



Affiliate Marketing Content to Commissions

by Lori Ballen

Content to Commissions: How I Turned My Content Into Daily Affiliate Income

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About the Author

Lori Ballen is a digital marketer, content creator, and solopreneur who built a business designed for freedom—not burnout.

She earns income through affiliate marketing, digital products, ad revenue, and coaching.

You'll find her across platforms like YouTube, TikTok, Pinterest, Amazon, and Instagram—testing strategies, creating content that converts, and showing others how to do the same.

Lori's not here to hype anything she hasn't built herself.

Everything she teaches, she uses. Her systems are lean, repeatable, and designed to run quietly in the background while she lives the life she actually wants.

She's grown blogs, built high-converting funnels, sold digital

products to thousands, and made affiliate commissions in her sleep—without a team, without meetings, and without following trends that don't make sense.

Through her coaching program, Ballen Blueprint, Lori helps creators cut through the noise and build real income from the content they're already making. No fluff. No chaos. Just clean systems that convert.

When she's not building or teaching, Lori's probably riding her e-bike, filming her cats, or off-camera letting the machine do the work.

👉 Learn more at BallenBlueprint.com

Introduction

If you're wondering how creators are turning everyday content into income, you're in the right place.

I'm Lori Ballen. I'm a digital marketer, a solopreneur, and someone who built a business around freedom—financial, creative, and personal. I don't have a team. I don't run launches. I make money while I film a TikTok, go for a bike ride, or sit in silence with my cats. And affiliate marketing is a big part of how I do that.

This isn't a deep-dive course. It's not a blueprint or a list of “top ten tricks.” This is an introduction. It's how I started, how I've evolved, and how I still use affiliate marketing today to create recurring income across my content.

I'm going to show you how I built it. The blog posts I wrote. The tutorials I filmed. The shift into short-form, shoppable content across platforms like TikTok, Pinterest, Amazon, YouTube Shopping, LTK, and Instagram.

This isn't theory. This is what I actually do.

You'll see how affiliate marketing works, how it fits into different content styles, and how to get started without overthinking it.

Let's get into it.

Chapter One: The Plugin That Changed Everything

“I didn't chase affiliate income. I built content that worked—and then let the links do their job.”

When I first heard about affiliate marketing, I didn't take it seriously.

To be honest, I thought it was a little scammy—like one of those internet things people did when they couldn't build a “real” business. I wasn't interested in selling stuff for someone else. I was busy teaching. I had a YouTube channel where I showed people how to build websites, specifically for real estate. That was my thing—step-by-step tutorials, screen shares, showing people exactly how to do what I'd already figured out.

One of the tools I used all the time was a real estate plugin for WordPress. It pulled in MLS listings and gave real estate agents a home search website that actually worked. I was using it constantly and showing people how to install it, customize it, and get their sites up and running.

That plugin became the core of my content. I filmed tutorials around it. I answered questions. I shared tips. People started watching, subscribing, and following along. And without even realizing it, I was sending that plugin a steady stream of new customers.

Then I found out it had an affiliate program.

At first, I rolled my eyes. I thought—no thanks. I'm not here to hawk products. But I couldn't shake the fact that people were already buying it because of me. They were following my exact steps, using my videos, and signing up for the plugin either way. Whether I had a link or not, I was already doing the work.

So I signed up.

I grabbed my affiliate link and quietly added it to a few video descriptions. I didn't change the content. I didn't do any kind of pitch. I just made it easy to click.

And that's when the commissions started.

First it was \$8. Nothing wild, but enough to make me pay attention. Then \$80. Then \$800. And then the big realization hit: this was recurring revenue. Every month, the commissions stacked. It wasn't just one-off payments—it was monthly income tied to subscriptions I had influenced.

That plugin became the foundation of my affiliate income. It taught me everything I needed to know—without me even knowing I was learning it.

I learned that affiliate marketing isn't about pushing. It's not about being "salesy." It's about knowing what works, showing people how to use it, and making it easy for them to say yes.

I didn't have a big audience. I didn't run ads. I didn't have funnels or email sequences. I just taught what I knew—and made it easier for people to follow through.

That one plugin changed how I saw everything.

It made me realize that affiliate marketing isn't a gimmick. It's just smart business. When you're already creating content, already sharing tools, already influencing purchase decisions—why wouldn't you get paid for it?

That was my turning point.

I didn't start with affiliate marketing as a strategy. I stumbled into it while doing something I loved—teaching. And that's when I realized it could be more than a bonus. It could be a serious income stream.

And it was only the beginning.



Chapter Two: What Affiliate Marketing Really Is (and Why It Still Works)

“You don’t need to be the face, the expert, or the brand—you just need content that meets the moment with the right link.”

Affiliate marketing is the simplest income model most creators overlook—and the most flexible one we have.

You recommend a product or service. You share your unique affiliate link. When someone clicks and buys, you get paid. Sometimes it’s a one-time commission. Sometimes it’s monthly recurring. But the concept is always the same: your content drives the click. The brand handles the rest.

That’s the foundation.

But how you build on that foundation is what matters.

Some people go all-in on personal brand. They become the go-to voice for a niche. Their audience trusts them, looks to them for recommendations, and buys what they suggest—because there’s real connection behind it. That’s a solid, long-term path. One I’ve leaned into myself.

When people follow you for your ideas, your tutorials, your style, your workflow—affiliate links convert easily. You don’t have to sell. You just show what you’re using. That’s what I did early on with YouTube tutorials, and later through my blog, Pinterest, and coaching business. But affiliate marketing isn’t only for trusted brands with built-in audiences.

There’s another model that works just as well—faceless, fast, and feed-driven.

You’ve seen it. A 12-second TikTok showing hands unpacking a gadget. A Pinterest pin linking to a product roundup. A quiet Amazon shoppable video with no talking, just a product in use. These don’t rely on trust or personality. They rely on timing, curiosity, and product visibility.

Sometimes that video hits someone’s feed at the exact moment they’re shopping—and the sale happens.

That kind of content doesn’t build community, but it can absolutely build income. And both paths are valid.

I use both. Some days I’m on camera, explaining what I love and why. Other days, it’s just my cats playing with a toy I linked. Sometimes I show my face, sometimes it’s a tripod and a voiceover. Both types of content sell.

What matters is structure.

Affiliate marketing works when your content points somewhere. When there's intention behind what you're showing. Whether it's a story, a demo, a roundup, or a reaction—when the product is present, the link should be too.

Right now, I earn affiliate commissions across multiple platforms:

- YouTube
- Pinterest
- TikTok
- Amazon
- LTK
- Instagram

And there are more like these—and more on the way.

Affiliate marketing is growing rapidly. “Influencer marketing” is where the brands are focused, and shoppable videos are the future. The platforms want creators to help sell products. And they're making it easier than ever to do it—with tools built right into the content experience. That's what makes this model sustainable.

You can build trust. You can build systems. You can build both.

What matters is that you stop creating dead-end content. Add the link. Guide the viewer. Create with a business model in mind.

Chapter Three: How \$8 Became \$8,000

“I didn't change what I was teaching. I changed how I linked it—and the income followed.”

The first time I earned \$8 in affiliate commission, I barely noticed it.

It was from that real estate plugin I mentioned earlier. I had added the affiliate link almost as an afterthought—because people were already signing up anyway. I was teaching the same tutorials, answering the same questions, and doing what I'd always done. The only difference was that now, if someone clicked the link and signed up, I got credit.

Then I earned another \$8.

Then \$80.

Then \$800.

And I realized something important: that \$8 wasn't small. It was stackable.

The plugin had a recurring commission structure. Every time someone signed up and stayed on, I earned again. Month after month.

The same tutorial that brought in one person brought in another, then another. I didn't have to make new content. I didn't have to update the link. I didn't even have to remind anyone it existed. The system handled it.

That's when I stopped seeing affiliate links as a bonus and started treating them like a revenue stream.

Most creators don't realize how fast it can add up. They focus on the \$2 here, the \$1 there. But those small commissions, if recurring, grow into something substantial—especially when the content lives across platforms.

Let me give you an example of what that looked like in practice.

I had one YouTube tutorial that walked through setting up a real estate website using WordPress and that plugin. It wasn't flashy. It wasn't high-production. It was a screen recording with clear steps.

That one video ran 24/7. People found it through search. I linked to the plugin in the description. No hard sell. Just: "Here's the plugin I'm using."
That one link turned into thousands of dollars.

Then I wrote a blog post with a step-by-step guide. Same plugin. Same teaching style. That blog linked back to the video. And both linked to the plugin. So now I had two assets feeding the same commission engine.

Then I made a Pinterest pin linking to the blog. More traffic. More stacking. I didn't reinvent anything. I just kept placing links where people were already paying attention.

Eventually, I applied this same approach to every product I loved and actually used—SEO tools, content schedulers, course platforms, analytics dashboards, even the AI tools I now use to streamline my content.

If it fit my system and helped my audience, I found the affiliate program, signed up, and added the link.

And when I saw one link working, I expanded it. I built around it.

One YouTube video became five. One blog became a series. One pin became a weekly habit. I wasn't hustling—I was repurposing. Stacking. Multiplying visibility. That's how you scale affiliate income. Not by posting once and hoping it hits.

By building around what works.

It's not about chasing every affiliate program. It's about choosing the ones that make sense, where the payout structure supports real income, and where you have content that makes the link convert.

For me, the turning point wasn't discovering affiliate marketing—it was realizing I was already doing the work. I just hadn't structured it to get paid.

If you're a creator who's posting content anyway, who's answering questions, who's showing what you use, what you wear, what tools help you move faster—then you're already doing 90% of the work.

The final 10% is building the system that lets it pay you.

Let's talk about how I choose the platforms and programs that make that happen.

Chapter Four: Where I Place My Links (and Why It Matters)

“Affiliate marketing works when every piece of content points somewhere—clearly, cleanly, and without friction.”

It's one thing to sign up for an affiliate program. It's another to place your link where it actually gets clicked.

That's where most creators go wrong.

They'll mention a product, toss a link in somewhere random, and hope for the best. Or they'll make amazing content but forget to build any path to the next step. No CTA, no structure, no reason for the viewer to take action.

Affiliate marketing only works when the content and the link work together.

It doesn't need to feel like a pitch. But it does need to be easy to find, easy to click, and compliant.

Let's talk about that for a second.

If you're using affiliate links, disclosures are non-negotiable. It's an FTC requirement. You have to clearly and conspicuously tell your audience that you may earn a commission if they click and buy.

That doesn't mean you need a big legal paragraph. It just needs to be honest and upfront.

Here's how I do it:

- **On blog posts:** I add a short disclosure near the top, something like: “This post contains affiliate links, which means I may earn a commission if you click and buy—at no extra cost to you.”
- **On YouTube:** I might say it in the video, and also include a written disclosure in the description box.
- **On TikTok, Pinterest, and Instagram:** I use short-form versions like “affiliate link” in captions, or place a brief statement in the comment or overlay.

Amazon specifically requires disclosure if you're an Amazon Associate. They give you the exact wording:

“As an Amazon Associate, I earn from qualifying purchases.”

You have to include that somewhere your Amazon links are displayed—blog, YouTube, or social platforms. If you don't, you risk getting banned from the program. Amazon does check. Now, back to where and how I place my links.

On YouTube, my links usually go under the video intro in the description box. I don't worry about cramming them into the top three lines. I write a natural summary of the video, then include product links.

And now that YouTube has a built-in Shopping feature, I also tag products from big-box stores like Walmart, Macy's, and Target—directly into the video player itself.

That means viewers can see the product, click, and buy—without leaving YouTube. It's affiliate marketing, native to the platform.

On Pinterest, I either drop the affiliate link in the pin URL box or use the “Add product” feature to tag links from Amazon, LTK, or other platforms. Pinterest allows affiliate links, but you still need to follow their ad policies. And again—disclose it. I usually add “affiliate link” in the pin description if it's direct.

On Instagram, I use story links, DM automation, and landing pages linked from the bio. One of my favorite tricks is “Comment SHOP” on a reel or post, which triggers an automatic DM with the affiliate link. That keeps it frictionless—and measurable.

On TikTok, I use the TikTok Shop Creator Program. Once approved, you can tag affiliate products directly in your video using the “Add Link” button. This is one of the highest-converting placements I've seen because the viewer stays inside the app, and the buy button is already there.

On blogs, I hyperlink naturally and use Lasso to embed clean, clickable affiliate boxes. It makes the offer feel real. Not spammy. Not forced. Just part of the reading experience. I also place affiliate links more than once—usually in the intro, body, and again at the end with a visual CTA.

The big takeaway: links need to be seen, clicked, and compliant.

Affiliate marketing isn't just throwing links around. It's about positioning them with intention—on platforms that support your business model, with disclosures that keep you protected, and in content that gives people a reason to care.

In the next chapter, I'll walk you through how I choose affiliate programs worth investing my time into—and how to spot the ones that won't be worth the clicks.

Chapter Five: How I Choose Affiliate Programs That Are Actually Worth It

“If I have to fight to make it convert, it’s not worth building around.”

There are thousands of affiliate programs out there. Most won’t be worth your time. Some pay pennies. Some are clunky. Some look great on paper but flop when you actually test them.

So I built a filter.

Because I’m not in this for busywork. I don’t promote products I don’t use. I don’t waste time with links that don’t convert. And I don’t clutter my content with offers that don’t fit. If I’m going to build content around something, the payout structure has to make sense. The product has to make sense. The process has to make sense.

Let’s start with payout.

Some programs pay once. Some pay monthly. I prefer recurring commissions—software tools, content platforms, anything subscription-based. That’s how my income stacks. A \$20 commission isn’t just \$20 once—it’s \$20 every month someone stays on. And when you layer that across multiple products and platforms, it adds up fast.

But that’s not the only way to earn well.

There’s also the platform-first approach, and a lot of creators go this route. Instead of joining individual affiliate programs one by one, they plug into an ecosystem that handles all the relationships for them.

Here are a few examples:

- **Amazon Influencer Program** – lets you create shoppable idea lists and earn commissions on anything people buy through your content. Works on Amazon storefronts, TikTok, YouTube, Pinterest, and more.
- **LTK (formerly RewardStyle)** – a centralized platform for linking products across major retailers. Great for fashion, beauty, home decor, and lifestyle creators.
- **TikTok Shop Creator Program** – lets you promote products from the marketplace and earn commission directly in your videos. You don’t need your own store—you just add the product link, tag it, and post.
- **YouTube Shopping** – integrates directly with big box retailers like Walmart and Macy’s. You can tag products that appear below the video without interrupting the content flow.
- **Etsy or eBay affiliate programs** – good options if your audience leans into handmade, vintage, or niche finds.

These platforms are doing more of the heavy lifting—sourcing brands, handling payments, tracking conversions—so you can focus on creating content and plugging into what’s already built.

That works well if you want speed and simplicity. Some creators go all-in on one of these ecosystems and never touch individual brand deals at all.

I’ve used both approaches. In some cases, I want full control over which brands I align with. In other cases, I want the infrastructure—quick tags, real-time tracking, auto-payouts. It depends on the platform and the product.

But no matter what, here’s what I won’t do:

- I won’t promote something that doesn’t fit my actual content or lifestyle.
- I won’t push a link that needs ten paragraphs of explanation.
- I won’t build content around a product just because the commission is high.
- And I won’t mess with programs that make it hard to get paid or hard to track.

If I can’t clearly show what it is, why it matters, and where to buy it—it’s not going in my ecosystem.

Affiliate income is too powerful to treat like a side game. You can build real leverage if you pick programs that convert, platforms that support you, and products that naturally align with what you already do.

Next, I’ll show you how I built my affiliate content engine—how I create, track, and repurpose affiliate content across platforms so it keeps paying me long after it’s posted.

Chapter Six: How I Built My Affiliate Content Engine

“If I’m already creating the content, the least it can do is make me money.”

Affiliate income doesn’t happen by chance. It happens when you create content that’s designed to work across platforms—each one pointing to something that pays you. I don’t create content just to create. I build with intention.

Whether it’s soft storytelling, a demo, or a direct sale, I know where the product is going and how the viewer can click it.

Let’s say I film a short video.

Maybe I’m showing how I pack for a trip, what I’m wearing that day, or using a product that solves a problem. That one video is where it starts—but it doesn’t end there.

I post it on TikTok, tagged with the product using the TikTok Shop Creator Program if it’s available in the marketplace. Sometimes I’m just showing. Other times, I’m directly selling—especially when there’s urgency, a sale, or bottom-of-funnel energy.

Next, I upload the same video to Amazon as a shoppable video—if the exact product is available there. You don't have to buy it through Amazon to do this, but it has to be the same item. When a buyer lands on that listing and watches your video, you earn if they buy. It's a quiet stream that stacks.

That video also goes on Instagram—either as a reel or a story. If it's a reel, I'll often use DM automation like “Comment DRESS and I'll send you the links.”

If it's a story, I add the link sticker. Instagram users are trained to tap, and that frictionless moment often converts fast.

Then it's uploaded to LTK, where I tag the outfit, the tools, or whatever items were featured. LTK makes it easy to build “shop the look” collections and is especially strong for fashion, home, and lifestyle creators.

I'll also repurpose the video as a YouTube Short or include it in a longer-form video. If the product is eligible, I tag it through YouTube Shopping so it displays directly beneath the video—no description scrolling required.

Now—let's talk about Pinterest. I don't lead with it, but if I've already created the content, I might as well use it.

Pinterest works better when you treat it like a search engine—not a dumping ground for affiliate links. You can't just spam the platform. They want original content, real user intent, and thoughtful structure.

Best practice?

Link to a blog post or landing page on your site that features the product, your video or photo, and the affiliate link. That way, Pinterest sees you sending traffic to real content—and you control the experience on the backend.

You can still use Pinterest's “Add Product” feature to tag individual items. For example, if I post a photo wearing an outfit, I might tag the dress, hat, sunglasses, bag, belt, shoes, and jewelry—so people can “shop the look.”

In the pin's main link field, I'll link to my blog post that shows the full outfit, embedded video, and all the products with clickable links. You can do one or the other—or both. Just start slow. When you're building a new Pinterest account, tag affiliate links gradually. Don't rush it. Let the platform trust you first.

The key across all of this is repurposing with intention.

If the product exists across TikTok Shop, Amazon, LTK, and YouTube Shopping, I'll reuse the video on each platform—tagging the correct product each time. As long as it's the same item, it's fair game. I don't need to refilm it.

I just make it work in the places that support the sale.

I also track what's earning using QuickBooks. Each platform—TikTok, Amazon, LTK, YouTube—has its own line item.

And each brand or software I promote is set up as a “customer,” so I can see where commissions are coming from. If something is converting, I double down. I create more content for that product or category and let the system keep working.

That's how I build affiliate income—without overthinking every post, but also without wasting opportunity.

You don't need a new idea for every platform. You need one good piece of content, placed in the right way, linked to the right offer, and repurposed where it fits.

If you're ready to stop leaving money on the table and want a system to build around—it's time for the next step.

Want to Build an Affiliate System That Actually Pays You?



If you're ready to stop guessing and start earning, you don't have to figure it out alone.

I built the Ballen Blueprint to show creators how to build real income with affiliate links, digital products, and content that actually converts. Inside the program, you get:

- My full content creation and affiliate marketing system
- Templates, tools, and Airtable trackers
- Trainings on blogs, short-form video, Pinterest, YouTube, and more
- A private group and live coaching calls to get your questions answered in real time

This isn't a course you'll buy and forget. It's a plug-in system that grows with you.

👉 Go to BallenBlueprint.com

content keeps earning, even when you're offline.

Let's build something that works—so your

The Tools That Power My Business

I didn't start with all of these. I worked my way up—adding what I needed, when I needed it. Now, most of my business runs on software and systems. I don't have a team.

I use tools that let me work smarter, automate where it counts, and stay profitable.

Almost everything I earn is profit. My biggest investment? These tools. (These are affiliate links, and I benefit if you make a purchase. No extra cost to you)

Affiliate Tools I Use and Recommend

Stan Store

The digital storefront where I sell my prompts, PDFs, and coaching programs. It's how I deliver offers, track income, and run my business—all in one link.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/stan-store/>

ManyChat

DM automation for Instagram and Facebook. I use it to reply automatically when someone comments “SHOP” or “LINK” on a reel or story. Converts DMs into clicks.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/many-chat/>

Lasso

Tool I use on my blog to embed affiliate links as clean, clickable product boxes. Helps boost conversions with better design.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/lasso/>

VidIQ

My go-to for YouTube keyword research, competitor tracking, and video performance. It helps me get more views, faster.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/vidiq/>

Tailwind

I schedule my Pinterest pins here. I also use it to repurpose content across Instagram and Facebook.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/tailwind/>

WordPress (Hosted by WP Engine)

All of my websites run on WordPress, and I use WP Engine to host them. Fast, reliable, secure.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/wp-engine/>

Alt Text AI

This tool auto-generates alt text for my blog and Pinterest images. It saves time and boosts SEO.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/ai-alt-text/>

Repurpose.io

Automatically distributes my content from one platform to another—like from TikTok to YouTube Shorts or Reels.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/repurpose-io/>

Opus Clips

Turns long-form YouTube videos into short viral clips. Perfect for repurposing and feeding my short-form strategy.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/opus/>

Ideogram

I use Ideogram to create e-book covers and high-quality Pinterest images.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/ideogram/>

Harpa.ai

A browser assistant that lets me extract data, auto-write descriptions, and do real-time research. I use it to speed up workflows.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/harpa/>

Airtable

My content tracker, affiliate product database, and calendar. I use Airtable to run my systems and track what content exists where.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/airtable>

MailerLite

The email platform I use for newsletters, lead magnets, and automations. It's simple and affordable.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/mailerlite>

Clicky Analytics

Real-time blog analytics that show me exactly what pages are working and where clicks are coming from.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/clicky/>

Pinclicks

Pinterest keyword research tool that helps me create SEO-optimized titles and descriptions.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/pinclicks/>

Camtasia

My video editing software for tutorials, YouTube content, and screen shares. I've used it for years—simple, powerful, reliable.

👉 <https://loriballen.com/go/camtasia>