

The Outrageous *Beauty of CPA*



***Start Making Money by
Giving Stuff Away!***

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Introduction

No matter what your skill level is right now when it comes to Internet marketing, or selling over the internet, CPA is one way you can earn money without actually having to sell a single thing. Yes, you did read that correctly - you can make money online without having to make a single sale.

How is this possible? Simple: CPA or Cost Per Action is an advertising platform that allows companies to pay a commission when certain actions are carried out which do not always have to be sales. While CPA is a great way for advertisers to make sales it is also a brilliant method to generate leads. You may ask yourself why anyone would pay to generate a lead and this is a valid question.

What you need to understand is that it costs a company 6 times more to find a new customer than it does to retain a customer. Likewise, a repeat customer is apt to spend at least 30% more than a new customer. Taking these factors into consideration, a list of highly targeted leads will be much more profitable for a company than if they were to simply try and sell their product as a one off.

By building a list of targeted leads, the advertiser can market to the same people on a regular basis, already knowing that they are responsive therefore, even if they make an initial investment in building their list, they will generate a much greater revenue over the lifetime of a customer from a list of laser targeted prospects than they would by simply paying a sales commission and making a one off sale.

The advantage CPA has over other advertising models is that it allows companies to pay only if a customer has actually bought something or signed up for their list. This subscription can come under the guise of giving away free products or information, contests, surveys and much more. The fact that they pay only per action means that advertisers can pay a much higher commission per unit than is possible with other advertising platforms like pay per click.

For example, where you can only expect to earn anywhere from a few cents per click to possibly a few dollars, if you are extremely lucky with Adwords for example, CPA commissions can easily net you anywhere from \$1 to even \$150 per action, depending on the action and the promotion. Therefore, if a single person signs up per day for an offer you are promoting and the offer pays out \$40 per action, you can make over \$1,000 per month. Compare that to trying to make the same amount of money with PPC. You would need, in most cases, more than 100 clicks per day to even come close to the same figures.

Even if you consider a meager 1% conversion rate, with CPA you would need approximately 100 visitors per day whereas PPC would need 10,000 and you still wouldn't come close to the same earning potential. It takes a lot more work to drive 10,000 visitors to your site on a daily basis than it does to drive 100.

Now that you understand why CPA is such an excellent way to make money online and why advertisers are happy to pay such high commissions, let's look a little closer at how CPA works and how you can make money with it.

How CPA Works

CPA advertisements are centralized by specialized companies that are the equivalent of online media brokers, known as CPA networks. A company approaches a CPA network and negotiates to have their advertisement placed in the network for publishers to subsequently place on their websites. You are the publisher.

As previously mentioned, the advertiser has one of two goals, to make a sale or to build a list of qualified leads. Many opt for building a list as they know that this is the best approach for a sustainable business model that will generate revenues for many years, versus a one-off sale.

The advertiser will provide all the marketing materials, from graphics to text for emails and more, and the campaign will run until, either a certain number of actions has been completed, ergo 500 people have signed up for their list, or until a certain date of expiry. The latter is usually the most common, though.

Commission Structure

The commission you receive for promoting these offers can be either a flat fee or it can work on a percentage basis. Percentages are usual in the case of the action being a completed sale and flat fees are most common for other actions. However, you will find that flat fees are *the* most common as most CPA offers focus on list building.

CPA Offers

There are many types of CPA offers and the main difference between them, besides the product they are promoting and the commission, lies in the action that a prospect is required to take. The longer and more complicated the action a visitor has to take, the higher the commission will be.

E-mail Submits

The most simple CPA offers, e-mail submits simply require prospects to sign up with a valid email address for which you receive a commission. The payout is usually quite low per lead but the conversion rate is quite high because entering an email address is pretty easy. E-mail submits are great for beginners to get the hang of CPA because you can learn the ins and outs of the system but still make some decent money while you are learning.

Zip Submits

These are practically the same thing as e-mail submits except that prospects are required to enter a valid ZIP code.

Short Form Offers

These require slightly more information from leads than e-mail submits, including name, date of birth, gender and address. They usually don't require prospects to sign up with their credit card details and the commission is somewhat higher than email or zip submits.

Long Form Offers

These are some of the most difficult CPA offers to promote as they require a lot of information, with prospects having to sometimes fill out a three page questionnaire. This obviously means that the conversion rate will be much lower, however, the commission is also much higher as prospects who stay to fill out the form are usually highly relevant and qualified leads.

Downloads

These involve the prospect downloading software that contains advertising, however, it is not considered malware or spyware because it can be removed at any time. You get paid for every download of free software.

PIN Submits

These offers require the prospect to enter a mobile phone number, to which a PIN will be sent. They then have to enter the PIN and they can then download a ring tone, or will receive some other incentive. The commission ranges from \$2 to \$10 per PIN entry.

Free Trials

There has been a lot of negative publicity around free trials due to some advertisers employing less than honest practices. They would require a person to sign up with their credit card details to receive a so called free trial but they would then be automatically billed for more of the product or service without informing them that they would be re-billed.

However, there are still plenty of free trial offers available that conform to FTC regulations which state that a prospect needs to be clearly informed that they will be re-billed. Clients must also be able to easily cancel at any time.

Incentivized Offers

These are also an excellent choice for beginners, because advertisers essentially allow publishers to offer prospects an incentive to take the action. The incentive can be anything from free information to gifts or cash. For example, if you are promoting a CPA offer that pays out a \$20 commission, you could offer a \$10 gift card to your prospects in return for them signing up for the offer and you would still make a \$10 profit per unit.

The Beginning

Since you now have a basic understanding of how CPA works and how you can earn commissions, it's now time to look at how you can sign up with a CPA network. You will hear of many people who have difficulty getting accepted into CPA networks and are even afraid to apply because of horror stories they have read online.

However, you don't have to worry because once you understand what CPA networks want you will be able to easily get accepted to any network you wish.

What CPA Networks Want

What do CPA Networks want? Well, they want to make money, just like you. This means that they have to keep their clients happy by offering them targeted leads that convert.

You probably have heard that CPA networks only want experienced affiliates that have been successful with CPA in the past and they aren't interested in beginners. This statement is not entirely accurate. While they need experienced affiliates, they also need to work with people who are starting out because there simply aren't enough experienced affiliates to go around.

What CPA networks want to avoid is people who generate false leads, using less than honest methods. This practice hurts everyone, from the advertisers, to the networks and ultimately affiliates. The reason is that the more false leads an advertiser has to pay out for the higher their cost

per sale will be and the higher their risk as well. This means that they will eventually pay lower commissions due to lost revenues and higher costs which will equate to both affiliates and networks losing money in the long run.

Applying

The application process is quite straightforward and simply requires you to fill out a form with your information. You will need to enter your full name, address, website and email address, at the very least. It is recommended that you use a professional email address, namely one that isn't from a free system such as Gmail or Yahoo Mail, as you may not be taken too seriously if you use the latter.

If you don't have a website, you needn't worry because you can specify in the observation box that you will be building websites around the CPA offers the network has.

The next step is "the phone call", which seems to be quite scary to some people. However, there is absolutely no need to worry, because it is simply a screening process for the network to be able to separate the wheat from the chaff. In other words, it's meant to be a deterrent to those who would use dishonest practices to generate false leads.

The CPA network essentially wants to know two things, namely how you will drive traffic to their advertisers and which offers you wish to promote. You will also be asked other questions such as how much experience you have with CPA and how you found their network.

The key is to be honest, even if you are a beginner because as long as you will not be employing any dishonest techniques to drive traffic, you

won't have any trouble. As long as you drive targeted traffic to their advertisers that converts, the network will be very happy because their clients will be happy.

When deciding which offers you would like to promote you don't have to worry about being limited to a certain niche, even if you name one because as soon as you are accepted you will have access to all of that network's CPA offers. If you aren't certain of what you would like to work with simply explain that you will be choosing the offers and the building websites around those offers.

If you want to improve the likelihood of getting accepted by CPA networks, it is often a good idea to come up with a plan to drive traffic and then call them yourself. This shows that you are eager to work with them and also, even if you are a beginner, that you have plenty of potential.

Choosing the Best Offer to Promote

Once you have been accepted, the next step is to decide on an offer to promote. You need to consider factors such as the niche, conversion rate and the target market.

One important tip to remember is to stick to very hungry markets where a lot of money is spent, even if the competition is tough. Even though advice that you should stick to less competitive niches abounds, you need to stick to markets where there is money and traffic if you want it to be worth your while. While they may be competitive, niches like Forex, golf, credit cards and similar markets have a lot of traffic and money, which is where you too want to be.

It's a bit like the difference between casting your net in the ocean where there are lots of fish and casting your net in a pond, where there is one fish. In the first scenario it may take a little while longer to catch the fish, but when you do, you will catch a lot of fish. In the second scenario, however fast you may catch that one fish, it's still only one fish and then the pond will be empty.

Market Research

So, now you need to find those hungry markets but don't worry, because finding a good niche is not difficult. There are plenty of places you can research for free and you will come up with lots of potential niches to work with.

eBay and Amazon

eBay and Amazon are two highly popular websites that will provide you with lots of information on which niches and products are extremely popular and selling well. Whilst eBay will give you information mainly on physical products, Amazon can also give you a good snapshot of the information market.

For example, with Amazon you can research the popularity of various hobbies, which is an area that people usually spend money without thinking too much about it. When people are passionate about something, rational thinking tends to fly out the window and Amazon can help you research those hobbies by looking at the magazine section. The more magazines dedicated to a certain niche, the more money people are willing to spend.

Both of these websites are also excellent sources for keywords, but that will be covered under the keyword research section.

Meetup.com

Another valuable source of information is meetup.com which is a site where people create and join groups based on anything from professional to personal interests and geographical location. It is an excellent place to research various niches and their feasibility because the more members a group has the more popular it is. If there are a large number of groups dedicated to a certain hobby or activity, then you can be sure that niche will be profitable.

Identifying the Offer & Testing Conversion Rates

You have two options when it comes to researching and choosing CPA offers to promote. You can either build your website around an existing CPA offer after you have done your research or you can look for an offer to match a niche you have already researched.

An excellent source to identify affiliate offers, which includes everything from traditional CPA offers to various affiliate programs, like ClickBank, is offervault.com. This website is essentially a directory for all offers online and you can search either by keyword or category.

Offervault.com provides all the pertinent information about an offer, from action required to the level of the commission and even suggestions for keywords that can be used to promote the offer. It is also free, but you do need to create an account to be able to access the information. However, the time you save is definitely worth receiving a few emails from them per month.

Once you have picked out your offer, you need to test for conversion rates. You can ask your affiliate manager about conversion rates, but your best bet is to test it yourself. You can do this in one of two ways.

First, you can set up a website, drive traffic and then determine the conversion rates. While this may take a while, the advantage is that it doesn't require much in the way of an investment. On the other hand, you can use a platform like Yahoo's pay per click platform to quickly test conversion rates.

The advantage of using Yahoo over other PPC systems, like AdWords, is that Yahoo allows you to use affiliate links in your ads. This means you won't have to build a website, drive traffic to it and then hope people click through to the CPA offer you are promoting. You will be driving traffic straight to the offer and it will prove a better and faster gauge of the offer's conversion rates.

If you do decide to build your own website, you can use a traffic tracking system such as Google Analytics, to track your ad conversion rates. If you want more data than Google provides, you can also consider Hypertracker.com, a paid analytics tool that allows you to track every link you put out on the web and even individual actions visitors take on your website. This information is very useful for helping you increase your conversion rates.

Keyword Research

The next step is building a list of keywords you will use to drive targeted and qualified traffic. The ideal keyword will have a good search volume, low competition and is a buyer's keyword. Of course, it can take a while to find the ideal keyword, but a little patience and work will pay off in the end.

Rather than targeting a keyword with a lot of monthly searches but also a high number of competing pages, your best option is to target a number of keywords that have a lower search volume but also less competition. For example, rather than targeting a keyword with 60,000 searches per month but over one million competing web pages, which could take years to rank for, you are better off targeting 10 keywords in

the same niche with 6,000 searches per month, each, that have fewer competing pages.

A good rule of thumb is to target keywords that have no less than 3,000 searches per month and no more than 50,000 competing pages. You can determine the number of competing pages by searching for your keyword in quotes with Google search.

Another search you should run to determine the degree of competition is to search for your keyword in the title of a site. This will reveal your true competition because entering a keyword in the title of a site is an important component of SEO which means that the site is most likely owned by an internet marketer. To conduct this search use the following string in Google: *intitle: your keyword here*. You should focus on keywords that have maximum 10,000 competing pages with the term in the title.

You can use either the free keyword research tool from Google, which is quite accurate and effective. However it can be time consuming which is why you should consider a paid keyword research tool. The latter will streamline your keyword research as it will provide all of the information you need from search volume to competing web pages. Some popular examples of paid keyword research tools are Keyword Elite and Market Samurai (though the basic version of Market Samurai is free).

The Value of Quality Content

Now that you have your niche, offer and keywords, it's time to build your website. What is important to remember is that your website plays an important role in how well your traffic will convert. This means that you need to provide quality information and compelling content if you want your visitors to stick around and click through to the CPA offer.

You may be tempted by all the automated systems that allow you to gather information from other sites and add to your own, this isn't exactly the best long term solution, nor is it a sustainable business model. The problem is that as soon as people see that your content makes little sense they will leave as fast as they can. So, even if you have thousands of pages indexed in the search engines, you could still be losing money.

You have to remember that your goal is to keep visitors on your site to increase the likelihood of them clicking through to the CPA offer which translates into you earning your commission. How likely are they to stick around if all you provide is garbage on your website? While you think you may be saving time and money by posting low quality content, you are, in fact, losing a whole lot more than you are saving.

This is simply because you will have to drive much more traffic to get the same results that top quality content would provide. Not only does this mean more time but it also means more money, especially if you are using paid traffic generation techniques. Therefore, content truly is king, queen and probably the entire royal family, including distant cousins.

Traffic Generation

Effective traffic generation is critical to becoming profitable with CPA, or any other type of online marketing. Therefore, if you implement and master a few of these techniques you will definitely be ahead of the game. There are many ways you can drive traffic to your site and quite a few of these will be covered below. However, the best approach is to master them one at a time, or you may find yourself tackling too many tasks at one time. It's better to do one thing well rather than many poorly.

Words, Words, Words

Article marketing is probably one of the most utilized traffic generation techniques online. However, using words and content to drive traffic shouldn't be limited solely to article directories because the adage that the pen is mightier than the sword is quite true. The most important thing you need to remember is that the more compelling your content is and the more value it provides to your readers, the easier it will be to convince them to click through to your site to read more.

By providing value to your prospects before asking for anything in return, you are essentially breaking down the mental blocks people have in place when it comes to advertising. Traditional advertising is losing a lot of its efficiency because people hate being sold to. So, if you offer something first, they are more likely to trust you and want to do business with you.

Article Directories

Article directories have lost much of their effectiveness when it comes to driving traffic to your website and are now used by many people mainly for back-linking and SEO. This is because there are a lot of article directories online now that provide poor quality content and people tend to avoid them.

However, there are some larger directories that are still quite effective, such as *EzineArticles.com*, *Suite101.com* and *AssociatedContent.com* to name a few. These directories, though, are only as effective as the content you write, thus, the more compelling and interesting your content is the more chance you have of people wanting to visit your site to learn more.

One vital tip in writing effective articles for directories is to use the resource box effectively. Most people are tempted to put a shortened version of their resume in the resource box and then they wonder why they don't get any clicks. Your resource box should essentially be an invitation to readers to click through to your site to find out more.

This means that your article should not come to a clear conclusion that will make people think there is nothing more you can offer them on the subject. Your articles should ideally flow into your resource box and then invite readers to visit your website to read more on the subject. If you take this approach you will find that your click through rate increases significantly.

Forums

One highly effective yet just as overlooked source of traffic is any forum that is part of your niche. The key is to provide helpful posts that contain valuable information. You don't want to blatantly advertise as this will put off your prospects. However, if you take the same approach of providing value first, you will find that people will want to learn more about you and will click through to your website.

You can find forums in your niche by running a search in Google. Before you start posting, though, make sure you are familiar with the rules of the board because some have strict regulations when it comes to outbound links. You don't want to get started on the wrong foot.

Document Sharing

Another excellent way to drive traffic that will allow you to repurpose content you have already used is to upload free reports to document sharing sites. For some reason, it appears that content posted on document sharing sites ranks much quicker and higher in Google than even article directories. Another advantage is that since the content is uploaded in encrypted PDF format, spiders won't be able to crawl it and you will avoid any real or perceived duplicate content issues.

The duplicate content penalty **doesn't exist**, in fact, as stated by Google themselves. However, not all article directories will allow you to post the same article to another site and document sharing sites allow you to overcome this issue quite easily.

Blog Commenting

Blog commenting can also be an effective source of traffic, however, you also need to be careful. Even your comments need to be interesting and compelling, or people will not want to click through to your site to read more. Therefore, you don't want to drop one liners on other people's blogs simply telling them their content is great.

You need to find relevant blogs to your niche and actually read the content. Then you want to post comments that are useful and provide value, which also show you have really read the content. You will be killing two birds with one stone because you will be able to drive traffic to your blog as well as start building a relationship with the owner of the blog.

Why would you want to build a relationship with the owner of a competing blog? Simply because the internet is a big place and there is room for everyone. Those who work together tend to make more money in the long run, so you need to consider building relationships for the future.

Video Marketing

Video marketing is becoming quite popular as more and more internet marketers are integrating it into their marketing strategies. You can use videos to either repurpose existing content or create brand new advertising videos.

One way to repurpose articles or reports with video is by creating a slideshow presentation of your content and effectively reading the report

out loud. There are a variety of resources online that allow you to feed in written content and will convert it into a video automatically with a computerized voice reading the article or report. One such service is *articlevideorobot.com* which is not free, but it does offer a free 14 day trial.

Another way you can use video marketing is by creating short videos that advertise your site. The best way to do this is to use photos or short clips from your niche, combine them with music and end them with an invitation for people to visit your site to learn more. You can either use video editing software such as *Camtasia* or you can opt for online services that will help you create the video quicker.

One such website is *animoto.com* which allows you to create free 30 second videos with various effects and music. They also offer premium plans that allow you to create longer videos and give you access to a comprehensive library of royalty free music which can save you quite a bit of time and money in the long run.

Once you have completed your videos, the next step is to upload them to popular video sharing sites such as Youtube.com. Of course, the more sites you upload your videos to, the more traffic you will be able to generate.

Below is a list of sites where you can embed your videos to increase exposure and generate even more traffic.

- <http://www.flixya.com>
- <http://www.spike.com>
- <http://www.instructables.com>
- <http://www.myspace.com>
- <http://www.uvouch.com>
- <http://www.ulinkx.com/>
- <http://www.myvidster.com>
- <http://www.gemzies.com/>
- <http://www.infectiousvideos.com/>
- <http://www.videosift.com>
- <http://www.vewgle.com>
- <http://www.tagged.com>
- <http://www.wonderhowto.com>
- <http://www.maxior.pl>
- <http://www.nowpublic.com>
- <http://www.vodpod.com>
- <http://www.mefedia.com/add.php>

You can also use a free service at TubeMogul.com which allows you to upload to a wide range of video directories. It also gives you the ability to track your videos so you can determine their efficiency.

Social Media

Social media is becoming an important part of marketing strategies used both by traditional and online businesses. This is because people are

relying more and more on it as a form of communication, both to make new friends and stay connected with their current friends. In fact, platforms like *Twitter* are even more popular than cell phones nowadays.

Social media can be used to increase your exposure as well as drive traffic. The first thing you should do is social bookmark your online content, from videos to podcasts and articles on sites such as *Reddit*, *Delicious*, *Digg* and *StumbleUpon*. This will increase the number of incoming links to your site and help you rank higher as well as generate traffic. Remember that the more compelling your content is the more people will want to read more and click through to your site.

Twitter is a platform you should definitely be using in your online marketing. It not only allows you to connect with your target market but it can also provide valuable information to help you understand them. The more you understand your prospects, the better you will be able to meet their needs and the more money you will be able to make.

You can use *Twitter* to build a relationship with your customers and since people prefer to do business with people they know and trust, this is a critical component to anyone looking to make money online.

Conclusion

As you can no-doubt see, CPA is an excellent way to make money online without having to make any sales.

Do keep in mind that you should not put all your eggs in one basket. In other words, don't focus on a single offer or website because if something happens, such as the advertiser goes out of business or changes their offer, or your site gets de-indexed, you could lose your whole income. This is why you need to have a good mix of websites covering various niches so that if something happens to one of them you will have plenty more to take its place.

However, to succeed with CPA, you simply need to create compelling content, drive traffic to your website and then entice people to fill out your CPA offers. Since most of them offer people an incentive to do so, this will not be difficult at all and that, my friend, is the **Outrageous beauty of CPA!**