

## AFFILIATE PROGRAM CASE STUDY

# HOW WE GREW RETAILER'S AFFILIATE PROGRAM REVENUE BY 206%

OVERALL  
**206%**  
REVENUE  
GROWTH

CAMPAIGN  
**\$9**  
RETURN ON  
AD SPEND

RECRUITED  
**800**  
NEW QUALITY  
AFFILIATES INTO  
PROGRAM

### SUMMARY

Acceleration Partners grew client's overall revenue by 206% year-over-year (YOY) while maintaining their return on ad spend goal of \$9 and recruiting over 800 quality affiliates into program.

### EVALUATING THE ISSUES

One of the services Acceleration Partners is valued for is our complementary affiliate program assessments. When we conduct these evaluations for companies, we look at everything from the types of affiliates in the program and the clicks and conversions they are generating to how fraudulent activities are being monitored and prevented, hidden sources of costs and opportunities for growth.

### CATEGORIZING THE CHALLENGES

After performing this assessment on one retailer's program, our team discovered that they had over 400 pending affiliate applications that weren't being reviewed. In addition, the affiliates in their program weren't receiving any communications that might activate them or optimize their efforts.

In short, their network-managed affiliate program was on auto-pilot. The retailer needed an affiliate network that would better support their needs as well as an industry partner who could provide management and oversight of their program.

Their internal team conveyed to AP that they wanted a program management partner who would focus more on recruiting content affiliates while also communicating more effectively and consistently with their existing affiliates.

The retailer also wanted to ensure that their needs would be met cost-effectively. For the client, this meant growing revenue while maintaining a \$9 return.

### SELECTIVE SOLUTIONS

To help them achieve their objectives, the first step their Acceleration Partners team took was to get the client set-up on an affiliate network that would allow them to grow their program strategically and cost-effectively. For the retailer, that network was ShareASale.

"Once we helped them transition their program to ShareASale, our team rolled up our sleeves and conducted a comprehensive audit of previous revenue-driving affiliates in their program to determine long-term partnership opportunities," said Heather Creamer, the client's AP Account Manager. "In this process, we were able to identify both top performing affiliates as well as affiliates who did not align with the client's brand. The most brand-aligned affiliates were then invited to join their program on ShareASale."

To enhance the quality and quantity of content affiliates in the retailer's program, the AP team pulled up-to-date recruitment lists from our internal CRM. After designating select affiliates who would be great content partners for the client, the AP team sent them various communications that imparted the value and opportunity of the retailer's affiliate program.

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### SELECTIVE SOLUTIONS -continued

It was also important for the AP team to make strategic adjustments to affiliate commissions in order to make the program as attractive as possible to quality content affiliates while also ensuring the retailer would get the return they were looking for.

Once a strong base of brand-aligned affiliates were in their program and smart recruitment efforts were under way, the team went to work updating all of the retailer's affiliate communications, including creating a fresh, well-designed newsletter template that they sent out to all affiliates every two weeks.

"To activate non-active affiliates, we created a blog post bonus campaign and offered it to every affiliate who had joined the program in the past four months," said Creamer. "And to optimize click-active affiliates, our team sent out an email newsletter to them every two weeks that provided information about the client's close-out sales and relevant categories to focus on in their content. We also offered affiliates three different blog post ideas in each newsletter and included links to special categories, shipping events, and the retailer's internally-created blog posts."

For affiliates who had generated clicks, but not revenue, the team conducted special activation campaigns. For example, if the affiliate drove their first three sales within a 30-day window, they'd earn an additional one percent commission increase in the following month. In addition, the team provided all the retailer's affiliates with tips and tricks for how to drive sales.

### REVITALIZING RESULTS

By laying out a customized, strategic process for the retailer, the Acceleration Partners team was able to:

- Grow overall revenue for the client by 206% year-over-year (YOY) while maintaining their return on ad spend goal of a \$9.
- Recruit over 800 quality affiliates into their program, almost 700 of which are content affiliates.
- Generate over 40 sponsored blog posts from affiliates.
- Decrease affiliate network fees by 30% YOY.
- Increase their average order value by \$5 YOY.
- Increase their conversion rate three percentage points from 1% to 4% by ensuring only qualified affiliates were accepted into the client's program.

Today, the retailer's program is now running on all cylinders. The AP team consistently monitors for fraud, FTC disclosures, trademark bidding, etc. as well as for performance. What's more is that information is now being shared consistently with their internal team via weekly and monthly reporting. The retailer's internal involvement and support combined with a better management and publisher development process will only continue to ensure their program bears fruit.

"We've learned a great deal about what resonates best with different affiliate types (content sites, loyalty sites, coupon sites, etc.). We've also been able to base our campaigns on segmented groups which allows us to get the most interaction from each subset," said Creamer. "We also recently conducted an affiliate survey. The direct feedback and responses from affiliates is incredibly valuable as it provides us insight into what compels them to promote a brand's offerings. These learnings will enable us to develop even more strategic campaigns that will offer value to both affiliates and to our client."