

MEDIA BUYING SECRETS FOR PROFITABLE AFFILIATE OFFERS

Cindy: It is fantastic to have you right here on 7 Figure Furnace. For the people who are listening in today, who haven't heard about you. Why don't you tell us who Tuan is and how did you get here... what is your thing?

Tuan: Hey Cindy, thanks for having me. Well, first off, hello to your audience. My name is Tuan. There's so much to my story, so it's hard to think of a particular spot to start off.

I guess I'll start off where I got into the industry. I started off as an affiliate marketer. Well, I wouldn't say I started off as an affiliate marketer, I started off as a regular person trying to make money online. Trying to buy different courses, different products and test different things and just basically try to make money online. I didn't really know where I was going. One thing led to the next and I got myself into something called CPA marketing, which is basically another form of affiliate marketing. People like to call it its own thing, it's its own industry.

I got into CPA marketing and I start promoting different offers. For those of you who don't know, it's basically finding an offer that someone owns and driving traffic towards it, creating a sale or creating a lead. That person who owns that offer would give you a commission based on the action that occurred. Now, it doesn't necessarily have to be a sale. It could be someone entering their email, someone entering in their ZIP code, someone signing up, just entering a short form. It doesn't necessarily have to be a credit card or transaction for you to earn a commission like traditional affiliate marketing.

I got into something and I started promoting lead gen offers. Something in the adult space, which is funny because I never really wanted to get into that space. I just started testing different offers and I found that I got lucky promoting some of these dating offers. These dating offers were really simple. All they required were people to enter in their user name, their email and a password. Pretty much create a free profile similar to creating something on Facebook. Every time someone did that, I would earn a commission.

Now, with a commission it was $3 to $5 every time someone entered this in, but they didn't have to purchase anything. They didn't have to use, swipe, pull out their credit card. It was really easy for me to get these conversions. One thing led to the next, I started buying paid advertising. I started driving traffic towards these offers and I ended up making more in commissions with these offers than I was spending in my advertising costs. That's where I made my money. It was just a simple game of arbitrage and then pretty much ramping it up seeing how much I could spend versus how much I could generate everyday. That's how I started and gained my success or gaining traction in this space to actually believe that it worked.

Before I did the adult stuff I was promoting some gaming offers. People click on this little game, they download it to their computer or they download it to their mobile phone and I get paid every time it's installed. That worked out really good at first, but something happened with a company called Google. At the time ... this was back in 2007. There was this company, everyone knows it, there was this company called Google. They have this platform called Google AdWords. A lot of people were doing this pay per search or pay per click advertising and that's what I was doing at that time. I was using pay per click advertising and driving traffic towards these gaming offers. People would type in a video game in the search. My ads would come up, they would click on it read a little bit about the game and then they would download it. Then I would earn a commission.

What happened was, I don't know, Google didn't like what I was doing and just banned my account. Pretty much overnight that ruined my entire affiliate marketing business. I mean at that time I was spending about $1,000 a day on Google Adwords for these gaming offers. I was making about $1,500 to $2,000 profit a day promoting these gaming offers. It was really good and going well for a few months until that ban hammer came down. It completely wiped out my business because I didn't have anywhere else to promote it. I didn't know how to promote it anywhere else. That was really tough for me to make that kind of money and feel like, "Yes! I made it. I finally arrived. I made it here. I did what everyone talks about making money online. I'm living that life."

For that to come down and happen to me, it was horrible. It took a long time for me to bounce back from that. I jumped around and tested different things. That's how I ended up testing these adult dating offers. It was because I was scrambling around trying to find something that worked. I tried skincare offers. I tried diet offers. I tried click bank stuff, promoting other people's information products. I just couldn't get anything to work and then luckily I stumbled upon promoting these dating offers, these lead gen offers. That's how it worked out.

Cindy: That's fantastic. You're doing quite a lot with these lead gen offers, aren't you?

Tuan: Yeah, it's pretty crazy to think about it now because it's really simple. I think when it comes down to it the name of the game is arbitrage. It's how much can you spend and how much can you make. If you're making a low margin, if you're spending $100 a day and you're making back $120 which means you spend $100 on advertising. You make $20 profit, you're making a 20% return. Now for some people that's too low. That's not worth their time. People are looking for 100%, 200% ROI and et cetera et cetera, but if you take that $100 spend and you turn it to a $1,000 spend then now you're making $200 a day. You spend $10,000 a day, you're making $2,000 a day. At the end of the day for me it wasn't really how much margin of profit can I make. It was basically how high can I scale this and how much can I net per day? If my goal was to make $10,000 or $20,000 a day, it wouldn't really matter to me how much I had to spend to get there as long as I just hit that mark.

That whole ROI or how much return you should make off your advertisement is kind of a myth to me. If you have the funds, if you have the cash flow you just have to do what you can to hit the net profit.

Cindy: Right, I mean it's a bit risky though if you don't have ...

Tuan: That's right.

Cindy: You know, if you don't have a huge buffer. If you can't get 200%, 300% ROI and then you throw $1,000 on a thing and it comes to nothing or you know [crosstalk 00:06:32].

Tuan: That's really true and that's why I try to tell people to test very small. At the same time you have to build your tolerance to paid advertising. I mean the very first time that you sign up to a traffic network and you pull out your credit card and you deposit $100 to fund your advertising, it's really hard to hit that submit button. Because you're like, "Oh my god, it's $100 and it's so much money." The funny thing is after you do it so many times next thing you know you're just swiping your card for like $1,000, $5,000 and it's nothing.

I mean there's a lot of people who do Facebook advertising and you know they fund their accounts religiously every single day. They don't even bat an eye to it. It's something where you ... when it comes to paid advertising and that's pretty much what I would suggest people to do. It's to focus on paid advertisement because there's so much control. You can scale your business. There's just so many benefits to paid advertisements, but you're going to have to do it and build your tolerance and slowly get used to spending more money and some more money. Next thing you know it's not a big deal.

Cindy: Right. So how [crosstalk 00:07:33] do people avoid ... this might be a really newbie question, but how do people like you know ... if you are investing that $100, how do you make sure that that's going to bring you more than what you're spending? Because that's the whole goal of it, isn't it? I mean we want to actually earn income and not just pay them $5,000. We want to be able to give them $100 and make some money back.

Tuan: Absolutely. Here's the thing. I've noticed people think that the more they spend, that the more guaranteed they are to make profit. It's really not like that. I tell people to test in small amounts. You know test $100. 90% of ... I ... pretty much 100% of the time, the first time that you go about something, purchasing paid advertising, you're going to lose money. You're going to not get a profitable campaign. You might spend, you might deposit $100, spend that $100 on traffic and make that first buy. Well not a ton of money, but you're going to more than likely lose money.

Here's the thing, you're not actually losing money, you're actually buying data. That's really the secret to any media buyer. It's the money that's spent to acquire data which is how many clicks? How many conversions? What's your click through rates? How much money did you make? How much money did you lose? What Adword worked? What didn't? You have to spend that money, accept that you're probably going to take a loss on that data. Then pause everything, go back, take a look at the data and find out some of the things that did work. Then find the things that did work and then you do another buy, invest money and then you focus strictly on the stuff that actually appeared to work.

When I say appear to work it's kind of like when you spend $10 and you get a conversion you can't really base your judgment just off that $10 spending. It's not enough money, enough ad budget. It's not spent across enough time of day, days of the week, et cetera et cetera. It's kind of a fluke. If you were to spend a little bit of money and say, "Oh wow, this ad gave me one conversion. Let's spend all our money on this ad."

What you're going to find out later is when you ramp up the ad spend on that ad, it's probably going to fail because it was insignificant data. You want to ... the way I look at it is you want to do a large enough data sample. You want to spend not too little, but not too much, but just enough to get enough clicks, enough leads, conversions to say, "Hey, now I can make a qualified judgment.

Looking at this data to say, "You know what? We had hundreds of conversions, hundreds of clicks, et cetera et cetera. We know that if we narrow down on these things the averages and chances of this stuff working should sustain and hold itself." Theory is test small, but test enough, test thoroughly. For me personally I rather lose money knowing that something doesn't work for sure than spend money and then pause something and say, "Oh! Maybe that does work, maybe it doesn't. Let me test this or maybe let me go back to that a week later and see if that worked."

That's what usually happens with a lot of newbies. They bounce around. They pause stuff. They try something new without thoroughly giving it significant data, a significant test. Test small, in small batches, look at your data come back analyze it and then once you see something that works that shows promise, slowly ramp it up. There's no point in throwing more money at something that doesn't work. It's not a recipe to improve your success rate. It just doesn't. A lot people think, "Hey, I have X amount of money, so much money. I'm guaranteed to make money." It's a benefit to have money to spend, but you got to test small. Everything you do test small and then scale.

Cindy: Okay, so some people will say you should be sending it through a funnel so you can capture a lead and then you know ... how do you structure your promotions if you're sending to ... do you send it directly to the affiliate offer or do you ... what do you do?

Tuan: Good question, Cindy. Here's the thing, a funnel is very important. Typically in a dating or I'll just say dating vertical, the dating niche or even just adult dating/casual dating niche, the funnel is typically a banner creative. It starts with a banner creative and on that banner creative it's a simple image with a headline, a short call to action. Some type of button, allows ... it just makes people click on that banner. It could go from that and they go to a pre sell landing page. It's basically a page that you create and you craft which kind of improves your chances of that visitor converting. It's not direct linking the banner to the offer. It's that landing page in the center, that pre sell page that's where the magic happens because think about it. If I were to promote an offer and all I did was promote a banner like promote a banner and promote it to an offer. If you're another affiliate and you do the exact same thing where's my competitive advantage?

If you use the same banner as me, if you're promoting the same offer as me, where's the competitive advantage? There is no competitive advantage for either you or me. We're just basically fighting each other for conversions, but when you add that element of having a pre sell page in between the banner and the offer it allows you to increase your conversion. Now you can persuade people more cleverly with better copywriting. You can do other things like capture people's information before they get to the offer like maybe have them submit their email before they get to the offer page. That way if they don't complete the offer you can follow up via email sequence and retain that lead. Maybe get a longer lifetime value out of that customer.

There's different [inaudible 00:13:06], but for me personally, I found that just going from banner to landing page to the offer, those three elements are the main things. When you get a little bit more advance you can set up opt in pages on your landing pages and then capture emails and stuff like that. What I found is most people like that idea of capturing emails, but they don't ever put in the effort of creating a powerful offer response sequence to actually monetize it. They do all these steps to get the email, but they don't even send any emails. Right?

We all know the more steps that someone has to do on the landing page, the less people are going to fill it out. If it's just a single landing page where it says, "Hey, here's some more information about the offer. Click here to get the offer." You're going to get a higher click through rate, but if you had stuff like enter your first name, cell phone number, your email before you get your offer it's like you're conversion rate on your landing page, CTR rate is going to drop drastically. Because people aren't going to want to go through the loops and hoops to finish your landing page. You're going to acquire less leads and less people are going to see the offer which means you're going to get less conversion and generate less revenue.

I find that just doing the simple banner, simple landing page, pre sell them and then straight to the offer that is the best funnel. You can direct link, but like I said there's no advantage there.

Cindy: No, I mean there's not at all. Yeah, so you're mostly just pre selling them and then pushing through. How do you find good affiliate offers?

Tuan: Here's the thing, luckily I've been in this space for a long time so I have a real good post on that particular vertical because you know all the advertisers. You know what new offers are coming out. I've been doing it for years so I kind of can see the whole market place.

For people who are just starting out, the very best ways to find what offers are performing, whether it's in dating or adult dating or casual dating or any vertical that you're in. Skincare, gaming, mobile apps, whatever you're promoting, the very best way is to contact your account rep. Whatever affiliate network or CPA network that you're working with, those people are like the gate keepers. They manage hundreds or thousands or several hundreds of affiliates every single day. They see the numbers. They see the offers that are converting. They see what EPC's and how much volume these offers are doing so they know from a bird's eye view what's working on the network. You have no idea. You're kind of like a lone ranger, you're by yourself wondering what's going on. You're testing different things.

I found that the huge differentiating factor between someone who is successful and someone who is not successful, it really boils down to are you promoting an offer that is converting? Are you promoting a hot offer? You can have the best banner, the best traffic source. You can have the best pre sell pages, but if you're pushing it all towards an offer that just doesn't convert, all your efforts are just going to waste. On the other side of it, you can have a poor banner, a poor pre sell page, but if you have an incredible offer that just converts like fire, you're going to make sales. You're going to make the leads. You got to find the hot offers so the first step is talk to your account rep. Say, "Hey, you know what? What's doing the most volume on your network? What has the most EPC? What has the most lead per day? Can you give me advice?"

A lot of these companies or these networks they're in the business of generating leads and sales. That's how they make money as the network. The more lead and sales they make, the more margin they make regardless if you're profitable or not. As long as you created the sale date, they take their share, right? They're in the business of helping you promote the best offers. They're going to give you that information. They're going to tell you, "Hey, this diet offer works" or "this dating offer does really well." Then take that information and kind of run with it.

Another thing you can do is do some manual spying. Login to your browser, look at ads. If you start seeing the same ads or the same type of offer being promoted, it's more than likely that's someone is profitable with it or it's popular. You can do some manual spying. You just go around and kind of see for yourself. Take note of what offer that is or what network that offer may be on and kind of do your research. Follow up and then get in touch with that offer and test promoting it yourself. Well that's how I do it.

Cindy: You do it, but you spend a lot on media buys. If someone were to sign up, do you instantly get a rep? Does everyone get a rep? How do you get in contact with a rep if you haven't put a lot of money into a network?

Tuan: Well typically when you sign up to a network there's usually an application process. They want to ask you a few questions like what's your background? Are you new? How many years have you been doing this? How much are you spending per month? Et cetera, et cetera. They usually get your Skype details or some instant messaging details or they might even give you a phone call and do a brief interview before they set you up on a network. Once you go through that process and you do get accepted, there's usually an account manager that's assigned to you. There's an email contact. There's a Skype contact. You have kind of you know ...

Cindy: So you shouldn't be shy. You can just go in and talk to them?

Tuan: You definitely have to be proactive. Like I said they're dealing with dozens of people a day if not hundreds of people a day. They might overlook you, they might forget about you. One thing that's for sure, if you haven't reached out or spoke to anybody at a particular network that you're advertising or you're working with, there's dozens of different networks out there. Find somebody who's willing to work with you, willing to help you grow your business. One sure fire way to get noticed is to generate sales and leads. They're forced to reach out to you because at that point they're like, "Who is this guy? Who is this person generating these sales?" You make them come to you in a sense if you want to go that route, but more than likely if you're new, you're going to have questions. You're going to wonder what offers to promote. How to promote it and so on and so forth. What you have to do is really just reach out, reach out.

Facebook is really powerful nowadays. A lot of these account or affiliate managers or A.M. or whatever you want to call them, Account Managers. They're on Facebook. They're promoting their companies, their offers, your business within Facebook groups, marketing groups and different groups of Facebook. They're on Facebook. All it takes is just reaching out to them, sending a message and saying, "Hey, I noticed you work for this company. I'm looking for these types of offers to promote." That kind of gets the ball rolling and that's how you get in contact with someone. You definitely need to work well with this person and build relationships with their Account Manager. There's just no way around it.

Cindy: Right, I mean if you want to know what's actually going to be selling and what's going to make you money. Which is what we want, right?

Tuan: Yeah, that's right. Here's a thing, it's like the manual spying thing that's probably a really effective way to just kind of go about it too. You go in there and just manually spy. You click around and you act like you're a regular customer, visitor seeing ads on the internet. That's a quick way to find out what's working. It also let's you ...

Cindy: How do you track it back ... so if you see an ad over and over, how do you know which network is selling? How do you find out how to promote that product? Have you seen [crosstalk 00:20:36]

Tuan: It's really simple. I mean there's simple ways like let's say you see a banner, you click on it. You click through the pre sell pages and you can finally get to the offer page. You just take note of the offer name of whatever product that it is. It could be whatever dating site, whatever you end up at. You can go to places like OfferVault.com and it's just a directory where they show what offers are on what networks and what pay outs they offer for that particular product or service. That's a quick way you find the name. You go to OfferVault.com, you type it in search. It will show you what networks it's at or they hold them on. Then you just go contact that network, sign up and boom. There it is.

Cindy: Yeah, that sounds good. Do you have any other advice for people that are just going to get started on media buys?

Tuan: Here's the thing when a lot of people first get start, they're really intimidated. They want to start advertising on the smallest traffic source. They want to spend the least money. They want to do the littlest thing they possibly can. They'll go to a second tier traffic network because they feel there's less competition. The truth of the matter is the media buying space is a dog eat dog world. Everything you do, the more ads you promote the more eyeballs on your ads that means there's more competition. There's more people seeing your stuff so all of your advertisements will get copied. It will get ripped at some point in time. The more volume you do, the faster it's going to be copied by someone else because these people see these ads. They want to mimic your ads.

My suggestion is this. The same amount of effort it takes to make $100 a day profit in media buying is relatively the same amount of effort it takes to make $1,000 a day profit or $5,000 a day profit. There really is no difference. If you were to ... for me personally, these dating offers that I promote, I promote in big countries like United States, UK, Canada, I focus on heavy traffic volumes. A lot of people that I talk to who are newbies they say something like, "I just want to promote this offer in this little itty bitty country somewhere."

I'm like, "Don't waste your time." Because if you were to get your campaign perfected and actually get it working, that little country only has potential to make you $100 a day profit at its maximum because there's just so much traffic there. If you go to the United States you might not be able to take the whole pie, but you get a small slice of United States. That small slice is bigger than that entire pie of that little small country. Do you get what I mean? Like I said just getting things dialed in and working [crosstalk 00:23:13]. Then you just ramp it up.

My suggestion is don't be afraid of competition. That's just a sign that's proving that there's money being made in that particular country or that particular traffic source. When it comes to traffic sources focus on big traffic sources, you know The Google's, the Facebook's. What I focus on a lot is the adult traffic networks because there's a ton of adult traffic. I'm not necessarily caring about what type of traffic it is as long as it's quality traffic. As long as the people there, the eyeballs that see my ads there are actually people that click and convert and purchase and generate leads. That's all that matters to me. I wouldn't care if it's Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Google, it doesn't really matter where as long as it's a huge source of traffic.

That's the main thing because look, at the end of the day when it comes to media buying it's kind of like everyone wants to do the big buys. Everybody wants to make $10,000, $20,000 a day. The only way you can make $10,000, $20,000 a day profit off any traffic source is if you had the ability to spend that much a day there. If you're working with a traffic source that only allows you to spend $200, $300 a day the chances of you actually turning that into a five figure profit per day [camp 00:24:30] monster, it's relatively small. I focus on huge traffic sources. When it comes to the adult stuff, I focus on two sites. These are basically galleries, you know sites where people are watching these videos. I would go ahead and place ads and display ads on the side. That's what I do.

The advice for newbies is focus ... well narrow it down, focus on large traffic sources. Don't be scared of competitive areas. It's just showing you that it works there, that people are making money there. Test early, test small and scale it up from there. When it comes to me ... right now a lot of people don't know it, but I spend ... I have spent over a million dollars a month on paid advertisements just with adult alone consistently. I know what I'm talking about when it comes to media buying on a large level, but I also started off as the guy spending $50 a day, $100 a day. I understand what's that like too. When I test new traffic sources, I'm the same guy. I'm testing $100 here, $50 here.

To get to that level like I said it's going to take time. You just got to be devoted and build your tolerance and not worry about the next man's success or the next man's ... or how much money they're spending on ads. Just focus on yourself. Someone else's success doesn't mean it's your failure. It's like you got to work, stay dedicated. The first 10 campaigns you run are probably going to fail. The next one after that might be the winning campaign that turns everything around and you recoup all your losses. That's just how it is. It's almost like a little gamble in a sense, but paid traffic is the most predictable, the most sustainable, scalable type of business model I think compared to SEO. I'm not talking about SEO. It has a great place, but anybody that does SEO knows that it can be very unpredictable and it can be slow. It can be slow to get results. You can spend weeks trying to ...

Cindy: Yeah, media buys you can just ...

Tuan: Media buy you just [crosstalk 00:26:27]

Cindy: Get it right and you can scale, yeah. Before we head out, I was just thinking do you have any advice to share about tracking. How do you track your ads? Do you ... you know ... obviously you need to know where the sales are coming from, where the traffic is actually coming from. How do you manage that? Any advice you ...

Tuan: I'm really glad you brought that up because I almost forgot to mention that. It's very important. If you're doing media buying and you're doing it blindly just kind of running ads and just guessing to see what works. Don't do that. Don't ever do that. You need to be tracking every single thing you do. You need to be tracking every single variable, every single metric that you can possibly track. Which is what banners are being clicked. Which landing pages are being clicked through. What offers are converting?

Here's another thing, when you promote an offer that same offer might have 10 different variations of the same offer. The product owner might create several variations of their offer page or their sales page just to see which one works better. You need to test that as well. Don't just test one single offer. Test multiple offers and test multiple variations of that offer sale page because there might be a video sales page. There might be a long copy page. There might be whatever type of page that converts better than next. You won't know unless you test, but you won't know if you don't track what's working.

There's different tools out there. A lot of people know some of these tools. There's CPV Lab that's basically an affiliate tracking plat ... a click tracking platform. There's Volume, that's a huge one. There's just so many in the space coming out. I think that when it comes to which one I should use, you should definitely pick one that works great for you as user interface wise. Because something might work great for someone else, but the interface might be just clunky and not just mesh well with how you like to work versus something else that you use that you like. Someone else says, "No, that's not the newest, coolest thing on the block. Why are you using that?" At the end of the day as long as it tracks your clicks, which banners and tracks your conversions, you're good to go.

Definitely pick up a tracking platform and they're relatively cheap nowadays. There's stuff that's month to month, $99 a month. Some of them are like one time fees. You self host it and put on your servers and you manage it yourself. It's relatively not expensive and if you're doing any type of paid advertising it's just part of the business. It's a must have. If you're not using one you're really just shooting in the dark and there's just no way that knows what's working.

Cindy: Yeah, that's right. [crosstalk 00:29:10] Most of those have free trials and stuff so you can give yourself a 30 day challenge. Get yourself, you know, get started. Actually really dive into it and try it out, but yeah tracking is really important which I think a lot of people ...

Tuan: It's really important and it is complicated. Like anything else there's a small learning curve, but once you know how to set up your offers and tracking links and you know how to use this and that and you know how to pull reports and look at your data. It doesn't take long.

Media buying can sound complicated, but in reality it's not rocket science. You can learn this particular skill relatively fast by just launching a few campaigns. Understanding your tracking. Understanding how to look at reports. Understanding how to optimize. It's one of those things where people are hesitant to do it because they feel that it's some rocket sciencey type of thing where it's just too complicated, but it's not. I can tell you I'm not smarter than anybody else on this call who's listening into this. It's just I spent the time to learn that skill set. It's like using Photoshop or using Dreamweaver. It's like these are complicated things, these are so advance and you spend about a week or two doing it and it's simple after that. When it comes to media buying definitely expect the learning curve, but embrace it because it's really powerful. There's a lot of things we do with it.

Cindy: Fantastic. Well thank you so much Tuan for being here on the show. I appreciate all the input that you've had. I'm sure that a lot of people are probably ready to go out and jump into some media buys and give it a try. Give it a good try guys. If you've got any questions or comments please come over and leave some comments. If you've got any questions for either of us post them on the blog over at 7 Figure Furnace and we would love to be in touch with you. Thank you so much for being on the show.

Tuan: Thank you Cindy for having me.

Cindy: Alright, take care man. Bye.

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