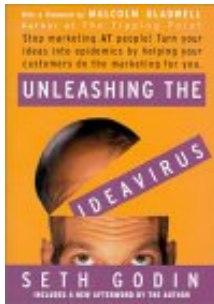


Amazon.com & Affiliate marketing (9/21/02):



The following e-mail message was sent to Jeff Bezos and his assistant on 9/20/02. As an Amazon.com affiliate and observer of businesses the worst that will come out of such a message is that Amazon.com does nothing with the message. They can ignore it or see if there is merit and then pursue it further.

Dear Jeff,

I highly encourage someone in your Affiliate Marketing Program to read and then implement the techniques / information found in [Seth Godin's *Unleashing the IdeaVirus*](#).

I wouldn't be surprised if you or someone in the affiliate division has read the book before. What I am saying is, "Read the book again! Then implement some of the strategies found in the book."


The only reason I say this is based on the following:

- From what I read Amazon probably has the largest number of affiliates of any online marketing program. Many books I have read credit Amazon with the proliferation of such programs.
- I am an Amazon affiliate myself so I have experience with your program. My website, BetterBizBooks.com, has been up for about 5 months but has not been marketed at all to date.
- I find that Amazon doesn't provide examples of who is making money in your program. **If you get permission from your affiliates why not let EVERY affiliate know that it is possible to make major bucks via real examples from affiliates?**
- **Has Amazon ever hosted an affiliate convention?** Amazon could have presenters illustrate their development and results. The company could show which categories are experiencing explosive growth. **If properly executed and planned you could probably get a ton of publicity / free advertising.**
- If possible to answer, what percentage of your total revenue is derived from affiliates? My

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curiosity is eating me up here.

- Does your top 20% generate 80% of total income from your affiliate program or is it 90/10? The only reason I say this is because you want to show the bottom 80% - 90% how they can generate substantially more income with their programs.

The below are excerpts taken from pages 47 – 49 of Seth's book, [**Seth Godin's Unleashing the IdeaVirus**](#)

A free copy of **Unleashing the IdeaVirus** can be downloaded @ [**www.ideavirus.com/downloads/IdeavirusReadandShare.pdf**](http://www.ideavirus.com/downloads/IdeavirusReadandShare.pdf)

Comments from the book are below:

Think about your own situation.... Have you ever signed up a friend for MCI's Friends and Family program? Or tried to get someone to use your Amazon affiliate links to buy books? Or join with you to buy something at Mercata.com? In every case, you're getting paid to alter your behavior. That makes you more promiscuous and less powerful.

The Art Of The Promiscuous

How do you attract and keep promiscuous sneezers? There are six key principles:

1. Make big promises
2. Show them how to make it up in volume
3. Describe an attainable path
4. When someone succeeds, tell the rest of them
5. Give the successful ones a way to show the non-sneezers it worked
6. Have a Mary Kay convention

Make big promises

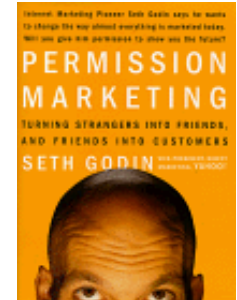
One of the things that drives someone to become a promiscuous sneezer is the opportunity for a change in lifestyle. Certain rewards, though small, are not as enticing as slightly less certain rewards that are much larger. Human nature (especially among the optimists) will give you the benefit of the doubt on the risks, but it won't cut you any slack on the rewards.

So, I'm much more likely to help you out for a chance to get free dry cleaning for six months than I am to get a certain reward of \$4 off my next dry cleaning bill.

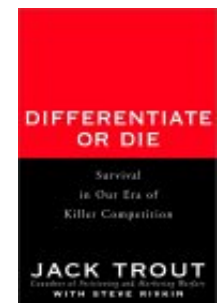
Show them how to make it up in volume

If you liked this book check out the following:

Find out how the Internet truly can change the way businesses interact with customers in Seth Godin's excellent analysis.



Differentiation is the key to long-term profits. The authors present a marketing-based approach to differentiation that is very insightful.



Of course, the promise has to be believable. One of the best ways to do that is to make it clear to the promiscuous sneezer that the system can be gamed. That if they work the system, the odds of winning go way up.

If I look at the offer you make and say, “Wait. If I go to *ten* friends, not just one, then I’m a lock to win this great prize...” you’ve done it right. I may think I’m scamming you by going to so many people to adjust the odds in my favor, but actually, I’m doing just what you wanted me to do—and then some.

Many of the online affiliate programs work this way. These programs offer a commission for referrals that result in a sale. First designed as a cheap way to get new customers referred from relevant web sites, they’ve evolved into something far bigger. If you’re at an online pet store, for example, and you see a link to a book about training dogs, you can click on the link and buy it from Amazon.com. Amazon then sends the affiliate (the online pet store) a commission. Small businesspeople have looked at these programs and said “Wait! If I build a site that does nothing but sell books and Barnes and Noble does all the work, I’ll scam the system and make a ton of money.” Of course, the online bookstore doesn’t care a wit about where the customers come from. They’re just happy to have them. In essence, hundreds of thousands of entrepreneurs are now building businesses dedicated to finding customers for other merchants.

Describe an attainable path

Alas, trust is in short supply, even among optimistic promiscuous sneezers. Thus you’ve got to make it clear to potential sneezers that there is in fact a way for them to profit from this adventure.

This is especially true for offers where you don’t have a lot of time to make your case. By showing the sneezer how smooth the system is, by making it trivially easy to forward that email or whisper to that friend, you’re far more likely to get their initial enthusiasm. The first few sneezes are the most difficult to get an individual to perform.

When someone succeeds, tell the rest of them

This is so important and so overlooked. I’m presuming that you’ve gained permission to talk with your sneezers on an ongoing basis. So now talk to them! I’m a member of several online affiliate programs, but not one of them does this. Why not send announcements detailing how the most effective affiliates are doing? Why not invite me to visit their sites and see them in action? By making it really clear that some sneezers are happily profiting, you dramatically increase the chances you’ll get better performance from the rest of your sneezers.

Give the successful ones a way to show the non-sneezers it worked

Mary Kay cosmetics gives its best salespeople a pink Cadillac. This is no accident. There are plenty of ways to pay off a promiscuous sneezer. Why do it with a pink Cadillac? Because it is a persistent amplifier of this sneezer’s success. Because it attracts new sneezers to

Have a sales convention

Just because it's a new century doesn't mean we should abandon the idea of getting together in real life. Zig Ziglar tells the story of how Mary Kay went to a sales convention when she was a struggling salesperson. She didn't even have enough money to eat the meals there... she brought her own crackers and cheese. But at the final banquet, when the salespeople queued up to shake the company president's hand, Mary Kay looked at him and said, "Next year, I'll be back as the #1 salesperson." The president, who could have easily brushed off the claim, stopped what he was doing, paused for a full thirty seconds, looked her in the eye and said, "Yes, yes, I believe you will." And the rest is sales history. But without the convention, I seriously doubt this would have occurred. How can you get together with your best promiscuous sneezers?

I hope everyone finds the facts/insights presented in this article valuable. If you find them interesting please send me a comment @ dan@betterbizbooks.com and forward the article onto as many friends as you want to. If you want to receive further articles such as this click on the subscribe button on the right to sign up for my [Free Monthly Newsletter](#).

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