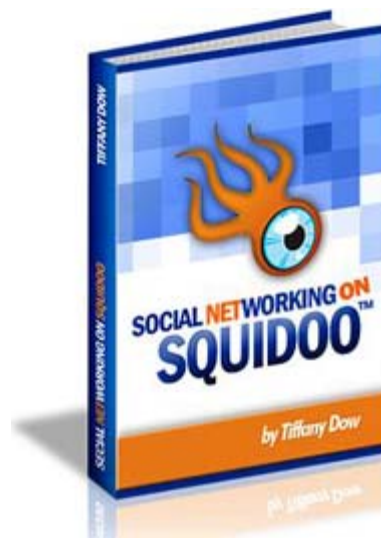


# Squidoo Cheat Sheet



*What Happens When 24 'Net Savvy Marketers Challenge Each Other to a Lensmaster Duel on One of the 'Net's Most Viral Web 2.0 Sites?*

**January-February 2007**

In mid-January, a Squidoo Challenge was launched through Tiffany Dow's [Social Marketing blog](#) and 24 LensMasters each built a new lens around the keyword phrase "affiliate marketing" to see who could rise to the highest spot on Squidoo.

Because the buzz was all about marketers invading social web 2.0 territory, the LensMasters were initially met with hostility from 1-2 bad apples in the community. But after it all settled down, and the Squid Staff assured them that Seth welcomes marketers into the mix, the results showed that many of us garnered a top 10 spot in our category and in the Top 100 lists of Squidoo.

[Kevin Davis](#) got the top position of all time at #9, but it was short-lived. In the end, Jasman Arifin reached #22 and on the last day of the challenge, he held the highest spot. Now we've compiled the notes of the participants into a cheat sheet you can use to jumpstart your own lens.

If you want to learn more about how to reach high levels of success on Squidoo, then join the forum at [www.socialmarketing101.com/Forum](http://www.socialmarketing101.com/Forum) and learn from those who've been there before you.

Here is a list of participants from the January-February challenge, along with their contest lens URL and where it stood on the last day of the challenge out of over 100,000 lenses:

**Jasman Arifin** - <http://www.squidoo.com/affiliatemarketing911/> #22  
**Kevin Davis** - <http://www.squidoo.com/internet-marketing-strategy/> #34  
**Tiffany Dow** - <http://www.squidoo.com/affiliatemarketing101/> #56  
**Greg Cryns** - <http://www.squidoo.com/goaffiliate/> #94  
**Bruce Hopkins** - <http://www.squidoo.com/affiliate-marketing-guide/> #107  
**Stephen Ayer** - <http://www.squidoo.com/affiliate-marketing-traffic/> #151  
**Ross Goldberg** - <http://www.squidoo.com/affiliate-marketing-done-right/> #158  
**Jennifer Gniadecki** - <http://www.squidoo.com/platinumaffiliatemarketing> #159  
**Ann** - <http://www.squidoo.com/affiliatemarketinginfo> #169  
**Ruth Ritchie** - <http://www.squidoo.com/affiliatemarketingplan/> #194  
**Linette Gerlach** <http://www.squidoo.com/AffiliateMarketingforAmateurs> #197  
**Jason Johns** - <http://www.squidoo.com/making-money-with-affiliate-marketing/> #289  
**David McGraw** - <http://www.squidoo.com/DayJobKiller/> #351  
**Ele** - <http://www.squidoo.com/sellyourtown> #371  
**Simon Strutt** - <http://www.squidoo.com/affiliate-programs4u> #381  
**Sherry Grunder** - <http://www.squidoo.com/funandeasyaffiliatemarketing/> #384  
**Somjai Santiratikul** - <http://www.squidoo.com/affiliateguy/> #394  
**Stuart Stirling** - <http://www.squidoo.com/affiliatebucks/> #405  
**Joseph Johnson** - <http://www.squidoo.com/Affiliate-Marketing-101> #408  
**Darwin Dennis** - [www.squidoo.com/affiliatemarketing-expat](http://www.squidoo.com/affiliatemarketing-expat) #607  
**Richard Mumford** - <http://www.squidoo.com/get-rich-clicks> #1,314  
**Amanda Jones** - <http://www.squidoo.com/affiliate-marketing-1> #1,500  
**Carson Brackney** - <http://www.squidoo.com/affiliate-marketing-spaghetti/> #1,844  
**imlurker** - <http://www.squidoo.com/loosely-affiliated/> #3,009

The challengers all created lenses around a specific keyword phrase - *affiliate marketing* - and all put them in the SEO & Affiliate Marketing category. While some worked on their lens growth daily, others rarely touched their lens for updates.

It was clear to see that those who updated frequently – even if just a small thing was updated – were able to achieve and hold a higher ranking than those who never updated at all.

Tiffany Dow, Kevin Davis, and David McGraw decided to spill their secrets of what worked and what didn't when it came to generating success for their lens. Here is a compilation of what they discovered.

### ***Tiffany Dow's Observations***

“When I first started creating my lens, I knew I wanted it to contain the keyword phrase. Since [www.squidoo.com/affiliatemarketing](http://www.squidoo.com/affiliatemarketing) was already taken, I added a “101” to the end since I wanted to give tips about the concept in general.

As soon as I created my challenge lens, at [www.squidoo.com/affiliatemarketing101](http://www.squidoo.com/affiliatemarketing101), I also created a couple of feeder lenses, which I've since deleted. The purpose of a feeder lens is to link them together and funnel any traffic the other lenses get into my primary lens.

After filling out my intro and Write (text) modules with basic affiliate marketing information, always bolding the phrase for each use, I tried to add a module a day or switch it up on a daily basis. I started by adding a standard link list with various affiliate products that I recommended (this resulted in about 3 sales for the month – but I removed this halfway through the challenge).

When my lens was filled out with enough modules to make it appear complete, I started searching Squidoo and signing other people's guest-books to get a backlink to my own lens. I chose lenses that also had the tag “affiliate marketing” so that any traffic they sent to my lens would be in line with my own target audience.

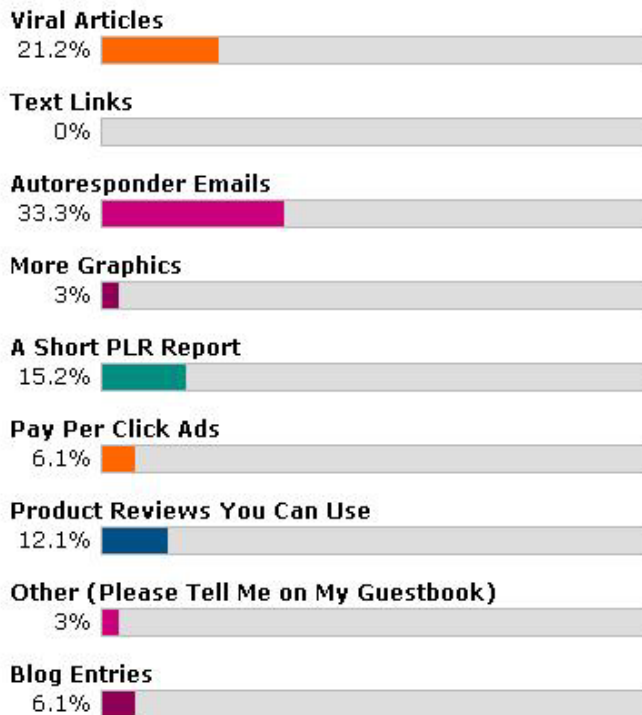
After launching my socialization strategy, I began adding moneymaking modules to my lens, since I feel Squidoo somewhat ranks you based on your lens' ability to be prosperous for their co-op situation where they donate to charities.

I began visiting other contestants' lenses and ranking them 5 stars. I added a poll and Plexo module to get visitor participation in my lens up. Eventually, though – the saturation of newly created *affiliate marketing* lenses was a detriment to us, I think. There were too many cookie cutter “new to affiliate marketing” concepts, so when my LensRank began to fall, I decided to take action.

I altered the slant of my lens to be about affiliate marketing for my own Squidoo eBook – [Social Networking on Squidoo](#). I added a poll about what my affiliates would most like to use to promote the eBook (as shown below):

## Affiliate Marketing Tools Poll

What Affiliate Marketing Tools Do You Want Me to Create for the Squidoo eBook?



Total Votes: 33

I did this for two reasons – to find out what the interest was in promoting the eBook, and to provide whatever it was my affiliates needed from me most as a publisher. I already had graphics created, which were uploaded in Write modules for them to save, so “more graphics” was low on their list.

I noticed autoresponder emails got a lot of votes, so I added 7 Write modules – each one of a series of tips on using Squidoo that they could blast to their list. I also added a viral article and will continue creating tools they can use.

In *every* module, I used the phrase “affiliate marketing” but I also targeted the word “tools.” So then I noticed I reached #17 for Affiliate Marketing Tools on Google SERPs out of 7.6 million results.

Toward the middle of the contest, I launched a group on Squidoo for us – and you can go in and add your lens to it now, too. Groups give you even more coverage. Our group is located at <http://www.squidoo.com/groups/socialmarketing101>.

In addition to what you're about to learn from David and Kevin, here are some innovative ideas I noticed other challengers implementing:

- Stephen Ayer, launched a contest within my contest. This is a social site, so holding contests with some sort of reward gets more traffic to your lens.
- Keith Boisvert became a participant in [www.SquidU.com](http://www.SquidU.com) and was elected Mayor of Squidoo – this was great socialization and he was really rising in LensRank before he had to drop out of the contest.
- Bruce Hopkins started using tags right in each module instead of relying on Squidoo's tagging system alone.

I also made sure to add an RSS feed in my lens so that I'd get fresh content in my lens each day – and I fed it through my challenge blog, since I knew there would be daily updates.

Everything else is covered in my eBook, but I did learn a lot from Kevin – technical tips that I'll let him explain. One thing I loved about this challenge is meeting fellow marketers and sharing ideas throughout the contest. Nobody was stingy or withheld information – they were happy to share their strategies and secrets.”

### ***David McGraw's Observations***

“I ended getting my lens up halfway through the Challenge. I am buying your e-book this evening, yet I decided to sort of wing it in the Challenge to see what I might learn and observe before seeing how things SHOULD be done.

I have found in life, sometimes going forward for a brief time, with minimal knowledge, and just see what happens, often uncovers a nugget or two.

The only knowledge I had of Squidoo was an inexpensive WSO about “Bum Marketing on Squidoo.” Not really conducive to the Challenge, but with some interesting information.

First and maybe foremost, seems to be the choice of the lens URL. I did a Google search Sunday, of all the lens, and found that in ALL but 2 instances, the Challenge Lens were on the 1st page of Google for their URL.

One, by Kevin, was on page 4 of Google, yet in a much more difficult Keyword. Joseph Johnson's lens was the only one I couldn't find in the 1st 5 pages of Google.

Now, the important thing I learned from all this, is that it appears imperative to use hyphens between each word in the URL to actually rank well for multiple word keywords.

My keyword, Day Job Killer, [was in the URL](#) as a run-on dayjobkiller. I didn't rank anywhere useful on Day Job Killer, yet I was 2nd-4th for dayjobkiller, a much less searched iteration.

There were at least a handful of Challenge Lens which 1 or 2 for their URL, in a minimally searched keyword, I think there was one which was 1st of 3 listed.

Since my Keyword was the Title of a newly launched IM product, it was interesting to watch the volatility and growth of a Keyword. Squidoo does very well on Google, quickly. Craigslist does as well. Yahoo and MSN seemed less friendly.

Also, LensRank seemed to not have much relevance with Google Ranking, in fact a lens with the URL Day-Job-Killer-1, was 2-4 on Google for the whole launch week and had a LensRank of 3600+.

My conclusion that the URL is very important!

One other thing I did, and think it was probably detrimental. I changed my Introduction, sort of like a Billboard. It seems that the first couple of lines should be given particular thought, because that is what shows up in Google.”

### ***Kevin Davis Observations***

Visit [Kevin's Blog](#) for more information.

- “Update and Publish your lens frequently, 1 – 2 times a day in the beginning. After it has been established, about two weeks make a change at least every other day.
- After updating and publishing your lens, ping your lens through Pingomatic.com or Pingoat.com. Pingoat has become more reliable than Pingomatic.
- If ping to Icerocket.com fails, ping Ice Rocket manually on [www.IceRocket.com](http://www.IceRocket.com)
- Create bookmark accounts on as many social bookmark sites as possible and bookmark your Squidoo lens.
- After bookmarking your lens, ping the bookmark user page and bookmark sites main page that lists the most recent bookmarks.
- Announce your Squidoo lens to any lists you have and encourage them to participate in Plexo Modules, Sign Your Guestbook, Vote on your lens, and create a lens of their own through your referral link.

- Be sure to add graphics to each of your modules, they differentiate your lens from others and leads the reader from module to module in the lens.
- At one point, I had three YouTube modules on my lens. While it took longer to load, visitors stayed on my lens much longer, at times over 10 minutes. I believe the length of time the visitor stays on your lens could be a factor in calculating lensrank. The longer they stay on your lens, the better the content.
- Use Text/Write modules for content, separated by modules that provide interactivity, such as Plexo Modules, or YouTube videos.
- Create your own link within the intro module to add your lens to favorites and add to lensroll. The default location for these links are within the right side menu, and those links are to inconspicuous. By adding the links within the intro module your visitors are more likely to use them. The number of users that have selected your lens as a favorite or added it to their lensroll also affect lensrank, and traffic from return visits.
- When choosing your tags, use keyword research tools to find highly searched terms. Also search Google for tag pages from Squidoo that already show up within the first 20 results for related tags. If you add a ranked tag to your lens, it will immediately show up on the ranked tag page.
- Tags are also used in the keywords meta tags, so it is best to limit the number of tags to 30 – 50.
- Choose your title and lens URL wisely, these are the two most important factors in Squidoo SEO
- Pay close attention to composing a good intro module. It is also used for the meta description tag for the page and will be used for the description in most search engines.
- Traffic is one of the factors in determining LensRank. You can drive traffic to your lens with PPC, mailing to your own lists, or mailing to email membership sites like; Your Lucky List, List Cube, or The List Machine.
- Forums are another great source of traffic. During the challenge I used my forum signature and created/participated in threads specific to Squidoo. As a result of the challenge, both Warriors and Conquer Your Niche forums started to buzz with threads about Squidoo.
- Add your own stats counter to see daily/weekly traffic, and countries of your visitors. Adjust your content based on your visitor countries.
- Add a Plexo list to determine what your visitors want to hear more about. Once they stop responding to the list, I removed it and started creating content based on the results.

- When replacing write/text modules, I found that it was better to update existing modules when replacing content. When I deleted modules and added new write modules, the ranking for the lens was affected dramatically.
- Other Advanced Techniques I Used:
  - Drop Caps in Write Modules
  - Changing Fonts to change the appearance
  - Adding an Optin Box to build a list
  - Adding a banner rotator
  - Adding a mini salesletter
  - Adding your own ClickBank text ads
  - Adding Technorati Tags for each module
  - Creating a custom RSS feed to include all modules. The Squidoo feed only includes the intro module.
  - Adding links to allow visitors to subscribe to custom rss feed.
  - Adding the custom rss feed to feedburner.com
- Sites used for articles for lens
  - ArticleStorm.com
  - ArticleDashboard.com
  - GoArticles.com
  - EzineArticles.com
- Getting Backlinks
  - Buy a link at TextLinkMarketplace.com
  - Submit articles to the sites above”

### ***Jumpstarting Your LensMaster Success***

While most of the participants created lenses and stayed in until the end, it's important that for the best success, you work on your lens frequently. This is a web 2.0 social site, so reaching out to the community is vital to your increase in traffic.

It doesn't matter if you don't know a thing about Squidoo, joining a challenge will help give you the push you need to **act** on your goals instead of putting them on the back burner.

The monthly challenges last from about the 15<sup>th</sup> to the last day of the month. Visit the blog at [www.socialmarketing101.com/blog](http://www.socialmarketing101.com/blog) to sign up and put your skills to the test based on what you've learned here.