

Rosalind Gardner Interview

Birgit: Hello everybody. Today we have Rosalind Gardner on the line. She is going to be talking to us and giving us all kinds of secrets about how she runs her internet business. I have been looking so forward to interviewing you because it was years ago when my husband told me about you; a woman running an internet site; a dating site and she was making \$50,000/month and I thought, "Wow! That is really amazing!" I know that was a long time ago and you've definitely developed since that time and added on so many parts to your business, so I would really love to find out all about that today.

How did you actually start?

Rosalind: You mentioned the dating site and how I started the dating site; I actually was running a 3-page seat exchange site and therefore I thought I was qualified as a web master, and so when I saw a banner ad that said, "Web masters make money," I clicked on it and it took me to the one and only dating network. Basically it explained affiliate marketing. You send traffic to our site and if they buy a membership from us, we will pay you 50%.

That was back in the day and that was the one and only dating network that is now defunked, but as most people know, there are hundreds and hundreds of them online nowadays, so I still make money selling dating services. That is basically how I got started. The site was and is Sage-hearts.com; a dumb name. That was 10 years ago and it is Sage-hearts.com if anybody wants to see what a basic affiliate marketing site looks like.

Birgit: OK. That probably got you going onto affiliate marketing, because I think that is one of your main areas; right?

Rosalind: Yes. That is a total affiliate marketing site, and I do specialize still in affiliate marketing, for the specific reason that the merchant handles everything, basically and you just make the referral and if the visitor that you send from your site buys something or fills in a lead or whatever that is acquired by the merchant, then you are making money, but you don't have to handle product development or product shipment or storage; any of that other stuff that goes into being a merchant.

Birgit: I see that you have an affiliate handbook. What is that about and if I look through that, what does it tell me?

Rosalind: I started as an affiliate marketer in 1998 and what happened was that my business was profiled by, at the time, Corey Rudl and now Derek Gerhl's; "Secrets to their Success" monthly magazine; it is a monthly online magazine, and from that interview what happened was that I started getting questions; hundreds and hundreds of questions, and so what I decided to do is to write a book about affiliate marketing because there really wasn't a book on how to become an affiliate marketer at the time. I wrote a book about how I did affiliate marketing and how I was so successful with it. It is called "The Super Affiliate Handbook" and the subtitle is, "How I made \$436,797 in one year selling other people's stuff online." That figure is relevant to 2002 and the book was published in June of 2003 and has since really become the industry standard training manual. I have all sorts of friends who are affiliate managers or network managers who basically make their employee read that book, which is constantly being updated to reflect new technology and that sort of thing. They make their employees read the book before they start working for them.

Birgit: It saves a lot of time in explaining and you are the best at it so that is great.

Rosalind: I don't know if I am the best at it, but I do pretty good.

Birgit: That would be something really fantastic for anybody to go read through. What do you actually do in a day? If I were to say that I wanted to be an internet marketer; what are all the things I would have to get used to doing so I could sit here and envision in my day whether I would be doing some writing or doing this technology; what do you actually do in your typical day?

Rosalind: I don't know that I have a typical day because I am pretty lazy. I might take a day and work for 6 hours straight or something like that and then not work again for 3 days, and I can make it look like I am working every day because what happens is using blob technology, like most of your listeners have probably heard about blogs, which is just a way of publishing information online. It is a content management system, they are really easy to set up; it is just what people use instead of coding HTML nowadays. Everybody is blogging. What I do is I might write a couple of different blog posts in one day and then queue one up to go today and

one up to go tomorrow, one up to go... I will write 3 or 4 so they go for the next four days, and that kind of frees me up over the next couple of days to not do anything at all.

As an affiliate marketer, some of those blog posts would include endorsements for products that I am going to make money on; but not always thought because we don't like to overwhelm our visitors with nothing but product, product, product, product, and so what I do is I give a ton of information to the people who are looking for what is relevant to my websites. I have a website that is for web masters specifically that is called netprofitstoday.com. I run a travel blog at roamsters.com. I run the dating site... I might write a product endorsement for a new dating site. I might write about a new product that I am using as a traveler or I might just rant. On the travel blog not long ago I wrote about "The Jerk in 12F". It is just really all about communication; communicating with your site visitors and giving them interesting information that is useful to them.

Birgit: I am on your main (audio cuts out here – dead air from 6:37 to 7:10).

Rosalind: ... Oh wow! I never thought of that. Let me research it and then tell everybody about it, which is a great way to expand your network and your readership and every time you do that, you make more money.

Birgit: Do you have a lot of team members, or do you do it mostly on your own? Do you hire people from India? How many team members do you work with?

Rosalind: The only team member is my executive assistant, Joel, who lives in Maine and the only thing that he really does; he doesn't handle the affiliate marketing side of things. He manages customer requests that are relevant to my book and also a drop shipping site that I have. I have a drop shipping site about watches, and when an order comes through, he processes that order with the manufacturer of the watches. As a team, it is pretty small.

Birgit: That sounds so uncomplicated and easy. It just comes from you and your ideas and you write it up. Do you spend a lot of time researching what to promote to clients?

Rosalind: Not really. I blog about things that I am interested in, so I am going to be doing the research anyway, so once again it is just sharing information. On the travel blog for example, I talk about my Baggallini bags on a post

called, "I Love My Baggallini Bags" or something like that. These are products that I actually use.

Birgit: What site is that?

Rosalind: Roamsters.com. I just talk about stuff like that and if there happens to be an affiliate program where I can sell that product as well or promote that product as well, then for me that is just a bonus.

Birgit: That is a nice way to live your life to share the information that applies to you that you think other people would find interesting.

Rosalind: Absolutely, and that is what I recommend that anybody new to internet marketing do. What I find is that a lot of people think that they can make a lot of money selling internet marketing products or business opportunity products, but the problem with that is that they don't have any experience in the field and so they don't come across as being credible and so they are not going to really make a whole lot of money, but if they talk about their love of bird-watching and building bird houses and whatever else and something that they are interested in and they do every day like gardening or parenting or whatever, they are going to be far more interested in what they are doing and they are going to connect with people a lot better, and that is what you really want to do is create those connections; that is first and foremost.

Birgit: If I was an interior designer or a lawyer or a massage therapist, how can I use those skills to make money online? Would I write an e-book or what would I do?

Rosalind: You can do that too. If you write an e-book, now you become a merchant, but if we stick with affiliate marketing and you are an interior designer, what you can do is talk about design furniture placement; there are a million things within that particular category and those are things that you are going to be thinking about every single day, and the things that you can sell are; there are so many! There are so many merchants that are selling home furnishings and you could sell rugs or lamps or couches... any number of things that are relevant to that particular category.

With being a massage therapist; you could sell oils. There are thousands of merchants out there who have products and affiliate programs that you can join.

Birgit: So I don't actually have to go out and ship this stuff? I can go check, for example, the oils; check where there is an affiliate program that I can sign up and then they would look after all of that?

Rosalind: Exactly; and that is the real beauty of affiliate marketing, is that you don't have to ship any products and you don't have to deal with any of that mess. It is just basically sending you visitors to your site AFTER making a thorough product endorsement. That is another thing; you need to be honest. If you really like a particular oil, then tell them why you like the oil and what it will do for them... and go on from there, and then send them to the merchant site, and you are much more likely to make a sale.

As for joining programs; what I normally recommend is that people join the Commission Junction Affiliate Network that is at CJ.com and in there, I forget how many merchants they have listed in there, but it is the biggest affiliate network and so if you are looking for a product, it is most likely going to be within that affiliate network.

Birgit: So that is a one-stop shop that we can go to find out different affiliate programs?

Rosalind: Exactly, and the nice thing about Commission Junction is that they handle all of the payments. There are no worries about dealing with an individual merchant who may or may not pay you. They make sure that the merchant has enough money in their account to cover commissions and Commission Junction cuts the check at the end of the month.

Birgit: If I were going online and I saw a product that was not in Commission Junction, would you recommend that I still forge a relationship with that person and how would I do that?

Rosalind: That is a really good question. It all depends. What I would do is I would spend a little bit more time researching the merchant. If it is a big brand name; absolutely, no worries. They obviously have brand reputation which they don't want to ruin and it is so easy for anybody to say, "Oh my! So and so didn't pay me this month..." and that is going to be all over the net in no time at all and they are not going to do that.

If it is a smaller brand, then what I would do is I would once again research that and see who is promoting the product, and if you come up with a lot of different affiliates promoting that product, then it is probably OK. The other thing is that you can get in touch with the individual affiliates and ask what their experience is with that particular merchant.

Birgit: So my responsibility in this whole process would be then to have a list and have a way to keep communicating to the people on my list so that they know that this is what I believe in. How do I go about actually go about starting in creating a list?

Rosalind: I always recommend an autoresponder service called "Aweber". I have been using them for just about 10 years and they are fabulous. The service starts off at \$17.95/month and that is for the first 10,000 leads and then after that, for every 10,000 after that, you pay an additional \$9.95 and they are just absolutely great. So you put the autoresponder form on your site; you have seen them 100 or 1000 times where it says, "Name and email address..." or sometimes just an email address, and so once they sign up for that and sign up for your newsletter, then you send broadcast messages through the Aweber service or the other thing you can do is create an e-course; like a 5-part or 10-part or 30-part e-course that is delivered to your subscribers on a daily or weekly or whatever basis you want and that keeps them coming back to your site. Always have a link to your site within the email to encourage more visits because as people come back to your site and visit, the search engine is noticing that you are getting more traffic and that way you get more highly placed.

Birgit: Do you think that I could make some money in 6 months or... How would I be able to make tons of money in a 6-month timeframe or do you think it can be done sooner?

Rosalind: Well you could make money today, and it all depends on... I generally dislike that question because I don't know how much work and time somebody has to invest in a particular project, but if you have... Suppose you already have a lot of articles or something like that on a particular subject and so now you are just going to be placing them in your autoresponder or your blog or whatever, so you can build out your blog pretty quickly and start getting traffic, and if you have money to invest in paper-per-click advertising to drive traffic to your site today as opposed to waiting sometimes for the search engines to find you and start and sending traffic that way... It really all depends on what you are going to do and how you are going to do it. Sometimes it is faster and sometimes it is slower.

Birgit: Maybe now for people who are more established like somebody who is already making \$50,000 or \$100,000/year; how can I get to that million dollar mark? I know that you are definitely doing over that every year and

are there certain things I need to do to grow my business from \$50,000 or \$100,000/year to a million?

Rosalind: Just keep at it and diversify. Once you have a site to the point where it is really successful and you are happy with it; whether that means that you are making \$5000/month or \$10,000/month or whatever, it might be time to start a new site and then you can drive traffic from your original site to the secondary site if it is somewhat relevant to the first site.

Birgit: How do I do that?

Rosalind: Just by linking to your new site. I have links on my dating site; I have a link that says, "Web masters" that drives people to sign up for my netprofitstoday.com newsletters. Singles represent 50% of the population and I'm sure that there are people who are not single that are visiting that site as well, and so if they click on that webmaster link and join my Webmaster newsletter, then I am just adding to that database. I am just adding to that subscriber list. That is one way of increasing it.

Then there are so many different ways to market; I think I have 30 different ways to market your site in my book. I do three things all of the time, and then when I get the time, I extend my region to other forms of marketing including social media marketing which means using Twitter and Facebook; I drive people to my Facebook site where they can learn a little bit more about me and then they might find something on Facebook that they didn't find on one of my sites and be interested in that and they click on that and it brings it back to my site again and it just goes around and around.

Birgit: So you just connect everything together in one big marketing circle?

Rosalind: Exactly.

Birgit: What does Twitter do?

Rosalind: Twitter is kind of interesting. I have only just started playing with it a lot just recently, but it is at Twitter.com and you just basically say what you are doing at the moment. I had a post this morning that discusses the fact that I just recently had surgery and how I lost 9 pounds in 12 days. People might comment on that or whatever, and it just goes back and forth, and other people who see that comment may come to my Twitter profile and on my Twitter profile there is link to my main business card

site, which is RosalindGardner.com. From there they might visit my other sites.

Birgit: Do you work with joint venture partners?

Rosalind: All the time.

Birgit: How do you get those relationships started or working? Do you meet them in person or online?

Rosalind: I meet them all over the place. I speak at industry conferences and attend industry conferences and when I introduce myself... and they find out that I am a super affiliate, they are always really interested in getting me to promote their products, and otherwise they contact me through the support desk that I have; actually just as you did.

Birgit: Yes; that is what I did. I just emailed you what I wanted to do and see if you were interested.

Rosalind: Exactly; and most affiliate relationships can also be called joint ventures. I work with JV partners all of the time. That is how I make my money.

Birgit: This whole ___ I started because when I was looking and went to my first internet conference a year ago, I realized that there weren't any women really in the crowd; there were hardly any and there were no women speakers at the conference, and I thought, "There has to be some really good women in this business." Do you find the same thing when you around? Why would it be that there seems to be more guys doing this than women, or maybe I am just wrong about that?

Rosalind: There are lots of women in the business, but I have had the same experience as you where I have been one of the few women at a conference. Many times I have been the only female speaker at a conference. I think it is women's lives; they are less likely to get involved in self-promotion. Men are a little bit more chest-beating, if you will, than women are, and so they are not as likely to want to step on a podium and tell everybody what they have done. I think that women are just a little bit more quiet about what they are doing, but there are; if you take a good look online, you will find tons and tons and tons of women as super affiliate marketers doing really well as merchants and network CEOs; some the favorite affiliate networks are run by women. There is no shortage of women out there; you just have to look.

Birgit: So it doesn't how they are profiled at the speaker conferences, there are just not as many there, but definitely they are online doing their work.

Rosalind: Definitely; and I also think that depends too on which conference you are going to. If you go Affiliate Summit, I wouldn't say that half the speakers are women, but a large percentage of speakers are women.

Birgit: Is that a conference that is held every year?

Rosalind: That is a conference that is held 3 times a year. As a matter of fact, the winter one is held usually in Las Vegas in January and February. The summer conference is held on the eastern seaboard of the states in July or August and then they do another in the UK and I think that is usually in September.

Birgit: Can I get information about that from your site?

Rosalind: You most certainly can. At netprofitstoday.com I usually talk about it. When you are there just search for Affiliate Summit.

Birgit: Do you end up teaching people, like if I wanted to get trained by you, do you have a course that I could take?

Rosalind: Other than my book, I don't really have an established course. I am working currently with Anik Singal to teach blogging at blogclassroom.com, but other than that, I do telephone consultations; for some people I have set up like a package of 5 hours or 10 hours or whatever of consultation so that they have more access to me for less than my usual rate.

Birgit: Like on an individual basis if people really bug you? Is that what you mean?

Rosalind: Yes; kind of.

Birgit: If I was starting today, what would you recommend that I do? There are so many things so that might be a pretty tough question.

Rosalind: I would go back and say, "Start a blog". Get a host that offers the C-panel interface which is widely available. On my netprofitstoday.com site I recommend Bluehost which is a C-panel because it is so easy to install a blog from there. Seriously there are like 6 form blanks to fill in and your blog is up.

From there just start it on a topic that you are interested in.

Birgit: Does traffic come to my site just by having a blog?

Rosalind: It comes to your site more easily by having a blog as opposed to writing HTML pages, because blogs tend to be dynamic, and I use Wordpress blog and for whatever reason, the search engines just love blogs and you will get more traffic through blogging from the search engines. I also again recommend that people use pay-per-click search engine advertising to drive traffic to their sites.

Birgit: If I am blogging about how to invest for your retirement, let's say, then how would I use pay-per-click for that, or even if it is for an interior decorator, going back to that example. Can you explain pay-per-click to us?

Rosalind: Sure. Pay-per-click basically is; Google has a pay-per-click system and it is called Google Adwords and you can search on that. What you do is you pay a certain amount per click; whether it is 5 cents or 10 cents or something like that to drive traffic to your site. What I recommend is that you create an ad about a specific article that they have written or endorsement and send it to that particular page on their blog instead of sending it to the homepage. So let's say you are talking about area rugs and you have done an article about the best size of area rugs or something like that. You would write your ad for Google Adwords and you would select a price that you are going to pay or a maximum price that you are willing to pay for that particular ad, and write a title and description that says, "Area rugs..." or you could even run "Discount Area Rugs" or something like that and when people click on that ad, they go directly to that page and where they are going to learn about where they can get discounted area rugs.

Birgit: You already talked to us about so many different websites that you have; how do you actually keep track of them? Do you make a spreadsheet and write them all down and know that every so often you post content to it or... How do you actually organize and keep track when you have so many different sites?

Rosalind: That is a really good question, and I actually don't have that many sites. I have my business card site which is Rosalindgardner.com and I do personal and business stuff on that site, I have my dating sites, I have my travel blog and I have my webmasters blog, and that is about it. I blog when I feel like it, to be quite honest. I am probably most active on the netprofitstoday.com blog; and of course I have the site on which I sell my book which is superaffiliatehandbook.com and I have the watches site.

The watch site is windingway.com and I don't do anything with that site. Basically it is a static site that has a list of the site with pictures and anytime a sale comes through, Joel handles all of that so that is no concern for me. The superaffiliatehandbook.com site is pretty much static as well, and because I use Click-bank as a payment processor, the payments are handled automatically and the delivery of the e-book is automatic as well, so there is really nothing to do there, so those two sites are absolutely static for me; I don't do anything with them, and so I am really only left with about 3 sites.

Birgit: I thought that when you use pay-per-click that each time you would start a new sales letter for each product or something like that; but that is not exactly how it works?

Rosalind: Yes; if you are writing a new article or something like that, then you might want to start a new campaign on Google Adwords and just send traffic to that individual page right on your blog.

Birgit: So then it isn't that hard to keep track of the sites. You use Adwords? What sites do you go to so you can find out what keywords to use?

Rosalind: I use a service called Word Tracker and I talk about it extensively at Netprofitstoday.com because it is such a big part of what I do when I set up a new campaign to determine whether or not there is going to be market interest in it. What Word Tracker does in a nutshell is it shows you how many people are searching for a particular keyword, so that way it is easy to determine whether or not you should invest your time in promoting a particular product.

Birgit: When you mentioned about netprofitstoday.com, what else do you have on that site? Is that more for internet marketers to learn more specifically about the details of this business or... What kind of information would I find there?

Rosalind: Netprofitstoday.com is for webmasters, and although I do concentrate primarily on affiliate marketing which is what I specialize in; I make a lot of recommendations for merchants who may have affiliate programs. I talk about everything. I talk about blogging and I talk about how to get traffic to your site. I talk about training courses that are available and I share success stories and I make recommendations for hosting service, autoresponder services, content suppliers, different software that affiliate marketers and internet marketers will use in their businesses; I do all sorts of different things there.

Birgit: That sounds like a really valuable site.

When you do the affiliate marketing, I always heard that it is a 50/50 split. If I have a product, I get 50% and the other person gets 50%. How is that because you are also adding in products like a shirt or a watch; I'm sure that couldn't all possibly be 50%. Where does the money come from and in what kind of areas and what could I roughly expect to be making in the different areas?

Rosalind: 50% is a really nice commission split, but you are really only going to make that on information products and software that people sell online, which is downloadable and it doesn't cost them any additional money. They create the product once and they upload it and every sale they make they can share 50% of the sale with their affiliates.

Birgit: Would that be like your affiliate handbook?

Rosalind: That is correct; and I pay 50% on commission on that as well.

Birgit: So I could take that and sell that to my list and make 50%.

Rosalind: That is true, and if you went to superaffiliatehandbook.com and clicked on the word "affiliates", you would find all the information about promoting that particular product. However, with consumer goods, if you are selling a treadmill for example, obviously they are not going to give you \$1000 on a \$2000 treadmill because it costs them so much money to ship it and all of that other stuff. You might make 3% or 7% or something like that.

Birgit: So 3-7% for a product is pretty common?

Rosalind: Sure. It really all depends on the product. There are some that only pay 1% and there are some that pay 3% and there are some that pay 25%; it really depends on the product.

Birgit: What about for books? Do you use Amazon or you can use different sites for that?

Rosalind: I am an Amazon affiliate, but what I find is that there is not enough money to be made by promoting them extensively, so I don't do it very often.

Birgit: So just when it comes up and there is something really good that you think your lists would like to hear about?

Rosalind: Yes; if I read a book that I am absolutely thrilled with, then I will definitely promote that book, I will talk about that book and if it is a low-priced

product then I might make a buck or two per sale. On Roamsters just recently I promoted the book “A Thousand Places to See Before You Die”, and made a couple of sales from that; no biggie, but it was just something that I really wanted to share with my readers so it didn’t really matter that I wasn’t making a whole lot.

Birgit: On your site Rosalindgardner.com, I see that you just cram so much information on it and I wonder how you do that; like from a technical perspective?

Rosalind: It is all part of the blog technology. When you get in there; when you are in the blog interface, it is easy to create different categories. As you can see at the top I have business category, entertainment, health, personal musings, videos, and basically I only just started this blog so there is not a whole lot here yet to be quite honest.

Birgit: Maybe some of the other sites that you have; I see so many and I think, “Wow! How can she fit all of that on with this topic and that topic?” Each time I can click on it and I can learn so much and I am really fascinated with it. Do you post to that almost every day or just once in awhile and probably if you have been doing it for so long it has just accumulated to a lot of information?

Rosalind: Yes. On the netprofitstoday.com blog I try to post every , but I am not always successful at doing that. The Rosalindgardner.com blog; it depends, because it is a personal/business blog and so I will blog about my God Son and I will upload a video about him or something like that, and then I repurpose content as well, so something that I post on netprofitstoday.com I bring over to the Rosalindgardner.com blog as well.

Birgit: So you actually tell people a lot about your personal life? Isn’t that scary? That makes you such an open book?

Rosalind: I am not really worried about it. It is kind of like; that is the most interesting thing about bloggers is that they talk about anything and everything and if all I was doing was how-to information for webmasters and things like that, it would get pretty boring after awhile, and so every so often I just say, “I just became a God mother!” or something like that. I talk about the fact that I had to go in for surgery and so that people wouldn’t wonder why I wasn’t blogging for a week or more, and it is amazing the response that you get. You probably get more response to a personal thing than you do to a business thing. Once you have built up that list of those subscribers, they are interested in who you are.

Birgit: I guess that makes you so personal to them and they think that they know you just like a best friend.

Rosalind: In many ways; absolutely. Through my support desk I have people that contact me. With the recent surgery I had, someone I consider a friend now saying, "Oh if this happens, then you do this and this..." It was pretty cool.

Birgit: That is fantastic! So you get information from all of the world and many people helping you. That is great.

If I were making a site and I have lots of different topics that are somewhat unrelated; perhaps I want to talk about relationships or maybe about wealth; how to make money in real estate, and then at the same time maybe I have an interest in frogs. Do I just put to all together in the one area or would you suggest that I do separate sites for unrelated topics?

Rosalind: Yes; your site should always have a theme, so I wouldn't talk about frogs and real estate in the same site.

Birgit: Unless you are going to tie it in like you do with your God Son, "Oh I have a pet frog..."

Is there any other information that you would like to share just off the top of your head with us today?

Rosalind: If you are interested in starting in internet marketing; by all means, do it. Contrary to what you might hear people say that you have missed the boat or whatever; that is so not true. I find that the more competitive the market, the more interested I am in it because it just means that there are lots and lots of people out there who are interested in buying products that are relevant to that particular topic. Just get out there and do it.

Birgit: Do you think this industry is going to keep on growing and growing?

Rosalind: No doubt.

Birgit: I find lately too that people that I talk to who are in traditional businesses, they don't know how to use the internet or how to do this kind of marketing. Even if they would collect people's names on their site, they could just increase their business so much if they just use some of the basic principles of internet marketing, and I often wonder if there is anyone who can consult to the bigger firms about things like this?

Rosalind: Even the mom-and-pop things like something as small as a restaurant, they should be collecting email addresses and then every Monday they send out their special; "Today we are having a 2 for 1 special on the dinner platter" or something like that. It would bring people back.

Birgit: Right; it would keep them top-of-mind and they would just be coming back all of the time, or even a doctor or a lawyer or an accountant could use it easily. I guess everybody really should make use of it more than what I find the general population is.

Rosalind: I couldn't agree with you more.

Birgit: You have been great, Rosalind, and thank you so much for all of the information that you have shared with us today. I really do get the sense that I would be able to go out and take the pointers that you gave me today to be able to add and enhance the internet marketing that I am doing and I really appreciate that you have spent this time with us today.