



THE AFFILIATE RESEARCH FORMULA



**AFFILIATE MARKETING
WITHOUT THE BULLS**T**





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MODULE 2: THE Affiliate

Research Formula

Success starts by picking the right niche.

Simply put:

The success of your affiliate business relies on selecting a market that's both profitable and personally interesting

Not a lot of pressure right?

Picking wrong means you'll waste time and money on a topic that simply doesn't work.

I know many "gurus" recommend going with your passions. But with affiliate marketing, some topics aren't great for making money.

Here's a personal example... I love running. But I wouldn't go into this market. That's because the only things we runners buy are shoes, race applications, and the occasional gadget. It's pretty hard to make money as an affiliate marketer in this niche because not many people are buying information.

On the other hand, the golfing market is an excellent option because golfers are fanatical about their sport. These people spend money on clubs, shoes, outfits and **information** about how to improve their game. You could make piles of money by targeting specific problems that golfers experience on a regular basis.

Your ultimate goal is to find that niche market that will be exciting to talk about on a daily basis.

⇒ **What Is Niche Marketing?**



Niche marketing is targeting a small population that has a special interest or problem. Rather than focusing on a lot of people, you laser-target folks that all share a common characteristic.

By specializing, you're not going against professional marketers who will crush you. Instead your aim is to build a reputation as an expert in a small, tightly-focused area. Over time, you'll develop a reputation you can use to get people to purchase affiliate products.

Your goal is to be *totally immersed* in this niche. Find out what problems people have. Discover what questions they're asking. And look for opportunities that other marketers have missed.

I recommend staying in a niche for a number of years. The reason is you'll develop "opportunity eyes." These are the gaps in information you can use to stand apart from others. Simply create content (or products) around them and you'll become one of the most respect authorities in this market.

Take this course for example.

There are *countless* affiliate marketing products. Unfortunately most are complete scams or they fail to teach how to build a long-term affiliate business. They're all sizzle with no steak. I consider this product to fill an information gap because it's one of the first to teach this business model, in a no-nonsense, no-bullshit manner.

Hopefully this shows that you can kick-butt in any niche – Even the ones with a lot of competition.

⇒ **How to Find the *Right* Niche**

Much has been written on the topic of niche market research. In fact, it seems like there's way *too much* information. Honestly most of what's posted on the Internet is a glorified push to buy an overpriced software package.

The truth is you can easily research a market – Without spending lots of money or using a pricy keyword tool.

This module provides a foolproof way to find that perfect affiliate marketing niche.

It's a very low-tech solution. I'm not going to tell you to choose a market based on some arbitrary number. Instead I'll teach you how to effectively use two incredible tools: **Your mind** and **your instincts**.

Yes, you'll do research. But this should be tempered by what you find personally interesting and relevant to your unique experiences.



In this lesson, I'm going to walk you through the process of niche research. First you'll cast a wide net and brainstorm random ideas. Second you'll take the best of these ideas and do basic research. Next you'll select the right market for you. Finally you'll generate hundreds of topics/ideas that can be used to dominate this niche.

⇒ **Be Dedicated to Niche Selection**

Before we begin, I'd like to recommend something.

The right niche is the foundation of a successful affiliate marketing business.

You're going to spend *a lot of time* talking about this topic. That's why it's important to find something that you find enjoyable. At the same time it should also be profitable.

You don't want to waste months of your life doing something you hate or doesn't make money.

So take your time with this step. Do ALL the steps I recommend in this module. Don't skip anything. Take as long as you need to find the perfect market. Even if you *think* you have the perfect idea, go through these steps.

Hard work now will pay lots of dividends down the road. Do these exercises and you'll be able to locate that perfect market.





Chapter 1

BRAINSTORMING NICHE IDEAS

Forget what you've been told about niche research. You don't start by doing keyword research.

Instead I recommend doing a *complete* brain-dump.

This module starts by focusing on the "big picture."

You generate ideas and overall themes first.

Then you do research to see if it's something that's monetarily worth pursuing.

Finally you dive into the market and generate hundreds of ideas that'll be discussed with your audience.

There's a lot to cover, so let's get started...

⇒ **Get a Notepad for Brainstorming**

This is a bit 'old school,' but I suggest using a small notebook to jot down ideas for your niche market.

Carry this everywhere you go. Use it whenever a great idea pops into your head. This will help you give consideration to *every* thought you have during the day.

The key is to never censure an idea. Jot down any topic – Even if you only have a slight interest in it. This is important because you never know where a random thought will lead!

For instance, I'd never consider going to a boring market like credit repair or finance. However if I took the time to consider these markets I might come up with a subject that I'd find enjoyable. Perhaps something like *personal finance for lifestyle designers*.





My advice is to use a notebook. This is an incredible tool for generating and capturing niche-related ideas. Spend a few days, even a week, using this tool. Eventually you'll have a massive collection of topics that can be narrowed down to a profitable market.

⇒ **Start with YOU**

In all likelihood, the answer to the question of niche-selection lies within YOU.

Take a hard look at your life. You'll discover a bunch of ideas that can easily be turned into an affiliate business.

Here are a few ways to kick-start this process:

↳ **What if you were Rich?** Imagine you had millions of dollars and never had to work. *How would you spend your time? What would you do for fun? Where you go? What relationships would you cultivate? Where would you volunteer your time?*

Use these questions to find out where your passions lie. I know it's a little hokey, but one of these ideas could lead to an excellent niche idea. Write down different answers to each question and think of how they can be turned into a profitable business.

↳ **Who are YOU?** Think about the characteristics or qualities that make you a unique person. *How old are you? What's your racial background? Gender? Family? Disability? Relationship status? Sexual orientation? Location?*

All of these traits can lead to a unique selling position that targets a specific group of people.

For example, the dating market is ultra-competitive. But let's pretend you're an Asian-American male. I bet there are some obstacles/situations you face when it comes to dating in the United States. You can easily become an Asian dating expert and talk to guys who face similar problems.

I know we've been taught to look for similarities within each other. But sometimes it's important to think about how we're different. How we stand apart from the masses of people. This is a great way to discover a topic that's appealing to a unique group of individuals.

↳ **What are your Hobbies?** Personal interests and passions are a great place to get niche ideas. This is something you already love to do...for free. You know the subject really well. So it's not too hard to think of good content ideas. I bet there are one or two topics you could spend hours talking about without coming up for air. That's the perfect niche for you!



↳ **Want to Learn Something?** “YOU-based” niche research also includes the skills or interests you’d like to develop. You can easily build an affiliate business around something you’ve always wanted to learn.

Would anyone listen if you’re a newbie? Well as they say, *“In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king.”*

No matter what topic you discuss there will always be someone starting out. You build an audience by sharing “ah-ha” moments and major breakthroughs with these people.

Many successful affiliate marketing businesses have been built by someone who chronicles their attempts at learning a skill. Eventually you’ll gain valuable knowledge that can be passed along to people who are also starting out.

There’s a great example of this comes from the movie **“Julie and Julia.”** The main character created a successful blog by cooking a few of Julia Child’s recipes every day. She became famous for being candid about her successes and her disasters.

This shows you don’t have to be an *expert* to do well with an affiliate business.

Trust me. Everyone loves a “rags to riches” story. For many, it’s hard to identify with people who have already achieved success. But it’s easier to connect with somebody who is going through the same painful learning process.

↳ **What are your Personal Skills?** What skills do you possess that others don’t? *Car repair? Sewing? Applying eye make-up? Clothing design?* All of these are viable markets that are filled with product ideas.

You might wonder “How do I turn something like car repair into an affiliate business?” Well you could have a website with videos of you fixing up a car. You’ll teach something different in each clip. Then you make money by recommending a car repair related product.

Personal skills can be a perfect niche for you! The trick is to take what you’re good at and turn it into useful content.

↳ **What are your Professional Skills?** Professional skills are a hot topic right now. Because of the lagging economy people need help with job success. Now more than ever, it’s important to stand out in this ultra-competitive market.

Are you good at public speaking? Writing resumes? Taking a specific test? Networking in a specific industry?

Think about all you’ve accomplished professionally. You might have a skill that others would *love* to learn.



⇒ Look at the “Big Four”



Another idea is to go after what I call the “big four” of Internet marketing.

These are massive markets that’ll be profitable until the end of time. They are **health, wealth, relationships, and passions**.

Before I move on to why these are important, let me give a quick breakdown of what each includes:

- 1) Health-** This includes everything to do with *how we look* and *how we feel*. Like losing weight, gaining muscle, stop smoking, being more physically attractive, etc.
- 2) Wealth-** This type of niche is centered on our financial success. This includes making money, earning passive income, investing, saving money, and career advice.
- 3) Relationships-** This category covers any type of interpersonal relationship people have with one another. This can include dating, break-ups, how to improve your social status, and sexuality.
- 4) Passions-** This is a pretty broad niche. Here you concentrate on hobbies and activities that people enjoy on a regular basis. They include things like golf, gaming, gardening, cooking, and surfing.

Sidebar: I’ve heard the argument that “passions” isn’t a real category. I disagree. Think of the guys who spend all their money tricking out their car. Some make minimum wage and live in run-down apartments, but they *still* spend hundreds of dollars on a new set of speakers. Don’t discount the passions niche because there’s a lot of money to be made here.

Why are these great niches? All four are concerned with basic, fundamental human emotions. Over a century ago, your great-great-grandfather wanted to make money, find love, feel healthy, and get more out of life. I guarantee one hundred years from now your great-great-grandchild will have the same concerns.

Even when technology changes the way people interact, these categories will never change. People will always want to make money, find love, enjoy their hobbies, and feel healthy.



Build an online business around these topics and you'll **always** have a target market of individuals who want to buy what you're offering.

⇒ **Explore “Problem Keywords”**

Here's another simple; but very powerful technique:

Use “**problem keywords!**”

When people do a Google search they use certain *modifiers* to find a solution for their problem.

Let's say you need to fix a car. Probably you'd use primary keywords like *car, auto, or automobile*. What you'd also use are words like *fix, help, how to, and solve*. I call these “problem keywords” because these modifiers show an active problem someone is trying to fix.

Why is this information useful? Well, most marketers understand the importance of looking at primary key phrases. On the other hand, they don't look at the modifier phrases. Do a search of just the problem words and you'll discover thousands of markets waiting for you to attack!

Below I've listed 215 problem keywords. What you'll do is [use the Google Keyword Tool](#) to find different keyword phrases. You want to look for problems that make a great niche market. These will be topics that require a lot of information.

For instance, “*How to Delete my Facebook account*” might make a great article for your site. But it's a terrible idea for an affiliate market because it's a 2 minute solution.

On the other hand, “*How to Get More Fans in Facebook*” is a solid niche to pursue.

Take time with this exercise. Do as many keywords as possible. Write down anything you find interesting. Keep adding ideas to your brainstorming notebook till you have a list of dozens of niche market topics.

<u>215 Problem Keywords</u>				
2010	Daily	Help	Pest	Soothe
2011	Deal	Hobby	Plan	Sports
Accessory	Design	Hobbies	Prevent	Start
Accessories	Diet	Hot	Price	Stats
About	Digital	How to	Problem	Steps
Acquire	Directions	How-To	Product	Statistic
Advice	Directory	Increase	Program	Story
Aid	Directories	Info	Promotion	Stories



Alleviate	Discount	Information	Purchase	Strategy
Answer	DIY	Instant	Quick	Strategies
Appear	DVD	Instructions	Quickly	Styles
Art	Do it Yourself	Interesting	Rare	Styling
Article	Do-it-Yourself	Investment	Rebuild	Success
Auction	Download	Job	Recipe	Successful
Bargain	Down Load	Key	Relief	Supplies
Beat	Easy	Kill	Relieve	Supply
Best	eBook	Less	Remedy	Survey
Bigger	Effortless	Listings	Remove	Symptoms
Blueprint	Eliminate	Locate	Repair	System
Book	Equipment	Look	Research	Test
Build	Facilitate	Look For	Results	Thin
Buy	Fact	Love	Revealed	Thinner
Buying	Fair	Lucky	Review	Tip
Buying	FAQ	Make	Revise	Tips
Guide	Fashion	Map	Rich	Top
Cash	Fast	Market	Richer	Toy
CD	Find	Medical	Riches	Trick
Cheap	Fix	More	Sale	Tutorial
Clean	Food	Money	Sales	Underground
Clips	Free	Movie	Save	Undisclosed
Close-Out	Freebies	Music	Score	Unknown
Code	Game	Mystery	Scripts	Unpublished
Comfort	Get	Name	Secret	Unrevealed
Computer	Get Rid Of	New	Sell	Value
Control	Gift	News	Set up	Video
Coupon	Go	Now	Sexier	Voucher
Course	Good	Obtain	Sexy	Way
Correct	Goal	Old	Shop For	Ways
Craft	Grant	Offer	Signs	Ways To
Create	Graphic	Order	Small	Weather
Cure	Great	Pain	Smaller	Wholesale
Current	Guarantee	Patch	Software	Win
Cuisine	Guide	Patterns	Solve	Young

⇒ **Explore “Mass Market” Sites**

Some websites are perfect for niche research. In this section, I’ve included a number of sites that are great for generating ideas. To get started, I recommend looking in the



categories that are personally interesting. For instance, if you're a health conscious person then start there:

- ↳ [Clickbank Marketplace](#)- Clickbank is the largest affiliate network on the Internet. Even better, it's a popular destination for researching product ideas. While the search function isn't the greatest, you can scan the individual categories and discover what products are being sold like hotcakes!
- ↳ [Amazon.com](#)- There is a lot to be learned by researching books on Amazon. A rule of thumb: If there are books on a subject, then there is a market for it. And if a book gets 20 or more reviews, then you know it's a subject that has a following. Not many people leave reviews. So a product with 20+ reviews means it's a topic with a core audience.

Another trick is to look at the "Dummies" or "Idiot's Guide to" series. You'll come across a wealth of information that can be used to find a good niche. I just did a search and got back 21,950 results. Think you find one niche from this list?

- ↳ [Google Groups](#)- Google Groups provides a great way to research certain "tribes" or collection of people who share an interest in a specific market. A successful affiliate business is about understanding what people want. With Google Groups, you can quickly explore a niche without wasting lots of time.
- ↳ [Yahoo Groups](#)- Yahoo Groups is similar to the one Google Provides. Personally, I don't think you need to use both. Just pick the one you like best!
- ↳ [Twitter Search](#)- I love using the Twitter search box. This is a great way to see what's being discussed **right now** in a niche!
- ↳ [eBay Pulse](#)- Want to find what people are buying right now? With eBay Pulse, you'll get the top 10 in every product category. The homepage doesn't give a lot of information. But do a search into each category and you'll discover a massive list of what's been sold on the world's largest auction site.
- ↳ [Magazines Database](#)- If a market has its own magazine then it has profit potential. Fortunately you don't need to go to a bookstore and tear through the periodicals section to check out magazines. Just use this site and explore the various categories. Here you'll find a vast array of magazines that discuss every conceivable market.



- ↳ [Squidoo Top 100 Lenses](#) – Squidoo is another great place for market research. Sure, some lenses are self-serving, but you can find a lot of hidden markets by reviewing **Squidoo's Top 100 Lenses** page.

For instance, there is a lens with a collection of “bucket lists ideas.” This page alone shows what people *really* want to accomplish with their lives. Some of these can easily become the basis of a profitable niche.

- ↳ [Shopping.com Top 100 List](#)- This site lists popular physical products. So it's great for anyone interested in starting a small retail site.

On the other hand, it's also a great research tool for anyone creating an information-based website. Use this site to find a popular item and then make a site that offers “hacks” for this particular product.

For instance, the **iPad** is really popular now. One idea that popped into my head is to be an affiliate for *how-to* guides on designing apps for the iPad. This is a great example of taking a popular physical product and turning it into an information-based website.

All these tools are a great starting point for researching a broad market. In a few hours you can build a massive list of niche ideas. The trick is to know *when* to stop...

⇒ **When to STOP Doing Niche Research**

You could easily spend *DAYS* researching these sites. At a certain point you need to call it quits. My rule of thumb is to keep researching until you've found a few dozen niche ideas.

It's important to generate a lot of ideas before moving on. Don't leave any stone unturned. Remember ...you'll be in this niche for a long time. So make sure it's the right one!

Eventually though, you'll have dozens of niche ideas.

That's when it's time to pare down this list:

Start by going through the notebook and eliminating any ideas you don't like. These are topics you don't personally find enjoyable.

Then cross off the topics that you couldn't discuss for months – even years. This is where personal passion comes in. Frankly, some topics are exciting to some and boring to others.



Finally go with your gut. Your intuition is the best tool you possess when it comes to selecting a niche.

Cull down the list till you have **10 basic topics**.

These will be carefully examined in the next section...





Chapter 2

How to “Define” Your Niche Market

In this step, you’ll carefully analyze each of these ten topics. The trick is to clearly define these niche ideas. That’s why you want to narrow them down into very specific markets.

⇒ **Broad Markets vs. Narrow Niches**

Many people get confused about the difference between a broad market and a narrow niche.

So let’s clear up the confusion.

A broad market is a massive list of topics that can be grouped together. Like these:

- Electronics
- Relationships
- Fitness
- Collectibles
- Books

A narrow niche is different because it targets a specific subset of a broad market. To illustrate, let’s take the five markets I just mentioned. You can easily break them down into niches like these:

- Electronics → iPads
- Relationships → How to Attract Women
- Fitness → Gain Muscle
- Collectibles → Star Wars Toys
- Books → Business Books

The idea here is to take a broad market and drill it down till you find a simple one line description of your core audience. These will be the people who are served by your affiliate business.





As an example, when I first started my blog, I was *way too* broad with my focus. I wrote about topics like: *Personal development, lifestyle design, affiliate marketing, physical fitness, blogging, professional development, and traveling.*

Bottom line is I didn't do a good job of finding a core tribe.

In early 2011, I decided to focus on the concept of "Internet Lifestyle without the Bullshit." This is a specific niche because it targets anyone who is willing to work hard for an online business.

(You'd be surprised at how many people *don't fit* this description.)

Narrowing down a niche is important. So don't skip this step. Your goal is to be considered an authority in this topic – Somebody people will view as an authority. When you know *who* you're talking to, it's really easy to create content they'll love!

⇒ **What Makes a Good Narrow Market?**

By now you might wonder what makes a good niche. My answer is it depends on what *you like* and *what you find* during the keyword phase. (This will be covered in the next section.)

I *DO* believe search results aren't everything. Sure it's important to get evidence of a profitable niche. But you should also look for markets with a built in core audience. My point is to always do keyword research. Just don't let it be the sole factor for why you choose a niche.

⇒ **Defining your 10 Niches**

Okay you've drilled down to a narrow niche. So what's next? Well, you'll take this list and define the *exact market* you'll attack.

How do you do this? You'll take the ten topics and generate keyword ideas. These phrases will form the foundation of the keyword phase of niche research.

The goal here is to come up with specific keywords and phrases people use to find information.

Start by creating a separate sheet for each of these niches. Jot down any words you think people use to find information. Then go to the following sites and add words related to this topic:

↳ [Ezine Articles](#) - Ezine Articles (EZA) is an incredible research tool. On the homepage of EZA, there's a massive list of article categories. Hit the "expand all"



button at the top of the page and you'll get a list of 100+ categories. Each section has thousands of articles; chock-full of niche-related keywords.

- ↳ [WikiHow](#)- This site also has a lot of categories and topics. Take a look around and you'll discover a number of great phrases.
- ↳ [Google Blog Search](#)- This tool is useful for researching an individual niche. With *Google Blog Search*, you enter a general keyword and see what people are writing about it. Plus this site lists the top stories in each category. These are the "hot search terms" that are currently trending.
- ↳ [About](#)- Another massive encyclopedia of information in every niche. Use this when you want to get a "feel" for the kind of information people want. Do a search and you'll get a bunch of keyword related articles.
- ↳ [Yahoo Answers](#)- I love Yahoo Answers because it shows real questions people have about a niche topic. Each category provides a bunch of keyword ideas. Even better – *Yahoo Answers* has a *Most Popular* tab. Scan this area and you'll get major problems that a lot of people experience on a regular basis.

All of these provide an excellent way to generate ideas for your niches. With a few hours work, you'll have lots of keywords for each of the ten niche ideas.

Don't skip this exercise. This is a great way to find out what kind of information people are seeking in a niche. This technique lets you know *exactly* what topics you'll be discussing with your audience.

Once you've done this exercise for each of the ten niches, move on to the final phase of this research process...





Chapter 3

Getting Hard Data

This is where the rubber meets the road.

You've now defined each of these ten markets. Now it's time to move on to keyword research. Here is where you'll figure out the profit potential of a particular niche.

The only mandatory tool is the [Google Keyword External Site](#).

Start with the top keywords for each of the niche ideas. Enter each into the Google Keyword tool and record the number of "Global Monthly Searches."

Your goal is to get a total of 30,000+ total searches for a niche idea. That means when you combine the results for all the keywords in a niche, the total should exceed 30,000 searches.

This rule of thumb isn't written in stone. The important thing is to make sure there is a market for this niche topic.

What if you don't get enough searches?

Use the suggestion tool that Google has in their results. This helps you discover additional keywords that might not have originally considered.

You need to answer three questions while doing this research:

1) What is the Demand?

Do a search for each of the keywords you've written down. Let's use those five markets I discussed as an example:

- iPad (20,400,000 searches)
- Attract Women (60,500 searches)





- Gain Muscle (246,000 searches)
- Star Wars Toys (90,500 searches)
- Business Books (90,500 searches)

All five are excellent niches because they exceed the 30,000 search rule. And that's from looking at one keyword!

Furthermore, what if you wanted to get into the iPad biz? You could easily drill this down and find a bunch of submarkets worth exploring – *iPad reviews*, *iPad accessories*, *iPad apps*, or *iPad cases*.

Finally, use the “problem keywords” I listed before. These show the current problems people experience in a certain niche. I recommend looking for words like “how to,” “problem,” “buy,” “stop.” Use these 215 root words and you'll get a lot of information about a niche.

Do a thorough job with collecting the keywords. My advice is to only pursue niches that get 30,000 or more total searches. Everything else on this list should be eliminated.

Once you've answered the first question, you'll move on the second...

2) What is the Competition?

I want to get something out of the way:

I don't believe in competition.

You can succeed in any market if you *work hard* and have a lot of *quality information*. Why do I say this? Because I've gone into two hyper-competitive markets and still had lots of success.

With that said, it's important to know how much competition is in each niche. You do this by getting statistics and numbers for each market. I recommend the following actions:

- ↳ Go to Google.com and enter a keyword using the “ ” parameters
- ↳ **Example:** If you're researching the *dog training tips* market, you'd enter “*dog training tips*”
- ↳ Do this for every keyword (Yes, it'll take awhile.)



↳ Identify the markets/niches that have a majority of the results under 200,000 total searches

Again this isn't an exact science. These steps are more of a *rule of thumb* rather than something that's set in stone.

Furthermore, you can succeed in any niche if you put your mind to it. So don't let the numbers dissuade you from a particular niche. Yes, you'll have competition. But this also means there is a lot of opportunity.

Using the Market Samurai Keyword Tool

Searching for competition in Google is very tedious – Specifically when you're entering hundreds of keywords.

One solution is the [Market Samurai](#) keyword tool. This software allows you to perform a keyword search for a number of factors: *Competition, profitability, SEO and PPC listings*. This tool is a great way to save a lot of time when doing niche research.

Sure you can use Google to search for competition, but you'll waste hours doing it. Personally, I'd rather spend my time building a business instead of doing hundreds of keyword searches.

Market Samurai also locates those **high demand/low competition** keywords in your niche. This is a useful way to locate content ideas and create articles that rank high for specific keywords.

I'm not saying you absolutely need [Market Samurai](#). But it's something that's expanded my online business. Perhaps it'll help you too.

Once you're researched the competition for each niche, you'll answer the third (and final) question in this process...

3) What are the Affiliate Products?

It's really important to research the affiliate products in each market. You don't have to find that many. The important thing is to see what's being sold in the niches you've identified.

To start, I recommend using these sites to research affiliate products:

- [Clickbank](#)
- [Commission Junction](#)
- [Pay Dot Com](#)
- [E-Junkie](#)
- [Share a Sale](#)



- [Associate Programs](#)

Go through each affiliate network. See what's being sold and what commission rate is being offered.

Once you've research the affiliate networks, take a look at the individual affiliate programs. There are number of ways to do this:

- Check out the sites advertised in Google Adwords listings
- Read niche-related blogs and see what they promote
- Join email lists to do the same thing
- Look at the sites being marketed in the articles on EzineArticles.com.

The important thing here is to determine the profitability of a niche. That's why it's important to be thorough. It's better to spend time now to figure out if a market is worth pursuing.

Here's a simple way to manage this process. Create an Excel spreadsheet that tracks each of the affiliate programs you find. Include things like:

- The niche
- The URL of the affiliate page
- The commission rates
- Back-end income (Y/N)?
- Residual income (Y/N)?
- The amount of tools/support

This sheet doesn't have to be exact. The important thing to determine is the **profit-potential for each niche**. In other words, you don't want to spend months in a market; only to discover there's nothing to promote.



Chapter 4

Making the Final Decision

Up to this point you've done a number of things:

- I. Brainstormed a large list of potential niches
- II. Narrowed down everything to ten topics
- III. Researched the keywords for each on this list
- IV. Checked the competition and eliminated a few markets
- V. Located affiliate programs/products for each of these niches



So what now?

It's time to choose the niche you're going to attack. This isn't an easy decision. I recommend you take the **top three** and do a final analysis.

On a separate piece of paper for each market, write down the following:

- 1) **Sub-markets.** Figure out the sub-markets for this niche. These are those *micro-problems* you discovered during the research phase.

For instance, let's say you're researching the fitness market for people in their 40's. Some sub-markets would include advice specifically related to people in this age bracket: *Nutrition, aerobic exercises, strengthening, and gender differences.*

My point is to identify a number of key components for each market. These will form the foundation of your entire affiliate marketing business. You'll be



creating a lot of content around these subjects. So it's important to have a lot of ideas.

- 2) **Affiliate products.** List all the affiliate products you've discovered. This list should have a mix of one-time sales, recurring revenue, and products with upsells.

Product diversification is a key to affiliate success. So make sure you have at least three listed for each niche. This is the bare minimum. My advice is to aim for five to seven affiliate products.

- 3) **Active Members.** You want a market filled with people who have lots of pain and/or desire. Here are a few ways to figure this out:

- *They talk about their topic*
- *They have problems that occur on a regular basis*
- *They join forums*
- *They read blogs*
- *They have a magazine.*

These are all important factors for determining the profit-potential of a niche. The folks in this market represent your potential customers. So it's important to know what they're thinking.

- 4) **Buying Information.** A market should have people who are buying information. This is where the *real money* is made with affiliate marketing. Sure you might want to sell the occasional gadget. But the majority of your prospects should be interested in informational "how-to" products.

- 5) **Disposable Income.** Look for markets with money to spend. Forgive the stereotype, but some types of people don't have a lot of money to spend.

For instance, the college student market can be tricky. They do have money to spend. But usually it's not on things like information.

- 6) **Competition.** Like I said, competition is a good thing. You *want* a certain level of competition on your market. This means *somebody* is making money. Perhaps that'll be YOU in a few months.



- 7) **Desirability.** *Do you like this niche?* On a scale of 1 to 10, **how excited** do you feel about this topic? Could you talk about it on a regular basis?

Remember, you're going to spend a lot of time in this niche. So figure out if it's something that will excite you...every day...for the next few years.

- 8) **50 Topics.** Can you think of 50+ topics in ten minutes? This is the ultimate test for thriving in a particular niche.

What if you struggle to even think of ten ideas? Then that's a sign that you won't do well in this market. Trust me. It's better to eliminate an idea now than waste months on a niche where you have little passion.

⇒ **The Bottom Line**

At the end of the day, all the charts and spreadsheets in the world don't mean a damn thing.

Really you only need three things:

- 1) Passion for your topic
- 2) An ability to talk about it
- 3) Products to promote

That's it!

Once you've dissected and analyzed these niches *ad nauseam*, you'll make a decision. It might be the right one. Or it could be wrong. You'll never know till you try it!

The bottom line is to pick something *you* like. Metrics aren't everything. Often it comes down to what you're willing to do in the years to come.

It's your choice. I can't tell you what to pick. However I can recommend that the best choice often **comes from your gut.**

But...what if you're still stuck?

Put all the ideas on a wall and throw a dart. Whatever you hit is the niche for you!

Just kidding about that last part ☺





Chapter 5

Doing In-Depth Niche Research

Your work isn't done once you've selected a niche.

In fact, it's just getting started!

After finding **"The One"** it's important to generate content ideas. This will form the foundation of the affiliate domination strategy which is covered in Module 3.

Your goal is to become an authority in this niche. So it's critical to know what you're talking about. Here is a three-step process to do this:

1) Generate 50 Topics

I said this before. Don't go into a niche *unless* you can think of *at least* 50 article ideas. These articles will kick-start the success of your affiliate business.

Fortunately it's not too hard to come up with ideas for content. Here are a few sites that can help:

- ↳ [Clickbank](#)- Look at the sales pages of products related to your niche. Analyze the web copy and find points of information that make excellent articles. Write down the *bullet points* because these are benefits that people seek in this market.
- ↳ [Ezine Articles](#)- There are hundreds of categories on this site. Each is *filled* with content. Honestly, you could review this site on a daily basis and never run out of article ideas.
- ↳ [Google Blog Search](#)- Google Blogs is another excellent research tool. Use this to find all the blogs in your industry and see what they're discussing. Don't rip-off





the content. Instead use these ideas as a launching pad for the content you'll create.

- ↳ [Amazon Bestsellers](#)- Amazon is a great place to research article ideas. If it's written in book form, you better believe it's a topic people want to learn.

The great thing about Amazon is it has a list of what's popular. Search this section and you'll discover a number of popular books. This will yield countless content ideas.

- ↳ [Yahoo Buzz](#)- Yahoo Buzz is a great way to see what's happening *right now* in the world. A great way to create *buzz* for your content is to tie it to a current event. Look at this site on a regular basis and find ways to relate your brand to what's going on in the world.
- ↳ [Google Trends](#)- This is the 2nd tool I use for current events. It provides the top 10 hot topics and top 10 searches. Furthermore, you can click on each listing and get a lot of data related to this news event. Furthermore, you can see if a topic is *growing* or *decreasing* in popularity.
- ↳ [Technorati](#)- This is the 3rd (and final) tool I use to see what's going on in the world. It's different from Google/Yahoo (G/Y) because it focuses on the blogosphere. A great technique is to type a keyword you discovered in G/Y and see what the bloggers are saying about this event.
- ↳ [My Goals](#)- This site is a massive directory of the individual goals that people set. Remember – Your online business is about helping people. This site gives a great perspective on what people *really* want to accomplish in their lives. You can easily relate ideas from this site into informative content on your affiliate site.
- ↳ [So You Wanna](#)- This site is full of “how-to” articles and guides. They have a small category section. But do a search for your niche keyword and you'll generate a lot of article ideas.
- ↳ [eHow](#)- “How to” articles and information products will always be popular. With eHow, you discover what type of content people create on a regular basis. Go here to discover unique article ideas.
- ↳ [43 Things](#)- This site is all about setting goals and creating a list of life goals. It's very current and shows what's popular right now.



For instance, I (originally) wrote this section in the beginning of 2011. At the time, **43 Things** had a list of everyone's New Year's resolutions. This is another list of excellent content ideas.

- ↳ [Stumble Upon](#)- Stumble Upon can be a little confusing at times. But when you know where to look, it's a great place to find the online content that's extremely popular among regular Internet users. The trick is to look in the individual categories in the *discover* section.

In addition, I recommend targeting a specific keyword to see what comes up. For instance, here are the results I just found for a few root keywords in my market:

- [Stumble Upon – Lifestyle Design](#)
- [Stumble Upon – Affiliate Marketing](#)
- [Stumble Upon – Blogging](#)

Play around with this tool and see what you can find!

- ↳ [Delicious Popular page](#): This the best place to see what's being bookmarked. The cream always rises to the top. So if a site gets a lot of bookmarks then it's probably a popular topic. Take a few ideas from this site and use it to create unique content.
- ↳ [Big Boards Forum Directory](#)- Without a doubt, forums are a goldmine for generating article ideas. Just search to see what questions get the most views/comments. You'll find lots of article ideas that people would love to read.

A great trick is to ask people *what's frustrating* about this market. Each response provides an excellent opportunity to generate a massive amount of article ideas.

With the "Big Boards" forum directory, you do a search and find popular forums in your niche. (On a personal note, my favorite place to go is the [Warrior Forum](#). I don't post there, but it's the best place I've found for generating lots of content ideas.)

- ↳ [PayDotCom](#)- This competitor of Clickbank (CB) is also another place to research product ideas and topics. Use this site to supplement what you found on CB.



↳ [Google Keyword Tool](#) – This tool is not just for researching a niche. It’s also a great place to get content ideas. Enter root keywords and you’ll get a bunch of phrases people use to find information. Each of these can be an individual article/post.

Use this tool to create a massive list of keywords. After each search, select the .CSV tab and save this file to your desktop. With an hour of work you’ll have thousands of article ideas!

2) Be a Unique Voice in your Market

It’s important to stand out – No matter what market you’ve selected. This is a topic that will be explored in the next module. However I’d like to briefly talk about the importance of developing a *unique voice*.

You now have a plethora of content ideas. These will help you stand out. They will provide the hook that separates you from the competition. Remember you’re in a fight for the attention of your prospects. That’s why it’s important to brand yourself as an expert.

My point is you need to be that unique person who stands out from the crowd.

Look at what people are currently doing. *How can YOU do better? What makes you unique? What problems and frustrations are being ignored? Are there gaps in information? What are some sub-markets in this niche?*

Find out what’s missing in your market and fill that need!

Don’t worry if you don’t know how to do this. In the next module, we’ll talk about how to dominate an affiliate market.

3) Pick Affiliate Products to Promote

The final way to dominate a market is to select the right affiliate products. How do you do this? You break down each individual problem in your market and find a product that solves it this problem.

Only promote one item for each problem. For instance if you promote *Muscle Building Product A* one week don’t promote *Muscle Building Product B* in the next. You’ll lose credibility and piss off many list subscribers.



Think about your primary niche. Break down each experience into small topics and themes. Then find a product that fills this need.

To illustrate this concept, let's use the previous example – **Health and Fitness Advice for People in their 40's**. This is a completely random topic I just chose. With that said, I can easily think of a lot of problems/topics that can be applied to folks in this age bracket:

- Muscle building vs. muscle maintenance
- How to remain fertile
- Top medical tests you should take
- How to adjust your calorie intake as you get older
- Should you still play competitive sports?
- How to have the body of a teenager...even if you're 50
- Is *juicing* right for you?

These are only a few problems I just randomly picked. Some are great for article ideas. Others are can lead to a great affiliate product you'd promote. My point is to take all the article ideas you've generated and look for products ideas.

I recommend finding *at least* seven different affiliate products. More importantly, find one offer that will become the focal point for your marketing. This will be the first thing you promote to new subscribers. (We'll cover this in Module 5.)

What should you look for in an affiliate product?

I recommend these eight factors:

- I. **Mix of Commissions:** Look for different ways to generate affiliate income. Have a mix of one-time purchases, recurring revenue, trial offers, back-end income and the occasional CPA product. This protects your business if a particular site shuts down or changes the way they pay affiliates
- II. **Quality Sales Page:** Only promote products with a quality sales page. The litmus test? Read the site and see if it does a good job of making YOU *want* the product. There isn't an exact science to judging a sales page. If you're unsure, try it with your prospects and see how they react.



- III. **Test the Product:** It's important to know if a product is good. My advice is to buy it (through your affiliate link) and test it out. Or ask the product owner for a review copy. You'd be surprised at how many people are willing to do this.
- IV. **Look for Competition:** Take a look at the competition. How many people are promoting this product? You *want* to find other marketers. That means it's a product that is making money.
- V. **Customer Reaction:** Do a search in Google for the product. See what people are saying. Are there a lot of reviews? Are people saying it's a scam? It's important to see how real customers react to the product. This is especially true if it looks a bit scammy.
- VI. **Affiliate Tools:** Does the site have an affiliate center? Is it filled with tools designed to help you sell? The best programs are stocked with sales copy and affiliate tools. Only promote products that are willing to help you out.
- VII. **Affiliate Support:** Send a short email to the affiliate site and ask a simple question. Did someone answer? How long did it take? Personally, I don't deal with people who don't respond to their affiliates.
- VIII. **Relevancy:** Is the product relevant to your market? Does it solve a major problem? Only market products that fit with what people want in your market.

Like I said, compile at least seven or more affiliate products in your market. Your prospects will love some and hate others. The trick is to find that perfect mix of offers that make money while helping people.





Final Thoughts on Niche Research

Let's recap what you've learned:

- **Brainstorming Niche Ideas:** How to generate dozens of ideas by looking within yourself, examining the four major markets, using problem keywords and exploring mass market sites.
- **Narrow and Define Markets:** How to laser target a market and identify your core audience.
- **Getting Hard Data:** How to use the Google Keyword Tool and Market Samurai to determine the demand and competition of a particular niche.
- **Choosing a Niche:** How to take all your research and select a market you'll attack in the years to come.
- **Doing In-Depth Research:** How to explore your new niche and become an instant authority.



As you can see, we've covered a lot of information. So if you're confused about anything, go back and read it again.

Honestly, the success of this *entire course* is built around YOU picking the right niche.

Not too much pressure, right?

I did my best to provide a step-by-step plan for selecting a niche. It's not going to be easy. But this process is *really* important. Hard work now will save you a lot of future headaches.

Use the tools I listed. Take time to explore the niche. And find topics that people want to learn.

This makes a huge difference in how much affiliate income you'll earn.



That's it for this lesson!

See you in Module 3!

Steve Scott

