well.

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

In fact yesterday I was talking to Janiece's husband, and we are going to do three of them next week. Where I do three emails bang, bang, bang in a row sending people to Janiece's site, and she does three emails bang, bang, bang sending people to my site, and we each should walk away with five grand as a result of this, maybe even more. And the thing that makes this work is, I offer a 75% affiliate payout on my products, and she offers a 75% affiliate payout. So, as vendors we are taking it in the shorts, because we're giving away all our profits, but we are making so much money on our own affiliate sales that it makes up for that, and there has to be a balance in there. It's not, send me somebody and I will do a lackadaisical job of trying to sell them, and then I will start pitching affiliate products. It's send somebody over to buy my product, and I will hammer on them to make them buy it so you get your commission. And after a week I am going to sell them something else, I'm going to keep the commission. And that works so well with the few people that I do that with. It's wonderful, and it doesn't matter how big their lists are. I do this people that have a few hundred subscribers and I do with people that have 40-50,000 subscribers, and it works, because it's... or, I think it's credibility. When I am telling somebody to buy my stuff all right, they take that with a grain of salt, but when they are in my list and I have been telling them to buy and they will buy and then I send them over to Janiece, and tell them to buy Janiece things, maybe they buy Janiece's stuff. Now the happy buyers, or the people who buy everything, they will go right over and buy Janiece's stuff. Other people, they get in her newsletter, they start reading hers, they're like, "this woman knows what she is talking about." They get in ten days, Janiece says, "go buy Terry's stuff." And now it's not me telling them to buy it, it's Janiece telling them to buy it, after they already have a relationship with both of us. And it is just so killer. And as far as I know, and I don't pay a lot of attention to other niches, although I do read a lot of Internet marketing newsletters, no one else does that. And I haven't seen any use of that. But it is so powerful to send people back and forth like that. And it's always done as a promotion, it's not done like, "you should read Janiece's newsletter". I might spend a note out that tells people you should go read Becky Hegel's newsletter, because it's great, and give them the link, but that's Becky and I are friends. With Janiece, we are peers and we are residents of the same market coming out of from different angles, and it's all sales.

ClickBank Affiliate Confessions

Interview with Terry Gibbs

Heather: So, what are the final words of wisdom that new affiliates should keep in mind as they are out there trying to become a success as well?

Terry: I think that it comes down to two things. One, provide value to people, all right? And that means selecting products that help people. The second thing is, it's about people, not products. And it's about people, not dollars, and this is actually the same as the first thing, selecting products that help people, but it's a little bit different phrasing. And that is if you look for people and how to help them, the products tend to identify themselves. And I mentioned that everybody was asking me where do I find products? Well that's identifying by looking at the people what they want. And when I am focusing on helping the people rather than the products, the products come and dollars come. So, I guess that's it.

Heather: All right. Well thank you so much, Terry, for sharing your knowledge and techniques with us today.

Terry: Oh, you're welcome.