

BRIDGE PAGES 101

LEARN THE SECRETS OF INCREASING AFFILIATE PROFITS WITH BRIDGE PAGES!



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Introduction

Earning money with affiliate marketing is actually relatively easy. Almost everyone who attempts to make a little cash with it ends up making a few bucks, even if it's accidental.

But if you want to take your affiliate marketing to the next level, one way to do so is through the use of bridge pages.

Bridge pages? What the heck?

Bridge pages are a type of landing page. Some people call these doorway pages, but don't get them confused with search engine doorway pages, which were used years ago to target keywords for search engine traffic. Such tactics no longer work for SEO purposes, but bridge pages of a different kind are incredibly powerful for affiliates.

In this guide, you're going to learn how to use bridge pages to send more traffic to your affiliate offers while still building your list and growing your own business.

You'll also learn some of the mistakes people commonly make with bridge pages, and how you can avoid these problems with your own pages.

So let's begin.

Bridge Page Warning

Before we get started, it's important to point out that bridge pages violate the terms of service of some ad networks, so it's vital that you check the TOS before you decide to use bridge pages for affiliate marketing.

For example, Google's terms of service specifically forbids the use of bridge pages. This means you won't be able to advertise your bridge pages via Google AdWords.

So why wouldn't affiliate networks allow bridge pages? Wouldn't they be grateful for the traffic?

Well, for one thing, they want that traffic for themselves. When you send traffic to a bridge page, the user may opt-in to your list, making them less likely to opt-in on the actual affiliate page because they've already given their email address to you a few minutes earlier.

Another reason is the potential for confusion. If people land on your bridge page and are later sent to another site to buy, they may feel confused or misled, potentially costing the sale, or you may inadvertently say something on your page that hurts the customer relationship.

Other companies may have their own reasons for disallowing bridge pages, but just make sure they are allowed before you go through the trouble of creating one to promote a particular product.

Why Use Bridge Pages?

Bridge pages are useful as a pre-selling tool when the sales page for a particular product isn't quite what you'd like it to be for conversion purposes, or when you have value you'd like to add on top of what is offered on the sales page.

Not only that, but you can add an opt-in form or social media icons to your bridge page, which you would not be able to do if you sent your traffic straight to your affiliate link. This allows you to “own your audience”, capturing them into your own marketing funnel before you send them off to another website and potentially lose them forever.

Bridge pages can be used for reviews, offering bonuses, capturing leads, building your own brand, and many other purposes—none of which can be accomplished by sending traffic straight to affiliate offers.

Bridge pages also allow you to introduce yourself as an individual, giving you the opportunity to begin branding yourself in your niche. You'll be able to introduce yourself, tell people why you're an expert in your niche, and then tell them why you recommend the affiliate product you're promoting.

Bridge pages also allow you to use retargeting. If you are using Facebook ads, for example, you can add a tracking pixel to your bridge page that will let you run ads for your product to get people who looked, but didn't buy, to have another chance to purchase.

Common Bridge Page Mistakes

Creating bridge pages seems simple enough, but there are some mistakes people make that can really hurt their campaigns. We're going to take a look at some of those common mistakes, and how you can avoid making them.

You may notice that a number of these stem from using sites like HubPages and Blogger.com to create your bridge pages. This can be useful if you're just getting started and cannot yet afford a domain and hosting, but it can lead to all sorts of problems down the road, as you'll see.

Lack of Value

Many people believe bridge pages offer no value for visitors, because they're thin on content and don't offer any additional value. This is true for bridge pages that are created for the sole purpose of attracting search engine traffic to affiliate offers, but not if you're creating bridge pages to help pre-sell your offers.

In order to prevent this mistake, you need to ensure your bridge pages are offering substantial value for visitors. Include information that might not be present on the sales page, for example. Perhaps you could add your own review of the product, or some tips for using the product more effectively.

You could also add bonuses for buyers if your affiliate program allows this. Bonuses are proven to increase conversions. Just be sure you follow through on the bonuses, or you'll risk alienating your visitors and hurting the reputation of the affiliate program you're promoting.

Also, be sure you're offering bonuses that really tie in well with the product you're promoting. Don't offer weight loss products as a bonus for an internet marketing product. I know this seems obvious, but you'd be surprised to see how many people include every resale rights product they have just because they think it increases value. Bonuses are only helpful if they're related to the product you're promoting.

Not Using an Opt-In

If you're using bridge pages with no opt-in, you're just throwing traffic away. Once you've sent the traffic to the affiliate offer, they're possibly gone forever. They aren't likely to return to your bridge page.

However, if you add an opt-in form and capture those leads to your mailing list, you will be able to promote to that list on a regular basis without worrying if they ever return to your pages.

Lack of Social Media Integration

Social media is one of the most powerful traffic options these days, and it's a mistake to ignore this. Be sure you're offering social share options everywhere you can. This will help bring in more traffic.

Be sure to integrate Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest at the very least. These are the most powerful social networks for sharing content.

Unstable Traffic Sources

If you're using sites like HubPages and Blogger.com to create your bridge pages, you run the risk of losing your traffic if they're "slapped" by Google.

Thousands of affiliates were hit hard by a Google update a few years ago that penalized sites like Squidoo, HubPages, and most of the popular article marketing websites. Google realized people were making a bunch of pages that had very little content for the sole purpose of driving traffic to affiliate offers or AdSense, and they penalized these sites for allowing their users to create such pages.

This caused massive ranking drops overnight, costing a lot of people the majority of their affiliate income.

You can still get hit with a Google penalty on your own site, but you have a better chance to fix problems quickly and revive your rankings. If you're hosting on someone else's site, you can be penalized by the actions of other people hosting on that same site, and you're not in control of the entire site, so you can't clean it up to fix your own rankings.

Lack of Branding

Using a site like HubPages to create your bridge pages is not just risky from a traffic standpoint, but also makes it unlikely you'll ever see your traffic again. Even if they happened to remember your page was hosted on HubPages and they wanted to come back, they would probably just go to HubPages.com and they wouldn't be able to find your specific page.

If you're hosting your own bridge pages, you have the opportunity to brand your website and get users to return later for more of your valuable content.

Creating Effective Bridge Pages

While you can certainly create bridge pages that are hosted on sites like HubPages, it's important to start hosting your own as soon as you can.

Some reasons to host your own pages:

- You cannot add retargeting pixels on pages you don't own
- You often cannot add opt-in forms to pages you don't own
- You can build **your own** brand instead of someone else's
- You aren't as likely to suffer Google penalties
- You can react quickly to fix issues if you **are** penalized

Don't think you have to buy a new domain name for every bridge page you create. If you own an internet marketing domain already, for example, you can use that not only for your blog, but also to host your bridge pages. This helps you build your overall brand, while saving money by using one domain to promote a large number of products.

You'll want to have a different domain for each niche you promote, of course. You wouldn't want to promote weight loss products on an internet marketing domain. Not only would that not look good to visitors, but you'd dilute your content focus in the eyes of Google, hurting your rankings for the primary niche of your domain.

You can create your bridge pages with whatever method you're most comfortable with. If you're great with HTML and CSS or a program like Dreamweaver, you can create your pages manually. Otherwise, you might want to use a CMS (content management system) such as WordPress.

If you already have WordPress installed on your domain, you can use it. Just create a page (not a post) and use that as your landing page. This had the added bonus of allowing you to have your sidebar (if you choose) and your header (for branding purposes).

Many themes have alternate styles for pages, which you can choose from when you create your page. You will see a dropdown box that will let you choose the style.

Generally, you won't want a sidebar distracting from your affiliate message, however you might want to have it there to hold an opt-in form. You can create a special sidebar just for this page, if you like. This will let you place only your opt-in form in the sidebar, leaving off anything that might otherwise distract visitors from your affiliate message.

So what can you include on bridge pages?

Reviews

A review is one of the best ways to pre-sell a product, especially if it is a product you have tried and have first hand knowledge of. A well-written, honest, helpful review can increase conversions significantly.

When writing a review, it's important to be as honest as possible. Don't feel like you have to say only good things about a product in order to effectively sell it, because writing about some of the product's flaws can lend some credibility to your review. If you say only good things about a product, you'll probably discover your readers don't entirely trust it.

Tips & Recommendations

Another great thing you can include on a bridge page is a list of additional tips and recommendations for using the product. This kind of information isn't usually found on product sales pages, so you can offer significant value by including this.

Comparisons

If you have several products of the same type that you'd like to promote, you can add value by offering product comparisons. You can do this with comparison tables, bulleted lists, or just offering reviews of the various products that go into detail about how each product differs from the others.

Alternative Sales Text

Sometimes you may have a product that you feel has a sales page that is lacking in some way. Creating a bridge page is a great way to create a sales page that might convert better than the product's own.

When you create your own version of the sales page, you can also include your opt-in box, which will allow you to build your list while promoting the affiliate product.

Be sure to go through the sales page carefully and make notes on what you think could be done to improve it. Then you can implement these changes in your own sales page.

Conclusion

Bridge pages are no longer about spamming search engines with pages that have little to no real content just to get free traffic. They're about pre-selling your affiliate offers in order to dramatically increase conversions while also building your own customer base.

Think of them as a type of landing page made specifically to pre-sell affiliate offers. These pages can include reviews, recommendations, tips, comparisons, or they can just be alternative versions of the sales pages.

One of the major benefits of using bridge pages instead of sending traffic straight to your affiliate link is the ability to include an opt-in box to build your list. This can greatly increase your profits, because you have the potential to sell to those people who did not purchase on their first visit, and you can market a wide variety of products to the same traffic source.

I hope you have come to understand the importance of using bridge pages to make the most of your traffic, and I hope this helps you increase your own income.

Best of luck with your bridge pages!