Semiologic at a Glance

Initially packaged and released in 2005, Semiologic is a cost-effective solution that allows non-technical users to create websites without worrying about software.

It is a software bundle comprising a slightly modified version of WordPress, a feature-rich theme and a collection of plugins tailored to cover the bulk of internet marketers’ requirements. The theme is flexible and allows a large variety of layouts and skins.

Semiologic comes with a year of free updates, and access to a network of carefully selected value-added service providers including virtual assistants, designers and copywriters. Community members can additionally exchange tips and resources with the development team and with one another in the forum.

Unique at the time of its release, Semiologic has inspired a great number of me-too products.

A constant stream of updates and improvements, a level of service that is frequently praised as unmatched in the industry, and an uncanny ability to bump web pages towards the top of search engine results (the software’s designer worked on search algorithms a few years back), have most certainly contributed to Semiologic keeping its lead in this ecosystem.

Yet, it is the word of mouth due to high customer satisfaction rates, and the network of affiliates (several internet marketers of note use and recommend the solution), that have contributed the most to Semiologic’s strong brand and success.

Affiliate vs. Reseller

Semiologic has two indirect sales channels: affiliates and resellers. The difference between the two is important to understand, as the level of responsibility is very different.

Affiliates are in charge of bringing prospects to the software’s sales page. The Semiologic team takes full responsibility from there: it closes the sale, handles customer care, etc.

In return for his efforts, the affiliate receives a compensation via a life-time ownership of the new customer (i.e. he gets a cut for future business by the same customer), and a two-tier commission plan (i.e. he gets a cut for any business that customer generates as an affiliate).

Resellers are in charge of delivering the software as part of their own value-added solution. Typical resellers include web designers who bundle Semiologic with a custom-tailored skin, and coaches who bundle Semiologic alongside course on internet marketing.

The reseller closes the sale, bills it under his name, and takes care of delivering the solution from there. On paper, the Semiologic team’s responsibility is then limited to maintaining the software bundle, and tackling the occasional support issue that resellers need to escalate. Some level of
technical skills is recommended for resellers, but by no means necessary: resellers can, via the virtual assistants list, outsource most -- if not all -- of the tasks involved with catering for new users.

Reseller Obligations

Resellers have a few do’s and don’ts. The obvious set aside (i.e. don’t hack the bundle):

1. **No reselling Semiologic as is**

   The general idea behind the reseller program is to allow value-added service providers to package Semiologic with their own offer -- as opposed to reselling the software as is.

   Value-added services could be anything substantial: hosting, design work, training, consulting, video tutorials, access to a members-only area...

2. **No low-cost reselling**

   If your plans were to resell Semiologic for less than we sell it for, please think again. On the one hand, we’ve no interest whatsoever. On the other, delivering support comes at a cost. As the creators of the software bundle, we do a more cost-effective job at supporting it than you probably ever will.

   For reference, Automattic (the people behind WordPress) delivers a similar offer with a level of service that is comparable to ours -- at ten times our price. We’re not expecting you to do things as efficiently as we are. But we do expect you to deliver impeccable service. In particular:

   - Never leave an issue unattended. If it’s out of scope, discuss your rates and get it done. “Sorry, can’t assist” is never the proper answer. “Sorry, can’t assist but they can” is fine, provided they can and do -- i.e. advise users to change host when necessary.

   - Take users by the hand. When they don’t “get it”, consider phoning them through the steps if resolving the issue at hand is a matter of rehashing the explanation. If not, log into their site, get it done, and explain in the aftermath.

   - Let us know if you spot a bug in the software, or if you have a suggestion to improve it. We’re committed to improving and maintaining it.

3. **No white labeling**

   It is called Semiologic and we’d like it to stay that way. There are no exceptions. Two reasons:

   On the one hand, Semiologic’s strong reputation is a powerful sales argument. It gets regular coverage and consistent praise in webmaster and internet marketing forums.

   On the other; letting resellers brand the solution as their own would work against the very brand we’ve worked so hard to create.

4. **Consider contributing to the community forum**

   As the name suggests, the forum is that of the Semiologic community.
Experienced users assist newcomers, exchange tips, and so on. Many of the more active forum members are resellers and/or virtual assistants. At some point or another, they’re bound to deliver (unpaid) assistance to your customers. Just as we are, and just as we do for theirs.

Consider reciprocating from time to time. This is by no means an obligation, of course. But it’s a great way to promote your own expertise to newcomers and more experienced users alike. Plus, it pays off eventually: The more there is in the forum, the more your customers will find in it.

The Reseller License

From our perspective -- i.e. that of our back-office -- resellers deliver Semiologic under the same terms as we do. This means their customers may use their API key for any number of sites provided they’re those sites’ owner / primary user.

On their end, resellers are most welcome to be creative, and charge their services on a per site basis, or whatever suits them best.

How to Sign Up as a Reseller

Email sales@semiologic.com with:

1. Your name and email address in the members’ area (http://members.semiologic.com).

Upon approving your project, we’ll mark you as a reseller in the members’ area.

How to Deliver Semiologic as a Reseller

Proceed as follows:

1. Sign the customer up in the members’ area (http://members.semiologic.com).
2. Email the customer’s API key to sales@semiologic.com so we can allocate the Semiologic membership (and thus the year of free updates).
3. Deliver the software as applicable.
4. At the end of each month, we’ll issue a paypal invoice where applicable.

(The above steps will be automated in 2008.)

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