

Google AdSense vs. Affiliate Marketing Programs

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Author: [Artem Gassan](#)

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For most people trying to make money online with their websites, they are looking for the easiest solution that will reward them with the highest payout. This usually means that they will implement Google AdSense or a combination of affiliate marketing programs. But which is more effective, and which should you choose for your website?

Google AdSense

Many webmasters, especially those who are familiar with Google's other products, start with Google AdSense. [AdSense](#) is a contextual advertising solution and is popular because it is:

- easy to sign up. There are very few approval requirements.
- easy to use. To get started with AdSense, you only need to add some simple JavaScript code to a web page, and voila, relevant ads are displayed.
- maintenance free. When you change your content, you don't need to update your ads, they will also change without requiring any maintenance.

But there are some drawbacks, the biggest of which is the payout.

For most ads, AdSense works on a cost-per-click (CPC) basis. What this means is that when a visitor to your website clicks on an AdSense advertisement you will get paid a portion of the amount that advertisers pay for the click. Unfortunately, as the [Google AdSense documentation](#) states, they don't disclose the exact revenue share. So you don't really have a clear idea of how much you can expect to make.

But worst of all, the per-click rate is fairly low. So unless you have a significant amount of traffic, you cannot expect to make a descent income with AdSense ads.

Affiliate Marketing Programs

As a result of the low payouts from AdSense, many webmasters turn to affiliate marketing programs. Like AdSense, these programs enable you to make money by adding code to your website, but there are three key differences:

1. more flexibility to choose ads. Most affiliate marketing programs enable you to select ads for specific brands or products. This works very well if you link to a product or service that you have written about in an article.
2. higher payouts: commission-based, lead-based, or click-based revenue structure. With most affiliate marketing programs, there are a variety of different ways that advertisers will pay you. The most common is with a commission. (If a visitor from your website purchases something at the website that you have promoted, then you get a commission

for that sale.) Additionally, click-based earnings are typically greater. So these programs give you greater ability to make more money.

3. well-defined commission/payment amounts. One of the most useful features is that you always know how much you will get if you make a sale, generate a lead, or refer someone via a click. When you sign up for a program, you will get a well outlined document which states the commission or monetary payout that you will receive per action.

But of course, there are drawbacks to affiliate marketing programs as well. First, there are more eligibility requirements for acceptance to a program. Some affiliate marketing programs, for example, require an acceptable website to be within a certain industry, maintain a high level of traffic, or achieve a specified minimum Google PageRank.

And second, affiliate marketing programs typically require regular maintenance. For example, you will need to update your ads if they become outdated or if you want to freshen up your promotions.

So Which Should You Choose for Your Website?

To achieve the highest possible revenue from your website, you should probably choose affiliate marketing. It is an ideal choice because it can be profitable whether or not you have a lot of traffic. However, if you don't have the technical know-how to update your ads on a semi-regular basis (or as needed) and/or cannot get accepted to affiliate marketing programs, AdSense will be a more appropriate solution.