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Thread: [cpa vs affiliate marketing which one is better?](#)

t33j - July 4, 2026, 11:15 am

CPA Marketing vs Affiliate Marketing – Which Do You Prefer?

A lot of people lump CPA marketing and affiliate marketing together, but they're actually quite different when it comes to how you get paid.

CPA Marketing

CPA stands for Cost Per Action.

With CPA offers, you earn money when a user completes a specific action, such as:

- Signing up for a website
- Submitting an email address
- Installing an app
- Starting a free trial
- Completing a survey

The user usually doesn't need to spend any money for you to get paid.

Pros

- Easier conversions in many cases
- No purchase required from the user
- Faster data collection and testing
- Can work well with paid traffic

Cons

- Lower payouts per conversion
- Offers can be removed without notice
- Strict traffic and compliance requirements
- Some niches are highly competitive

Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing typically pays you when a user purchases a product or service through your referral link.

Examples include:

- Software subscriptions
- Web hosting
- Online courses
- Physical products
- Digital products

Pros

- Higher commissions on many offers
- Potential for recurring income
- Long-term business model

Often easier to build a brand around

Cons

Harder to generate sales

Longer customer decision process

Requires more trust from your audience

Can take longer to become profitable

Example

Imagine you send 100 visitors to an offer.

CPA Offer

Payout: \$2 per lead

15 people sign up

Profit: \$30

Affiliate Offer

Commission: \$30 per sale

2 people buy

Profit: \$60

The affiliate offer made more money, but it was also harder to convert.

My View

CPA marketing is often better for people who enjoy testing traffic sources, landing pages, and conversion rates.

Affiliate marketing is often better for people who want to build long-term content, websites, brands, or communities around products they genuinely recommend.

Both can be profitable if executed properly.

What Do You Think?

If you had to choose only one, would you rather focus on CPA marketing or traditional affiliate marketing, and why?

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