



## Affiliate Advantage

### Jeremy Palmer: The Million Dollar Man

By: Eric Reyes

Jeremy Palmer knew he had the entrepreneurial spirit. He just hadn't found the right thing to let it soar.

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He knew there was more to life than his mid-level job at a small financial services company. As a Web developer, in 2002 he launched website MeetYourMatch.com in hopes that it could generate a little extra cash for his wife and two kids in Utah and give him an outlet to pursue his independent business ideas.

He sold things on eBay. He sold some of his possessions just to get his affiliate sites off the ground. He wasn't exactly sure of what he was doing. That was 2001. Fast forward to his current life as an affiliate marketer and he would say his wings are no longer clipped – in fact, in 2005 he made \$1 million in commissions.

He will be the first to say that he had never envisioned this life for he and his family. In the beginning, he worked part time at night and on weekends on a dating site but it wasn't making much money. He loved building websites but didn't see a lot of cash in assembling other people's sites. His original dating site went up in 2002, a time when dating on the Internet was just about to explode and Palmer felt like he had a killer domain name – with MeetYourMatch.com. "I was naive to think I could compete with Yahoo personals," he says. "It was a great failure for me."

Meanwhile, his wife had a good career in the financial services industry – had her own office and at one point was the breadwinner for the family. The company he was doing Web design for had an affiliate program through Commission Junction – but he wasn't involved in that part of the business. The guy who ran it, though, started to tell him the numbers. Some of these people were making up to six figures a month. "So I threw up some links on my site," he says, and in six months he was matching his salary in commissions.

He had finally touched that entrepreneurial magic and he dove into it head first. Today Palmer has a network of more than 100 websites (he doesn't even know the exact number), an e-book on how he made it and is Commission Junction's 2005 Horizon Award Winner and a Yahoo Search Marketing Ambassador. His domains include FreeBudgetingSoftware.com, DatingSiteCritic.com, CreditRepairGuy.org and, of course, the site for his e-book: QuitYourDayJob.com (see page 44).

How does he do it with so many sites? The key, he says, is to work with templates that need very little manual tweaking. He has 50 dating sites that are virtually the same – they are just targeted by geography. But, Palmer says, it's not about how many websites you have or following a more-is-more philosophy. "Each page should do just one thing," he says. "You don't want to overwhelm the customer with choices. You know, like when you go to call Dell and the first thing you hear is 30 options to direct your call. It takes you forever or you hang up before you get an answer."

The other main reason Palmer claims he's successful is because he goes the extra yard to reach out to the merchants. It satisfies his social nature, he says. He typically spends a few hours a day just talking to the merchant reps.

"I have their cell phone numbers and they have mine." He says that just talking to people is crucial to getting help and getting what you want from a merchant. Sometimes Palmer will fly out to see the

merchant or the company will send someone to meet with him. Of course, Palmer admits merchants don't do this for everyone, but, then again, he makes six figure commissions – that puts him in the upper stratosphere of earners. It's no wonder merchants will roll out the red carpet for him, especially when 80 percent of most merchant's affiliates are not earning enough to register a blip.

He says being a big earner just takes hard work. His day really isn't much different from most affiliates. Typically, Palmer starts his day by viewing his stats on CJ, LinkShare, etc. Then, he logs into Google AdWords to check on his costs. "I do have some spreadsheet systems that I made up to make it easier on myself and this way I can make bidding decisions based on that and see where my ROI from the previous day was." All of this, he says, is a way of tailoring your existing sites to make them better. "It is far easier to improve on existing websites than to launch a brand new site."

He's always looking for ways to improve things. "I probably differ from most in that I will build a website around a merchant's product and services instead of just throwing a link on my site – then throw a couple of hundred keywords at it."

Once traffic looks promising, he will expand. It could take few days to a few weeks to see if it is worth it. He claims that he's got more patience than most affiliates and he believes that's what helps him to see if ROI kicks in and to wait for the results.

Palmer then spends the rest of his work time building relationships – over chat, email or by phone talking to the merchants. It's his favorite part of the job.

"You want to know the dirty little secret of affiliate marketing?" he says conspiratorially. "I gained 30 pounds because you don't get a lot of exercise just sitting, building websites." He says it took a lot of hard work and sacrifice. He says he sold a favorite – and very expensive – racing bike and some of his personal gadgets – a road bike, Palm Pilot and cell phone – to get the business started.

"People buy into the hype and hope. I want to retire by the time I'm 30. So, in the beginning I was doing 20-hour days and still do some of those sometimes." The reason so many affiliates don't turn over the big numbers, according to Palmer, is because they are unwilling to do the tough work. He says you have to put in the labor on optimizing your site and making it eye-catching. He's constantly experimenting – putting up a site and throwing a few hundred keywords at it to see if it can bring numbers. [Continued on Page 2...](#)

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