



Cultural Trends Equal ClickBank Success

Are you thin enough? If you're American, odds are you have given that question serious thought – or at least a snap judgment in front of the bathroom mirror. American culture, if not Americans themselves, is obsessed with weight.

Supermarket checkout stands are lined with magazines displaying pictures of half-naked celebrities and models vying for our attention, along with headlines pitching the latest tips for losing the beer belly, pregnancy weight and the hottest diet that some washed up diva used to shed 20 pounds and lose 10 years. Odd, none of these mention Botox treatments or Hollywood plastic surgeons. Such magazines are placed directly above the candy bar rack, next to the soda pop cooler. It makes it easier to buy the magazines and enjoy it with a Butterfinger and Mountain Dew.

Understanding a culture – what people want and need – is one of the keys to becoming a successful ClickBank affiliate or product vendor. “People go to the Internet to get information or to solve a problem,” said Bob Dunlap, ClickBank’s director of marketing. “If you manage to make the right offer with the right product, it can pay off handsomely.”

Take Mike Geary, for example. Geary is a smart guy, earned a degree in science at a small college in Pennsylvania and got a good job working for an environmental consulting firm. In his spare time, he became a certified personal trainer and nutritionist. Now, with help from ClickBank – the largest online retailer for those engaged in developing, selling and promoting digitally downloadable products and services – his e-books and Web site on working out and fitness gross \$6 million a year. He hit it big, as a first time author, because his books tapped into a real need and demand in the market.

ClickBank manages all of the purchases and financial transactions Geary needed to launch his online business. Not only does ClickBank facilitate customer transactions, it provides the guaranteed tracking of sales and state-of-the-art fraud protection Geary needs to focus on writing and customer demand, rather than worrying about the back end of the business.

Working with clients as a personal trainer gave Geary a front row seat to the American obsession with weight and its love affair with supersized meals. Both factors have been a boon to the health club industry. In 2007, with more than 29,000 fitness clubs in the United States with 42.7 million members, the industry was pegged at nearly \$18 billion. That doesn't count the hundreds of millions spent on supplements, diets, magazines and books.

Geary's experience as a trainer and nutritionist gave him insight into what was and wasn't getting people the results they wanted, so he wrote a book.

"I never thought I would be an author," Geary said. "I wrote scientific and technical papers at my old job. In 2004, I got the idea and since then it has taken off."

Before he wrote his first book, *The Truth About Six Pack Abs*, Geary researched the Net. "I looked at what people were searching for on the Internet and nearly 90 percent of the questions were, 'How do I get six-pack abs, flatten my stomach and lose fat?' So I knew there was a demand. And, I thought there were a lot of misleading products out there such as the infomercials about ab belts. I wanted to cut through all this false information and show people the truth. That's how I came up with my first product that sells so well."

When Geary was ready with his book idea, he didn't go the traditional agent to publisher to market route. He went to ClickBank to help sell his e-book. "I like self-publishing because I make \$35-\$55 per book, opposed to \$.50 or \$.25, or whatever you get from a traditional publisher," Geary said. "Using ClickBank for my e-book has been very financially lucrative to me. If I had gone through a traditional publisher, the chances of getting approved and becoming a best seller would have been very slim. With an e-book, there is a much greater chance that it will actually make money. If you are not a celebrity or well known in your industry, it is very hard to go to the traditional publishing route and get noticed by a publisher."

In publishing an e-book, Geary has the ability to control *every* aspect of the book: from what is written, how it's written, when it's produced, how much it costs and what commission he pays ClickBank affiliates for promoting the book. Everything is under the discretion of the product vendor.

Another advantage e-books have over the traditional publishing route, Geary notes, is the ability to update the book based on customer feedback. "I have probably done it every couple of months and I'm always looking at reader feedback and how to improve the book. I can pretty much change it and upload a new PDF and there is my new version. If I went a traditional publishing route, there would be thousands of hard copies that I couldn't change."

Helping Geary sell his book is ClickBank's network of over 100,000 active affiliates. "One of ClickBank's greatest benefits is the product [Marketplace](#). Affiliates find me and they help drive a lot of traffic and sales to my site."

"I also like the fact that ClickBank automatically pays affiliate commissions," Geary said. "With the volume of sales I have now, if I had to pay commissions myself – as some companies require – I'd have to hire someone full-time to manage that."

With ClickBank as his partner, Geary has greater flexibility in his life. "The great thing about my ClickBank business is that I can go anywhere. I spent three months in Colorado

skiing. I spent a couple weeks in Mexico and just worked from my laptop. I do a lot of adventure trips. My success on ClickBank has allowed me to work from a laptop anywhere in the world.”

With his success, Geary offers some advice for e-book writers: passion for a subject is important. “If you come across as just going after money, the book will show that and won’t be as successful. You need to be really passionate about it and that will come through to customers and make that much more money.”